general purpose committee

3

section

organisation and resources

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SECTION 3 - ORGANISATION AND RESOURCES.

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ITEM: 22 **Monthly Financial Report - March 2001**

FILE NUMBER: GF011/005/FNC/OGD24NAX.F11

REPORT:

March 2001

Summarised below, are particulars of both the income received and the expenditure incurred by Council for the month of March 2001. This information is reconciled between the cashbook and the bank statement balance as at the end of March 2001. All expenditure is fully supported by vouchers and invoices which have been duly certified.

A. Cash Book Reconciliation - March 2001

Cash Book Balance as at 1 March 2001		($206,826.91)
Add: Receipts for month of March		$3,746,515.53
		$3,539,688.62
Less: Payments for month of March		
Cheque # 73375 - 73788	$1,835,257.69	
EFT # 17222 - 17525	$1,850,124.07	
Family Day Care Payments	$60,766.37	
RTGS (Investment) Transactions	$600,000.00	
Cancelled Cheques	($2,232.70)	
Miscellaneous (Bank Charges, Dishonours etc)	$20,824.39	$4,364,739.82
Cash Book Balance as at end of March 2001		($825,051.20)

B. Statement of Bank Balances - March 2001

Bank Statement Balance as at end of March 2001		$134,705.10
Less: Unpresented Cheques		($337,678.91)
		($202,973.81)
Add: Outstanding Deposits	$46,947.28	
Statement Credits not Receipted	($669,024.67)	($622,077.39)
		($825,051.20)

C. Investments - March 2001

The Local Government (Financial Management) Regulation requires that each month, details of all money that has been invested under section 625 of the Local Government Act, 1993 be reported to a meeting of Council.

The following table outlines the investment portfolio held by Council as at the end of March 2001. All investments have been made in accordance with the Act, Regulations and Council's investment policies.

Investment Type	Balance Brought Forward	Deposits	Withdrawals	Interest Paid	Balance End of Month
Managed Funds	$28,564,707.45			$143,105.54	$28,707,812.99
On Call Funds	$2,960,000.00	$600,000.00	($850,000.00)		$2,710,000.00
Term Investments	$3,070,000.00				$3,070,000.00
TOTAL	$34,594,707.45	$600,000.00	($850,000.00)	$143,105.54	$34,487,812.99

Geoff Banting
Responsible Accounting Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 22 Oooo

ITEM: 23 **Candidates and Councillors for the 1999 & 2000 Elections**

FILE NUMBER: GC070/005 PT19/GMA/OGD24NCX.G02

REPORT:

The following are the main findings of 166 Councils which held elections between September 1999 and 31 August 2000 concerning the characteristics of Councillors and Candidates:

*"**Gender***

- *at the 1999 elections, nearly three-quarters (74%) of the **councillors** elected were men. The number of female councillors has grown at each election held since 1987 from 16% in 1987 to 26% in 1999. In 1999, while women made up more than one-third (35%) of Sydney councillors, they made up less than one-quarter (23%) of councillors in the rest of NSW. The average number of women elected to each Sydney council was 4 compared to 2.2 for councils in the rest of NSW. This geographical difference was also apparent in previous elections where women made up a greater proportion of Sydney councillors than councillors in the rest of NSW. There was little difference in the average number of men elected to Sydney councils compared to councils in the rest of NSW in 1999, that is, 7.4 and 7.6 respectively*

- *the total number of **candidates** has increased at each election since 1991, particularly between 1995 and 1999. This increase is largely accounted for by the increase in the number of candidates standing for Sydney councils compared to councils in the rest of NSW. At the 1999 elections, men comprised 70% of candidates. This was similar to the 1995 elections. Candidates were much more likely to be male in non-Sydney councils than Sydney councils (75% and 64% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, male candidates were more likely than female candidates to be elected (36% and 30% respectively). This was also the case at the 1991 and 1995 elections. In 1999, both male and female candidates for non-Sydney councils were more than twice as likely to be elected as their counterparts for Sydney councils*

Age

- *at the 1999 elections, more than half (61%) of the **councillors** were aged 40-59 years with another 20% aged 60-69 years. The age distribution of councillors elected in 1999 was similar to those elected in 1987, 1991 and 1995. At the 1999 elections, Sydney councillors tended to be younger than their counterparts in the rest of NSW, particularly men*

- *at the 1999 elections, more than half (57%) of the **candidates** were aged 40-59 years with another 15% aged 60-69 years and another 15% aged 30-39 years. The age distribution of 1999 candidates was similar to 1995 candidates*

- *at the 1999 elections, those aged 60-69 had the best chance of being elected (46%) followed by those aged 50-59 years (41%). Those aged 18-24 years had the least chance of being elected (11%). This was similar to the 1995 election*

Aboriginality

- *at the 1999 elections, 28 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander* ***councillors*** *were elected. Most (79%) were elected to 19 non-Sydney councils. The rest were elected to 5 Sydney councils. This compares with 12 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander councillors elected in 1995.*

- *at the 1999 elections, 85 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people stood as* ***candidates*** *for 34 non-Sydney councils and 12 Sydney councils.*

- *Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates were about as likely to be elected as candidates who were not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (33% and 35% respectively). However, in Sydney councils Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates were more likely to be elected than candidates were not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (29% and 21% respectively). The opposite was the case for non-Sydney councils where Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates were less likely to be elected than candidates who were not Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (34% and 48% respectively)*

Ethnicity

To obtain some indication of their ethnicity, ***councillors*** *were asked to identify the first language they spoke if it was not English. The survey found that:*

- *the first language spoken by an overwhelming majority (94%) or councillors was English*

- *the most common language other than English first spoken by councillors was Greek (1%), followed by Italian (0.5%), Dutch (0.5%), Chinese (0.4%) and Lebanese (0.4%)*

- *more than two-thirds (70%) of the 79 councillors whose first language was not English were elected to 24 Sydney councils. The remaining councillors were elected to 21 non-Sydney councils.*

Occupation

- *at the 1999 elections, the most common occupations of* ***councillors*** *were professional (26%), manager (22%) and primary producer/farmer (20%)*

- *these were also the most common occupations of councillors at the 1987, 1991 and 1995 elections. While the proportion of managers has remained fairly constant over this time, the proportion of professionals has increased and the proportion of* *primary producers/farmers has decreased. The proportion of councillors in each of the other occupational categories has remained fairly constant over this time.*

- *at the 1999 elections, there were few geographic differences in the occupations of councillors. The main differences were that Sydney councillors were more likely than their counterparts in the rest of NSW to be professionals, and not surprisingly, non-Sydney councillors were much more likely than their Sydney counterparts to be primary producers/farmers*

Candidates at previous local government election

- *at the 1999 elections, more than half (57%) or all* ***councillors*** *elected had stood at the previous ordinary election. Councillors in non-Sydney councils were more likely than their counterparts in Sydney councils to have stood at the previous election (60% and 52% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, two-thirds (67%) of all* ***candidates*** *did not stand at the previous ordinary local government election. Sydney councils had a greater proportion of candidates who did not stand at the previous election compared to councils in the rest of NSW (76% and 58% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, overall candidates who stood at the previous election were much more likely to be elected than those who had not stood (59% and 22% respectively). For Sydney councils, those who stood at the previous election were about three times as likely to be elected as those who did not stand (45% and 13% respectively) compared to about twice as likely for non-Sydney councils (67% and 33% respectively)*

Membership of previous council

- *at the 1999 elections, more than half (57%) of all* ***councillors*** *were members of the previous council. Councillors in non-Sydney councils were more likely than their counterparts in Sydney councils to have been members of the previous council (60% and 52% respectively). This is similar to the 1995 elections*

- *at the 1999 elections, nearly three-quarters (74%) of all* ***candidates*** *were not members of the previous council. Sydney councils had a greater proportion of candidates who were not members of the previous council compared to councils in the rest of NSW (86% and 64% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, candidates who were members of the previous council were much more likely to be elected than those who were not members (76% and 20% respectively)*

Length of service as a councillor

- *at the 1999 elections, overall* **councillors** *were most likely to have been either elected for the first time (29%) or to have been a councillor for no more than one term (26%)*

- *at the 1999 elections, the distribution of experience amongst councillors was similar for both Sydney councils and councils in the rest of NSW. The main difference was that Sydney councillors were more likely than their counterparts in the rest of NSW to have been elected for the first time (39% and 25% respectively)*

- *these findings are similar to the 1987, 1991 and 1995 elections*

Position on group ticket

- *at the 1999 elections, just over half (53%) of all* **councillors** *ran on a group ticket. Councillors elected to Sydney councils were nearly three times as likely as their counterparts in the rest of NSW to have run on a group ticket (94% and 36% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, more than two-thirds (68%) of all* **candidates** *ran on a group ticket. More than half (54%) of all candidates occupied position 1 or 2 on a group ticket. Candidates for Sydney councils were twice as likely as their counterparts in the rest of NSW to run on a group ticket (92% and 46% respectively)*

- *at the 1999 elections, candidates for Sydney councils were more likely to be elected if they ran on a group ticket (21% compared to 14% of those who did not run on a group ticket). Candidates for non-Sydney councils were more likely to be elected if they did not run on a group ticket (56% compared to 37% of those who ran on a group ticket). Overall, candidates who ran on a group ticket were much more likely to be elected if they occupied position one on the ticket compared to any other position (51%)*

Mayors

At the 1999 elections, the main differences between mayors and all councillors were that mayors were:

- *more likely to be men (85%), particularly for non-Sydney councils (90%)*
- *from a narrower age range and they were more likely to be older (69% were aged 50-69 years)*
- *there were no Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mayors*
- *from a narrower rage of occupations and they were more likely to be primary producers/farmers (29%)*
- *much more likely to have been a member of the previous council (92%)*
- *much less likely to have been elected for the first time (4%) and more likely to have served more than one term as a councillor (76%)*

Women councillors

At the 1999 elections, the main differences between women councillors and all councillors were that women councillors were:

- *more likely to be professionals (32%), and engaged in home duties (10%), and less likely to be primary producers/farmers (9%)*
- *more likely to have been elected for the first time (34%) and less likely to have served more than 2 terms as a councillor (39% compared to 29% for all councillors)*

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates and councillors

At the 1999 elections, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates and councillors had the following characteristics:

- *most (65% of candidates and 86% of councillors) were men*
- *candidates were aged between 25 and 79 years, and councillors were aged between 30 and 69 years. Both candidates and councillors were most likely to be aged 40-49 years (39% of both), followed by 50-59 years (27% of candidates and 32% of councillors)*
- *the most common occupation of councillors was manager (46%), followed by professional (21%)*
- *councillors were most likely to have been elected for the first time (36%), followed by having been a councillor for no more than one term (32%)*

Older candidates and councillors

At the 1999 elections, candidates and councillors aged 60 years or more had the following characteristics:

- *there was a total of 889 candidates and 394 councillors who were aged 60 years or more*
- *most (75% of candidates and 78% of councillors) were men*
- *the oldest male candidates and councillors were aged 80 years or more; the oldest female candidates were aged 80 years or more and the oldest female councillors were aged 70-79 years*
- *eight candidates and three councillors were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander*
- *the vast majority (96%) of councillors first spoke English*
- *the most common occupation of councillors was retired (42%), followed y primary producer/farmer (28%)*
- *councillors had a wide range of experience as a councillor. They were most likely to have served one or two terms (37%). A significant proportion (14%) were elected for the first time*

New councillors

At the 1999 elections, the main differences between new councillors and all councillors were that new councillors were:

- *women made up a greater proportion of new councillors (31%)*
- *more likely to be younger*
- *more likely to be professionals (34%) and less likely to be primary producers/farmers (13%)*

Implications

While there were significant differences between individual councils in relation to the characteristics of candidates and councillors at the 1999 elections, analysis of the 1999 local government election results reveals that some groups in the community are often under-represented on local councils. If the composition of local councils is to accurately reflect the demographic characteristics of their communities, the following groups need to be encouraged to stand for election:

- *women, particularly in non-Sydney councils*
- *those aged between 18 and 39 years*
- *those who first spoke a language other than English*
- *lower income occupations such as para-professional/tradesperson, home duties, salesperson, student and unemployed*

As well as encouraging these groups directly through such strategies as appropriate information campaigns and mentoring, it may be appropriate to consider ways in which the operation of local councils can be enhanced so that these groups are attracted to stand for office.

The implications of the significant proportion of councillors elected for the first time and the even higher proportion of councillors who were not members of the previous council (but who may have been a member of another council or had a break from serving as a councillor) on the stability of councils are unknown. While it may mean a lower level of experience as a public official, it may also result in new ideas and an increase in energy and enthusiasm. The significant proportion of new councillors indicates the need for appropriate induction and training programs."

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 23 Oooo

ITEM: 24 **Misbehaviour by Councillors**

FILE NUMBER: GA030/014 PT5/GMA/OGD24NCX.G01

REPORT:

The following circular has been received from the Department of Local Government:

> "*Councils are no doubt aware that the Minister for Local Government recently expressed concern in the Parliament over misbehaviour by certain councillors, particularly in council meetings.*
>
> *Over recent years there appears to have been an increasing incidence of misbehaviour by councillors causing disruption and time wasting in council meetings. Incidents have included argument and abuse between councillors, abuse of council staff, arguments with members of the public gallery during council meetings and general waste of council time and resources on inappropriate issues. Sometimes the misbehaviour is limited to only one councillor within a council, occasionally it may involve several or a factional group.*
>
> *Healthy debate and discussion in council meetings is both normal and expected. Abuse, intimidation, sexual harassment and aggression, whether by councillors, council staff or members of the public is not an acceptable part of the democratic process.*
>
> *Misbehaviour by councillors in the performance of their civic functions is a serious failure of their public duty and should not be accepted by other councillors and is not tolerated by the community. Under the autonomy established for councils through the Local Government Act, councillors, both individually and collectively as a council, are accountable to the community for their own behaviour. It is acknowledged that at times it can be difficult to deal with individual councillors who are unable to exercise the self discipline and restraint which is expected by the community of their elected officials. Councils are nevertheless responsible for meeting the ethical and behavioural standards expected by the community.*
>
> *Councils already have the ability under the current legislation to ensure that meetings are orderly and focussed on the legitimate business of council. A variety of instruments are available to assist councillors to meet appropriate standards of behaviour. These include the Meetings Regulation (under the Local Government Act), the model Codes of Conduct and Meeting Practice, and documents such as the joint Department of Local Government/Independent Commission Against Corruption 'Under Careful Consideration: Key Issues for local Government'.*
>
> *The Minister's comments to Parliament were based on his concern that, despite the obvious requirement for professionalism, courtesy and civility that should be demonstrated by elected officials, inappropriate and serious misbehaviour continues to occur. This is clearly frustrating for other councillors who are conscientiously and genuinely trying to make*

decisions for the benefit of their communities and a source of significant annoyance to the community. The interests of local communities are not being best served by such disruptive behaviour.

The Minister has therefore indicated his intention to introduce a series of measures designed to improve councillor behaviour. One option to be considered is a mechanism to 'sinbin' individual councillors. Obviously, any such proposal would have to be quick, fair and independent. This would be intended for situations where the ongoing actions of individual councillors seriously disrupts the functioning of Council and frustrates the rights of ratepayers to an efficient, cost effective and operational council. The Minister also announced possible legislative and regulatory changes to strengthen code of conduct provisions.

These changes are not intended to diminish the primary responsibility of councils for managing their own behaviour.

The Minister has invited submissions from councils and the community on possible measures to deal with councillor misbehaviour. Comments or suggestions from councils or individuals should be sent to the Department by 25 May 2001 by post or email (rcb@dlg.nsw.gov.au)."

Council needs to determine if it wishes to make a submission in this matter.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 24 Oooo

ITEM: 25 **Aerospace and Defence Industry Cluster Project**

FILE NUMBER: GM001/039 PT2/CSV/OGD24NBX.C03

REPORT:

Hawkesbury Economic Development Advisory Committee and its project partners, Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board and GROW Employment Council, have commissioned Consultants, PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC), to assist with the Aerospace and Defence Industry Cluster Project.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Facilitate the development of an Aerospace and Defence Industry Cluster surrounding the Richmond RAAF Base.
- Create new employment opportunities by capitalising on the region's competitive advantage.
- Put in place strategies for the possibility that Richmond RAAF Base may close or downsize within the next ten years and therefore minimise the impact in terms of job loss.

Subsequently, PWC were engaged with funding provided by the project partners and Council to:

- Investigate the region's capacity for the development of an Aerospace Industry Cluster.
- Identify the gaps in skills and infrastructure necessary to develop an Industry Cluster.
- Identify potential models on which to base the implementation phases.
- Identify target enterprises that may be interested in expanding to establish a presence or service in north west Sydney.
- Undertake an analysis of the potential for existing companies associated with the RAAF to expand their operations in the region.

Following this stage, PWC will develop a Communications Strategy including a marketing, attraction and distribution strategy based on the findings of the report. A prospectus will be developed that utilises this information to market the region to identified enterprises.

Stage 1 of the project has been completed and the report considered by HEDAC and the Project Task Force at its meeting on Friday 30 March 2000. The report was received by the Committee and it was resolved to refer the report to Council for determination of its position and in particular, its level of support for the Action Plan. A copy of the report is circulated with the Agenda and the Committee is of the view that implementation of the Action Plan will require the commitment of the Council to the project, including allocation of resources for delegations/representations and funding for project outcomes. It is acknowledged that links will need to be established with the Department of Defence to ensure effective communication with Council and the community on the future of the Base, and the Committee recognises the need to accelerate the study commissioned by the Department to examine the potential economic impacts of Base restructuring. Many of the items listed in the Action Plan are proposed to be carried out by PWC including the preparation of the prospectus document and liaison with industry stakeholders.

It is pointed out that the report examines the scope to fill the "economic gap" resulting from Base restructuring and focuses on further development of an Aerospace Industry Cluster centred around existing Base infrastructure. The study does not examine non-aerospace options for development for the broader economic aspects of the restructuring process. The report is considered to be a pro-active approach to planning for and minimising the impact a closure or realignment of Richmond RAAF operations would have on the local economy and accordingly, is therefore supported.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt the Aerospace Industry Cluster Project report prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers and assist where appropriate, Hawkesbury Economic Development Advisory Committee and its project partners, with the implementation of the Action Plan.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 Aerospace Industry Cluster Project - Final Report (distributed separately).

oooO END OF ITEM 25 Oooo

ITEM: 26 **New South Wales Water Reforms**

FILE NUMBER: GM001/021 PT14/CSV/OGD24NBX.C04

REPORT:

The NSW Government in December 2000, passed the Water Management Act 2000, with the objective of the legislation being the sustainable and integrated management of the state's river water supplies for the benefit of both present and future generations.

It is pointed out that during the consultative process in the lead up to the passing of the legislation, both Council and Hawkesbury Economic Development Advisory Committee made a number of representations with the underlying concern being to ensure that the legislation does not impact on the viability of agriculture and horticulture production in the Hawkesbury Valley and that rivers in the coastal terrain such as the Hawkesbury, should be managed differently to catchments in the western areas of the state. The key outcomes of the legislation relating to the Hawkesbury is that Water Licences are now issued on a volumetric basis rather than area based and from mid 2002, existing licences will be replaced with Water Access Licences, Water Use Approvals and Water Supply Work Approvals. These will be for longer terms than currently available and aim to provide greater management flexibility for licence holders, with licences linked to provisions in local Water Management Plans. Water Management Plans are to be developed by local committees and will be a legal document which directs how water is to be allocated, used and managed and how water resources are to be protected.

As a result of the legislation, the following water allocations have been made:

- Turf farmers to be allocated 11 megalitres per hectare per annum.
- Dairy farms to be allocated 7 megalitres per hectare per annum.
- Orchardists/citrus growers to be allocated 6 megalitres per hectare per annum.
- Vegetable growers to be allocated 7.5 megalitres per hectare per annum.
- Cut flowers to be allocated 5 megalitres per hectare per annum.
- Nurseries to be allocated 20 megalitres per hectare per annum.

The Hawkesbury Water Users' Association, whose objective is to ensure the needs of local irrigators are met with the implementation of the reforms, addressed the recent meeting of HEDAC and detailed their ongoing concerns and strategies. They noted that as a result of intensive lobbying, a number of amendments were made to the draft legislation including the introduction of rights of appeal over allocations and the removal of the excessive number of impact statements required if a farmer was to change crops. However, they are concerned that the 7.5 megalitre allocation for vegetable farmers is insufficient and noted that the original request was for 16 megalitres. It was noted that negotiations are continuing for a review of the allocation and a compromise position is expected. The Water Users' Association is also concerned that no economic impact statements were prepared in respect of the water reforms and this issue was also addressed in Council's submission during the consultative process.

Subsequently, the Water Users' Association and HEDAC have requested Council's ongoing support for campaigns to ensure that the economic impact of the water reforms is minimised in respect of the local agriculture/horticulture industry.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. Where appropriate, Council continue to support the Hawkesbury Water Users' Association and take a pro-active role in ensuring the impact on the agriculture and horticulture industries is minimised through the water reform process.

2. That representations be made to the Minister for Land & Water Conservation requesting an economic impact statement in respect of the water reforms.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 26 Oooo

ITEM: 27 **Rating Yield 2001/2002**

FILE NUMBER: GR010/20 PT03/CSV/OGD24NBX.C14

REPORT:

The Department of Local Government has recently issued several circulars concerning rates for 2001/2002. In Circular Number 01/22 dated 21 March 2001, the Minister for Local Government announced that for 2001/2002, Council may increase it's General Income by 2.8%.

Since the introduction of the Local Government Act 1993, Council's General Income has comprised the revenue raised from Ordinary Rates as well as the revenue raised from Non-Domestic Waste Management charges.

On 1 April 2001, the Local Government Amendment Act 2000 took effect. This Amending Act includes changes to Section 505 which defines what comprises a councils General Income. For the 2001/2002 rating year, Non-Domestic Waste Management Charges will no longer form part of Council's General Income.

The Department of Local Government have advised councils that there will be no requirement to reduce the General Income for 2001/2002 as an offset to the removal of Non-Domestic Waste Management Charges. What this means is that Council has the opportunity to raise the equivalent value of the Non-Domestic Waste Management Charge as additional rate income for 2001/2002.

The Non-Domestic Waste Management Charge for 2000/2001 amounted to $408 628.20 (as at 31 March 2001). If Council decides to take this up as additional rate revenue in 2001/2002, the effect will be an increase over and above the rate pegging figure of 2.8%. The Department has advised that Council will need to consider the impact on individual ratepayers if it decides to utilise these funds. The following table identifies the potential impact on ratepayers of the available options:

	Rating Yield without take-up of s.505 changes	**Rating Yield with take-up of s.505 changes**
Rating Income from 2000/2001 2000/2001 Business Waste Management Charges	$15,604,382	$15,604,382 $408,628
 2.8% Rate Pegging Increase	$15,604,382 $436,923	$16,013,010 $448,364
 Shortfall Catch-up	$16,041,305 $68,681	$16,461,374 $68,681
	$16,109,986	$16,530,055
Increase to ratepayers over 2000/2001	**3.24%**	**5.93%**

It should be noted that the anticipated rating yield indicated in the above table differs from the original 2000/2001 budgeted rate income. Variations occur throughout the budget year between the estimated rate revenue and the actual income received. Reasons for variations between estimated income and actual income received include:

- Previously non-rateable properties becoming rateable during the year.

- Properties being withheld from rating, pending revised valuation particulars from the Valuer Generals Office. This occurs when properties are subdivided and new valuation particulars are requested for the newly created lots. This usually results in an increase in the valuation base for the following year.

- Properties being rated for previous years upon receipt of new valuation particulars. There is a time delay associated with requesting new valuation particulars. This may result in some properties not being rated for a particular year until subsequent rating periods. This artificially inflates the rating revenue received for the year the rates are actually levied.

In Circular Number 01/29 issued on 9 April 2001, the Department provides advice to councils considering seeking Ministerial approval for a Special Variation to General Income. If Council proceeds with the proposals for a Special Rate in 2001/2002, then application will need to made seeking approval for a Special Variation to General Income.

The Department have advised that in assessing any special variation requests the following will apply:

Catch-Up (Section 511)

Those councils that receive Ministerial approval for a special variation for the 2001/2002 rating year should note that they cannot catch up any shortfall that may have been available at the end of the 200/2001 rating year (per Departmental advice). This factor will be incorporated in the special variation approval.

Amendment to Section 505

For the purpose of determining general income for 2001/2002 all waste charges including those levied under 501 are excluded from the calculations (see Council Circular 01/26). When assessing a Special Variation request, the Department will consider the effect of this change.

It is recommended that the information be received and that preparation for the 2001/2002 Estimates incorporate the rating yield available from the changes set out in the Local Government Amendment Act, relating to Non-Domestic Waste Management. Further, it is recommended that consideration be given to the impact of the Department of Local Government's advice in relation to the provisions of catch-up (Section 511) and Non-Domestic Waste (Section 505) as they relate to the assessment of special variation requests (special rate levies).

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The information be received and that preparation for the 2001/2002 Estimates incorporate the rating yield available from the changes set out in the Local Government Amendment Act, relating to Non-Domestic Waste Management.

2. Further, that consideration be given to the impact of the Department of Local Government's advice in relation to the provisions of catch-up (Section 511) and Non-Domestic Waste (Section 505) as they relate to the assessment of special variation requests.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 27 Oooo

ITEM: 28 **Mainstreet Special Rate**

FILE NUMBER: GT070/024 PT02 & GC155/001 PT03/CSV/OGD24NBX.C13

REPORT:

Background

In Council's 2000/2001 budget process Council resolved to allocate $80,000 to the Hawkesbury Chamber of Commerce as a contribution towards the maintenance of a Mainstreet Program. As part of this process Council resolved at the Ordinary meeting in April 2000 that:

> *"Council initiate investigations for the implementation of Special Rates for Tourism and Mainstreet funding for the 2001/2002 budget".*

Further to this process the Council adopted Principles and Criteria in relation to Economic Development Funding. These Principles and Criteria are provided as an attachment to this report. In relation to Mainstreet the principles outline that funding for economic development should be improvement funding with a finite initiative and that it would not be appropriate to fund promotion and/or marketing. In relation to the criteria, economic development funding should be for initiatives which benefit the whole of the City and are to be preferred to those which are more limited in scope. Exceptions to the criteria are possible in cases where specific groups, such as Mainstreet, are levied a special rate which would provide the funding for an initiative focussed on a particular group of enterprises.

At the November Councillors workshop the requirements of a Special Rate were set out and there was general agreement to progress the Mainstreet Special Rate. A Special Rate can be levied on any rateable land which, in the Council's opinion:

- benefits, or will benefit from the project in question;
- contributes to the need of the project; or
- has access to the project.

Guidelines published by the Department of Local Government state:

- Where Council proposes to participate in a project which has regional significance demonstrated through project participation by several councils and/or State / Commonwealth contributing funds towards the project or an outcome with a demonstrable economic benefit

- Where Council is seeking to fund a major enhancement to community services or facilities. This would include the need to address infrastructure maintenance or replacement, public health or environmental benefit or protection.

- Where Council is required to meet substantial increases in Government contributions or charges. (This would need to be over and above the increases experienced by other councils).

Rating information in relation to a proposed special rate was also put forward at this workshop which identified the range of average rates payable for 2000/2001 and are depicted in the following table.

Rate Description	Average Rate
Residential Rate - Residential Sub Category	$469
Residential Rate - Rural Residential Sub Category	$1,238
Residential Category - Overall	$613
Farmland Category - Overall	$1,266
Business Category - Overall	$1,029
All Categories - City average	$669

Current Situation/Public Meeting

A public meeting for the proposed Mainstreet Special Rate was held at the Windsor Function Centre on 28 March, 2001. There were approximately eighty people present from the possible 446 mail outs that occurred. Attendance was varied between property owners, shop keepers, Chamber representatives and the general public. The figure of participants represented 18% of those who received a notice which would be considered a good turn out for a public meeting.

The outcomes of the public meeting were positive as there was an exchange of information and an opportunity for concerns and questions to be raised. A proportion of the public meeting was opposed to the concept of a Special Rate on the owners of the properties as they put forward that the benefits would return to the shop keepers and, in certain circumstances, the owners would not be able to pass on the rate levied. There was also an alternative view held that the rate levied for Mainstreet would provide positive outcomes and this was largely supported by shop keepers and Chamber members present at the meeting. There was no absolute outcome from the meeting as a "formal" vote was not taken.

Corrospondence has been received from Hawkesbury City Chamber of Commerce indicating there continued support for the introduction of a Special Rate. Their correspondence stated their belief that the outcomes of the meeting were more positive than negative. The Chamber is prepared to support a dollar for dollar proposal to continue the Mainstreet Program in partnership with stakeholders (including Council) if this model is determined to be more favourable.

Correspondence and telephone calls have also been received from concerned owners opposed to the proposed Special Rate. In particular, the representative of Business and Development Sector on the Hawkesbury Economic Development Advisory Committee has advised that this sector is opposed to the proposed Mainstreet Levy.

In addition to the feedback, both positive and negative, during the meeting a number of participants raised questions and considerations that it was indicated would be reported back to Council. The following comments were noted and are provided for Council's information:

- the levy represents a 47% increase in the General Rate;
- will the owners of vacant premises have to pay the levy;
- large organisations such as Hanna Match will not benefit from the levy;
- the Chamber of Commerce should raise funds through its own membership for Mainstreet;
- Council should consider matching the funds raised from owners on a 50/50 basis;
- the issue of Windsor Mall should be looked at as a separate issue by Council; and
- should Council fund the old hospital site when issues such as Mainstreet need to be addressed.

Conclusion

The raising of a Special Rate for Mainstreet satisfies the requirement under the Local Government Act where a rateable property has access, contributes to and benefits from the project in question. It may be more difficult though, to convince the Department of Local Government that a Mainstreet Special Rate provides regional significance, is a major enhancement to community services or facilities or is required to meet substantial increases in government contributions or charges.

Having regard to this and other guidelines recently provided by the Department of Local Government in relation to rating provisions, it would be challenging to gain support for a levy equating to 47% of the current Business Rate. The levy would raise $250,000 and needs to be considered in regard to Council's current financial position. However, the Mainstreet proposal and program put foward by the Hawkesbury City Chamber of Commerce warrants consideration to ensure a vibrant sense of community through economic, social, physical and cultural revitalisation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 Principles and Criteria for the Allocation of Funding for Economic Development.

Allocation of Funding for Economic Development.

Principles

1. Economic development funding is provided by Council to organisations which are able to offer specific initiatives or services to enhance the local economy, consistent with Council's social, environmental and heritage vision for the City, and thereby improve the employment prospects of Hawkesbury City residents.

2. Economic development funding is allocated on an annual basis, unless Council enters into a contract for a longer period. Organisations seeking funding support for specific initiatives should take this into account in designing their initiatives.

3. Economic development funding, other than in cases where Council delegates an on-going service role to an external organisation, is understood to be "improvement" funding. That is, the funding is intended to support a specific, finite initiative which will, when complete, have a lasting beneficial impact on the performance of the local economy. For this reason, it is not deemed appropriate to extend funding for recurrent purposes such as promotion or marketing.

4. All funding, whether derived from general rates or from a special rate levied on commercial premises, is public money for which Council retains the responsibility of allocation according to published guidelines. Funds raised through a special rate will be used for the purposes for which that rate is levied.

5. All funding provided by Council will be contingent on satisfaction of appropriate acquittal procedures. Appropriate performance indicators will be established in each case to permit evaluation of the proper use of Council funds.

6. Funding provided for economic development shall not be granted or used for purposes which would properly be addressed through other areas of Council's budget, such as cultural or capital works expenditure.

Criteria

Proposals which satisfy one or more of the following criteria may be considered eligible for funding from within Council's allocation for economic development.

1. Initiatives which will contribute in a lasting way to:

   - local employment generation
   - development and growth of existing enterprises
   - "value adding" within existing enterprises
   - the development of improved practice and efficiency
   - the adoption of ecologically sustainable development principles

or the facilitation of the:

- relocation of enterprises from elsewhere to Hawkesbury City; or
- establishment of new enterprises in the City

consistent with Council's social, environmental and heritage vision for the City.

2. Proposals to operate a service on behalf of the Council and community for an extended period, subject to annual funding allocations. Such services would be integral to the economic well-being of Hawkesbury City and of a nature which would, in the absence of the proposal from the external organisation, be a service which might be directly provided by Council.

   An example of a service which may be eligible for funding in this way is the operation of the Visitor Information Centre.

3. As far as possible, proposals for initiatives and services to be undertaken by external organisations with Council funding should seek to maximise co-operation with other community organisations and avoid duplication of effort or overlap into existing projects.

4. Initiatives which offer benefits to the whole City or to a whole economic sector are to be preferred to those which are more limited in scope.

   Exceptions to this criterion would be possible in cases where a specific group or class of enterprises (e.g. businesses in a "mainstreet" locality) are levied a Special Rate which would provide the funding for an initiative focussed on that particular group or class of enterprises.

oooO END OF ITEM 28 Oooo

ITEM: 29 **Affordable Housing Demonstration Project Grant**

FILE NUMBER: GC170/002/CSV/OGD24NBX.C07

REPORT:

To respond to increasing community concern about homelessness and the provision of affordable housing Council staff, in conjunction with the members of the Hawkesbury Housing Forum, planned and staged a Community Forum.

"*The Housing and Homelessness in the Hawkesbury*" forum was held on 6 December 2000 and officially opened by the Mayor, Councillor (Dr) Rex Stubbs. The Forum was attended by over 80 participants and included speakers from the Department of Housing, the NSW Affordable Housing Service, Shelter NSW and representatives of a number of organisations who operate accommodation and community housing services.

The purpose of the forum was to explore options for providing affordable housing and crisis accommodation services within the Hawkesbury. The invited speakers provided information to participants on innovative and successful joint venture service models. Discussion groups were then held to enable participants to canvas possible approaches for addressing housing needs in the Hawkesbury.

The outcomes of the forum deliberations were referred to the Hawkesbury Housing Forum which subsequently met to develop priority recommendations for inclusion in the Hawkesbury Social Plan. Under the sponsorship of the *Hawkesbury Community Planning Strategy*, the Hawkesbury Housing Forum referred two recommendations for inclusion in the *Community Needs Report 2001/2002* which were subsequently endorsed by Council for inclusion in the 2001/2002 Management Plan.

The first of these recommendations requested that Council:

> "*investigate funding opportunities to support Affordable Housing projects in the Hawkesbury LGA.*"

To give effect to this recommendation, Council staff have met with members of the Hawkesbury Housing Forum to develop a proposal to apply for a seeding grant under the Affordable Housing Services Affordable Housing Demonstration Project Program. This Program provides seeding grants to fund feasibility assessments of affordable rental housing projects.

It is proposed that Council submit an application under this Program for $25,500 to employ a worker to undertake a feasibility assessment of a number of joint-venture options which would increase the stock of affordable rental housing in the Hawkesbury. An application for a seeding grant does not commit Council to fund or implement any projects which may be developed as a result of the feasibility assessment. It does however provide the opportunity for Council staff to work with private and public housing organisations to identify affordable housing options which are compatible with the Hawkesbury Local Government Area.

The agreement of Council to sponsor an Affordable Housing Demonstration Project Seeding Grant will enable Council to meet an endorsed target as outlined in the *Community Needs Report 2001/2002* (which Council has committed itself to implement in 2001/2002).

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The information be received.

2. Hawkesbury City Council sponsor an application for an 'Affordable Housing Demonstration Project Seeding Grant in conjunction with the Hawkesbury Housing Forum.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 29 Oooo

ITEM: 30 **National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) Concert Funding**

FILE NUMBER: GF008/001/CSV/OGD24NBX.C08

REPORT:

Hawkesbury City Council has received a letter from the Hawkesbury NAIDOC Day Planning Committee thanking Council for its support of NAIDOC Week celebrations held in 2000. The Committee has also made representations for funds from Council to support the staging of NAIDOC celebrations to be held on 8 July 2001.

The NAIDOC Committee reported that NAIDOC Week 2000 was a very positive and rewarding event. The NAIDOC Day activities were well attended by participants and spectators who talked '*in glowing terms of the concert and the wonderful celebration that the Hawkesbury had provided for this special week*'.

In their letter, the Hawkesbury NAIDOC Planning Committee also highlighted the importance of NAIDOC Week to indigenous people as it provides the opportunity for them to share their culture, history and lifestyles with other Australians.

The NAIDOC Day Planning Committee is seeking $2,656 (two thousand six hundred and fifty six dollars) to support the staging of a '*free public concert with information stalls, bush tucker food and children's activities'*. The funding is to be used to hire Richmond Oval for advertising, the hire of sound equipment and the purchase of materials for a program of Children’s activities.

In 2000, Council was successful in securing $94,000 (ninety-four thousand dollars) over three years from the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning for an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Community Access Project. Council has used these funds to employ an ATSI Community Access Worker. The DUAP grant also includes an annual amount of $7,000 (seven thousand dollars) to fund ATSI programs and initiatives - it is recommended that these funds be used to support the proposal submitted by the Hawkesbury NAIDOC Planning Committee.

The provision of funds for this purpose will enable Council to meet a recommendation received from the Hawkesbury Aboriginal Community Support Group as part of the *Hawkesbury Community Planning Strategy*. The recommendation for Council to support and resource NAIDOC Week Celebrations was reported in the *Community Needs Report 2001/2002* and subsequently endorsed by Council for inclusion in the 2001/2002 Management Plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The information be received

2. That Hawkesbury City Council allocate $2,656 (two thousand six hundred and fifty six dollars) as a contribution to the cost of staging NAIDOC Week Celebrations for 2001.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 30 Oooo

ITEM: 31 **Prohibiting Consumption of Alcohol in Public Places**

FILE NUMBER: GP070/001 PT6/CSV/OGD24NBX.C10

REPORT:

Concerns have been raised regarding the consumption of alcohol in public places including Thompson Square at Windsor and McLeod Park at South Windsor.

It is pointed out that there are two methods of prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in a public place, namely:

- declaring an alcohol-free zone;

- prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public places such as parks and reserves.

Section 644 of the Local Government Act, provides that Council may declare a zone consisting of one or more public roads or parts of public roads within the area, to be an alcohol-free zone. It is noted that the zone can only include roadways, footways and public carparks and does not therefore include parks and reserves or other public areas and public consultation is required prior to implementing a zone. At present, Council has established alcohol-free zones for the period 1 January 2001 to the 31 December 2003 in a number of road and footpath areas including The Terrace; Windsor Mall; the block having its boundaries East Market Street, Windsor Street, West Market Street and March Street, Richmond; and the road and footways surrounding South Windsor Shops and McLeod Park.

Signs must be erected in the area and police officers have the capacity to enforce the zone.

In relation to parks and reserves and other public areas, Council may in accordance with Section 632 of the Act, prohibit the consumption of alcohol on the site. Once again, a sign indicating that the activity is prohibited, must be placed on the subject area, however, public consultation is not required. The restriction can be enforced by an authorised Council officer.

It is noted that if it is the intention of the Council to prohibit the consumption of alcohol in the grassed area of Thompson Square, a notice in accordance with Section 632 could be erected on the site and an alcohol-free zone declared on the footpaths and roadways. However, an alcohol-free zone under Section 644 would prohibit the consumption of alcohol in the alfresco dining areas and tables and chairs placed on the footpath outside of Macquarie Arms Hotel.

In view of concerns about the consumption of alcohol in Thompson Square and McLeod Park, the requests to prohibit the consumption of alcohol under Section 632 of the Act be supported.

RECOMMENDATION:

That in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act, the consumption of alcohol in the grassed areas of Thompson Square, Windsor and in McLeod Park, George Street, South Windsor, be prohibited and public notification be given of this decision.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 31 Oooo

ITEM: 32 **Audit Committees**

FILE NUMBER: GF001/001 PT05/CSV/OGD24NBX.C12

PREVIOUS ITEM: 20, GPC Section 3 - Organisation & Resources (27.03.2001)

REPORT:

Council at the Ordinary meeting of 27 March, 2001 resolved to defer the matter relating to audit committees to this General Purpose Committee. The report provided in full below:

> *"At the Ordinary Meeting of Council dated 13 March 2001 a Best Practice Guideline for Audit Committees was tabled by Councillor Williams. As stated in the Audit Committee's Best Practice Guide, the role of the Audit Committee would be as follows:*
>
> > *"An Audit Committee is unique in that it provides a forum where Directors, Management and Auditors can deal together with issues relating to the management of risk and with financial reporting obligations. Although Auditors have a responsibility to report to stakeholders, their objective views can also be of value to the Directors who are elected to govern the entity on behalf of those stakeholders."*
>
> *The main objectives of an Audit Committee would be as follows:*
>
> - *Improving the credibility and objectivity of the accountability process.*
> - *Assisting the Board of Directors to discharge their responsibility.*
> - *Providing a formal forum for communication between the Board and Senior Financial Management.*
> - *Improving the efficiency of the Board of Directors.*
> - *Improving the effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions.*
> - *Facilitating the maintenance of the independence of the external Auditor.*
> - *Providing a structured reporting line for internal audit.*
> - *Improving the quality of internal reporting.*
> - *Strengthening the role and influence of non-executive Directors.*
>
> *The internal Audit Committee is a sub-committee of a Board of Directors (listed and unlisted companies) and is not necessarily relevant to local government as the primary purpose of a Board of Directors is a profit motive bearing in mind shareholders' interests. Within the Local Government Act, the corporate governance implications of Elected Members is outlined and is moreover satisfied by the Annual Report, Management Plan, Quarterly Reviews, General Purpose Financial Reports and monthly reporting through the current committee structure."*

Council's Auditor, Mr Carl Millington (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu), was requested to provide comments on the applicability of audit committees in local government. The following comments were provided:

"The original concept of audit committees came from the private sector as a result of increasing concern about management of earnings by public companies and high profile financial reporting failures. Recent reviews of the effectiveness of audit committees and corporate governance generally result from public concerns about corporate governance issues related to the board of directors and the audit committee.

The main difference as I see it between local government and the private sector are the underlying profit motive and preservation of distributable earnings, and the numerous corporate governance principles embedded in local government legislation and regulations.

The structure of the current legislation embodies many of the "voluntary" principles of modern day corporate governance. Chapter 13 of the Local Government Act, for example, is titled "How are Councils made Accountable for their Actions". The amount of community involvement and interaction with the Department of Local Government also differs from the private sector.

The current Local Government Act and reporting requirements, for example, are more prescriptive and extensive than requirements relating to the private sector. The auditor must conduct interim and final audits, and not only report on the disclosures in the financial statements but also provide comment on the conduct of the audit and the financial position of Council. No such provision exists in the private sector. Further, the auditor is also required to provide a copy of the various audit reports direct to the Department of Local Government, whereas in the private sector the report is provided to the company only.

Another example of the existence of corporate governance principles in current local government legislation is the requirement for Council to rectify any deficiencies in the system of internal control when required to by the Department of Local Government. The Local Government (Financial management) Regulation and other regulations are further evidence of the extent that the legal draftsmen went to when drawing up the Local Government Act etc."

Mr Brian Mitchell addressed the General Purpose Committee and discussions have been held with Mr Mitchell in regard to the need for a separate audit committee. The meetings with Mr Mitchell were to try and establish what charter or purpose such a committee would serve in adding to the accountability and transparency set out in the 1993 Local Government Act.

Mr Mitchell suggested that the scope of the external audit could be provided as an example of an audit issue that Councillors may be interested in. The external audit was tendered under the requirements of the Local Government Act in March 1998 and resulted in the appointment of Council's external auditor. The tender specification and instructions are provided as an attachment to this report.

Council currently has numerous "subject matter" committees where representative Councillors are nominated as delegates. In contrast the Finance Committee (Organisation & Resources) includes any matters of a finance or audit nature and meets monthly through the General Purpose Committee and involves all Councillors. Questions with or without notice and/or requests allow Councillors to raise any audit matters through this mechanism.

As indicated, Council's current external auditor is Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and from time to time matters relating to internal audit are outsourced so that independent and objective evaluation can be carried out and reported to Council. The last matter where this occurred was the old hospital site report where Council's auditor addressed the General Purpose Committee, November 2000. Other outsourcing, where objective or independent advice is required, occurs on an as necessary basis. Where conflict may arise between the role of the external auditor and any internal audit that is required, services can be, and are obtained from other professional firms. Outsourcing for independent and specialised expertise was used to assist staff to make recommendations for the shortlisting and financial comparison of information technology tenders.

Finally, a survey of other Western Sydney Councils has been undertaken to determine the extent and use of separate audit committees. Advice received from Fairfield, Penrith, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Liverpool and Baulkham Hills indicates that separate audit committees have not been established. Matters of a finance or audit nature proceed through the finance committee as part of each councils committee structure. Councils significantly larger than Hawkesbury, have in some cases created an internal audit function that reports through to the General Manager on specified organisational operations.

As reported to the Ordinary Meeting of March 2001 it was recommended that the information provided on audit committees be received and noted. The Local Government Act 1993 provides significant corporate governance implications for its elected members and satisfies transparency and accountability through annual reports, management plans, quarterly reviews, general purpose financial statements. In addition, opportunities exist for audit matters to be raised through the monthly finance committee (Organisation & Resources) under the current committee structure.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 Auditors scope from tenderers specification - March 1998 (2.0, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4)

2.0 TENDER SPECIFICATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

All tender documents **must** comply with the Services and Instructions set out hereunder.

2.1 SERVICES REQUIRED

Council is seeking a tender from suitably qualified persons or firms to carry out the following services -

- Audit of the general purpose and special purpose financial statements of the Council for each year.
- Audit of expenditure of government grants requiring a separate audit report.
- Audit of pensioner rebate applications.
- Audit of Workers' Compensation Insurance Declaration.
- Examination of the Financial Statements to be incorporated in the Annual Report.

The audit services shall include an attest audit coverage which can be defined as:-

"The minimum audit work necessary to enable an opinion to be expressed on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and compliance with any provisions of statutes, ordinances, Code of Accounting Practice or Accounting Standards related to the form and content of the Statements."

2.2 DUTIES OF THE AUDITOR

The auditor shall provide the auditing services in a professional manner with all reasonable skill and care.

The auditor has discretion as to the manner in which the auditing services are to be performed but shall have regard to:-

- auditing practice and standard statements issued from time to time by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants;
- the Local Government Act and Regulations thereunder;
- the Code of Accounting Practice issued by the Department of Local Government;
- any other relevant legislative provisions.

The auditor shall ensure that all relevant time deadlines are met to enable the audited financial statements to be available within the specified statutory time.

2.3 OUTCOME OF AUDITING SERVICES

The outcome of auditing services shall be generally in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, and will include, but not limited to:-

2.3.1 The provision of an audit opinion on the general purpose and special purpose financial reports of the Council;

2.3.2 The provision of a report to the Council and the Minister on the audit as required;

2.3.3 The provision of appropriate additional reports on the items detailed in paragraph 2.2;

2.3.4 The provision of a Management Letter detailing any matters arising during the course of the audit and not otherwise reported. This letter should include any suggestions for improvement in efficiency or economy of resources detected during the course of the audit.

2.3.5 The meeting of all agreed deadlines to ensure that reports are available within the statutory time required.

2.3.6 The auditor will, as required, present his reports to a full meeting of Council and address Council on the audit and financial position of the Council.

2.4 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Applicants must be qualified in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993.

Auditors must be able to demonstrate suitable experience covering at least three years in the audit of local government General Purpose Councils.

It is preferred that the tenderer will be able to draw from prior experience in auditing and involvement with Western Sydney local government issues and knowledge of financial applications, having regard to Council's current computer based environment.

oooO END OF ITEM 32 Oooo

ITEM: 33 **Establishment of a Book Depot - Wisemans Ferry Community Centre**

FILE NUMBER: GL020/051/CSV/OGD24NBX.C09

REPORT:

Hawkesbury City Council receives funds from the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) to operate the Forgotten Valley Mobile Resource Unit (FVMRU) located at the Wisemans Ferry Community Centre. Since 1998, Council Staff have been progressively reviewing the programs operated by FVMRU and where necessary developing initiatives to upgrade and improve the level of services provided to residents of Forgotten Valley.

As part of this service improvement process, FVMRU staff have recently reviewed the operation of the Unit's Community Library. The Library was established five years ago from books donated by residents. It currently comprises seven large bookshelves containing some 1,000 titles. A review of usage indicates that over the past eighteen months there have been only seventeen registered borrowings. In comparison, the St Albans Book Depot maintained by the Hawkesbury City Council Library Service (with a rotated book stock of 250 titles) recorded 247 borrowings over the same eighteen month period . The low usage of the Wisemans Ferry stock probably reflects the age of the existing book stock and the limited turnover of book titles - it also indicates that the existing facility is failing to meet the needs of residents.

FVMRU Staff have been canvassing options for improving the community library in conjunction with the Hawkesbury City Council Library Service. The following initial measures are proposed;

a. Hawkesbury City Council Library Service to establish a 'Book Depot' at Wisemans Ferry. Book Depots are designed for geographically and socially isolated communities and provide residents with access to popular titles which are regularly updated. The Library currently operates 'Book Depots' at Bilpin, Blaxlands Ridge, Bligh Park, Glossodia and St. Albans. Extending this service to Wisemans Ferry will enable the book depots at St. Albans and Wisemans Ferry to be serviced on the same day. FVMRU funds are available to meet the initial start up costs for the Book Depot service.

b If required, the Library will provide a special needs extension service to provide large print books to elderly residents. The Library's Special Needs Officer will be able to provide this service to any new (or existing) seniors social group at Wisemans Ferry.

c. Residents will be able to access FVMRU's Internet facility to browse the Library's on-line catalogue to locate book titles and other library resources.

d. Residents will be able to use FVMRU's fax/telephone service to lodge requests for library items which can then be delivered to Wisemans Ferry during the scheduled community transport bus run to Windsor.

e. The existing book stock will be donated to the Sunshine Club (a seniors day care group) and can be relocated to another part of the Community Centre or some other community space. This will create the space required to establish the Book Depot and provide Internet access.

When implemented, these initial measures will provide a baseline of library services which can be expanded in the future. Information services which are being considered for future development include the provision of public Internet access, the establishment of a study/resource booth for student research, and Internet and computer software training. The proposed services and facilities were identified by residents as priorities in the 1998 Library Services Survey conducted by Council as part of the Review of (the Hawkesbury City Council) Library Service.

These proposals will ensure that residents of the Forgotten Valley can be linked in with the NSW Public Library System through the Hawkesbury City Council Library Service. It will replace a under-utilised community library with 'aged' bookstock with a contemporary service which provides residents with access to current titles and the technology to better address their information and recreation needs.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Hawkesbury City Council endorse the proposal to upgrade library services for residents of Forgotten Valley though the establishment of a Book Depot (and associated measures) at the Wisemans Ferry Community Centre.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 33 Oooo

ITEM: 34 **Hawkesbury Seniors Week**

FILE NUMBER: GC100/004/CSV/OGD24NCX.C06

REPORT:

Seniors Week was held between 18 - 25 March 2001. To celebrate this event, Council Staff, in conjunction with the Seniors Advisory Committee and a number of local clubs, organised a series of activities. These included:

- a Seniors Concert, held at the Richmond Club;
- a Seniors Golf Day and barbeque; and
- an Open Day and Community Luncheon at the Hawkesbury Senior Citizens Centre.

These activities were well attended by seniors (over 250 seniors attended)

Hawkesbury City Council provided funds to transport residents to the Seniors Concert from designated pick-up points, local hostels and nursing homes. Council funded the golf day barbeque (including prizes), the community luncheon and also met the costs of advertising these events in local papers. A grant of $500 was received from the Ageing and Disability Department (ADD) as a contribution to the costs of staging these Seniors Week activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 34 Oooo

ITEM: 35 **Youth Week 2001**

FILE NUMBER: GG012/079/CSV/OGD24NCX.C05

REPORT:

Youth Week is an annual, national event celebrating the contribution of young people. In 2001, it was held between April 1 - 7.

Planning for Youth Week began in October 2000 with the formation of the Youth Week Planning Group (made up of young people and youth workers). The Planning Group successfully coordinated a series of youth week events and activities including:

- The re-launch of the Youth Transport Service - the launch was attended by the Mayor and included a prize draw and refreshments (over 50 young people registered with the service during the evening);

- Graffiti Art Demonstrations proved to be a popular activity that occurred at a number of venues throughout Youth Week (this activity was organised by the Youth Streetbeat Project);

- PCYC (Police Citizens Youth Club) Mobile Activity Centre operated at a number of venues during Youth Week (providing young people with access to video/arcade games);

- A Youth Week Art Competition was organised by the Hawkesbury City Council Library Service - 50 entries were received from high schools in the Hawkesbury and were displayed in the Library;

- An Internet Radio Program was organised by Hawkesbury Skills Inc with Youth Week activities to be displayed on this website;

- 'Streetgames' were organised by three youth centres and a local church - 60 young people attended with various prizes awarded to participants;

- A number of youth centres also staged pool competitions and trivia nights.

Hawkesbury City Council provided the funds to facilitate the staging of these events and activities as well as the promotion of the activities in local newspapers. A grant of $1,500 was received from the Department of Education, Employment & Training as a contribution to the costs of Youth Week activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 35 Oooo