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ITEM: 1 **Monthly Financial Report - November 2000**

FILE NUMBER: GF011/005/FNC/OGA30NAX.F13

REPORT:

November 2000

Summarised below, are particulars of both the income received and the expenditure incurred by Council for the month of November 2000. This information is reconciled between the cashbook and the bank statement balance as at the end of November 2000. All expenditure is fully supported by vouchers and invoices which have been duly certified.

A. Cash Book Reconciliation - November 2000

Cash Book Balance as at 1 November 2000		$46,462.79
Add: Receipts for month of November		$7,780,016.03
		$7,826,478.82
Less: Payments for month of November		
Cheque # 71631 - 72187	$1,779,355.42	
EFT # 15792 - 16244	$2,016,587.96	
Family Day Care Payments	$44,930.81	
RTGS (Investment) Transactions	$3,750,000.00	
Cancelled Cheques	($30.26)	
Miscellaneous (Bank Charges, Dishonours etc)	$13,440.17	$7,604,284.10
Cash Book Balance as at end of November 2000		$222,194.72

B. Statement of Bank Balances - November 2000

Bank Statement Balance as at end of November2000		$419,528.48
Less: Unpresented Cheques		($558,024.06)
		($138,495.58)
Add: Outstanding Deposits	$644,572.21	
Statement Credits not Receipted	($283,881.91)	$360,690.30
		$222,194.72

C. Investments - November 2000

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 November 2000. 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	$27,994,025.84			$132,887.16	$28,126,913.00
On Call Funds	$4,150,000.00	$1,750,000	($2,650,000)		$3,250,000.00
Term Investments	$1,950,000.00	$2,000,000			$3,950,000.00
TOTAL	$34,094,025.84	$3,750,000	($2,650,000)	$132,887.16	$35,326,913.00

Geoff Banting
Responsible Accounting Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 1 Oooo

ITEM: 2 **Monthly Financial Report - December 2000**

FILE NUMBER: GF011/005/FNC/OGA30NAX.F12

REPORT:

December 2000

Summarised below, are particulars of both the income received and the expenditure incurred by Council for the month of December 2000. This information is reconciled between the cashbook and the bank statement balance as at the end of December 2000. All expenditure is fully supported by vouchers and invoices which have been duly certified.

A. Cash Book Reconciliation - December 2000

Cash Book Balance as at 1 December 2000		$222,194.72
Add: Receipts for month of December		$4,134,870.81
		$4,357,065.53
Less: Payments for month of December		
Cheque # 72188 - 72597	$3,045,528.30	
EFT # 16245 - 16553	$2,246,564.87	
Family Day Care Payments	$46,817.43	
RTGS (Investment) Transactions	$1,080,000.00	
Cancelled Cheques	($2,012.60)	
Miscellaneous (Bank Charges, Dishonours etc)	$22,375.53	$6,439,273.53
Cash Book Balance as at end of December 2000		($2,082,208.00)

B. Statement of Bank Balances - December 2000

Bank Statement Balance as at end of December2000		$340,112.91
Less: Unpresented Cheques		($498,648.01)
		($158,535.10)
Add: Outstanding Deposits	$30,934.03	
Statement Credits not Receipted	($1,954,606.93)	($1,923,672.90)
		($2,082,208.00)

C. Investments - December 2000

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 December 2000. 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	$28,126,913.00			$152,676.39	$28,279,589.39
On Call Funds	$3,250,000.00	$1,080,000.00	($1,550,000.00)		$2,780,000.00
Term Investments	$3,950,000.00		($1,000,000.00)		$2,950,000.00
TOTAL	$35,326,913.00	$1,080,000.00	($2,550,000.00)	$152,676.39	$34,009,589.39

Geoff Banting
Responsible Accounting Officer

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 2 Oooo

ITEM: 3 **Local Government Amendment Bill 2000**

FILE NUMBER: GC070/005 PT19/GMA/OGA30NCX.G01

REPORT:

The Local Government Amendment Bill 2000 has passed through both houses of Parliament. Some minor amendments were made in the Legislative Council. It is expected that the Bill will receive the Governor's assent early this year.

The Bill contains four schedules dealing with:

1. Elections
2. Pecuniary interest matters
3. Miscellaneous amendments
4. Amendments to other legislation

Schedule one aligns the procedures for the grouping of candidates at local government elections and those applicable to Legislative Council elections and to apply recent changes to the procedure for the registration of parties under the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act 1912.

Schedule two requires Councillors who have a pecuniary interest in a matter to disclose not only the interest but the nature of the interest and leave a meeting when the matter is being considered by council, and to clarify the operation of the provisions relating to complaints concerning non disclosure of interests and the conduct of the proceedings before the Local Government Pecuniary Interest Tribunal.

Schedule three provides for the Director General of the Department to prepare guidelines that must be taken into consideration by councils when exercising their functions and to make further provision regarding the classification and management of community land. Further, it extends the operation of tendering requirements and requires councils to pay expenses to Councillors and provide facilities to Councillors in accordance with a policy that conforms with regulations made under the Act and to require that any substantial amendments to such a policy must be publicly notified and adopted in open Council Meetings.

Schedule four makes consequential amendments to the Defamation Act 1974 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000.

The Government made a commitment that the more significant changes to election procedures, including changes to group voting and party registration at local government elections, would not have effect on any elections to be conducted prior to the next state-wide ordinary council elections in September 2003. The Bill therefore sets out the commencement date of various provisions between 2002 and 2003 in order to give effect to this commitment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 3 Oooo

ITEM: 4 **Hawkesbury National Fiddle Festival**

FILE NUMBER: GR030/003 PT2, PK/202/CSV/OGA30NBX.C05

REPORT:

A submission requesting support has been received from the organisers of the Second Hawkesbury National Fiddle Festival to be held from 6 - 8 April 2001. This event is unique in Australia, and received wide publicity in its first year.

The festival is a three-day event and as such provides opportunities for local businesses to provide food, beverages, accommodation, and other services. A variety of venues are used, including Richmond School of Arts and Richmond Club, as well as the Royal Hotel, other Richmond hotels and St Monica's Church, Richmond, where a Fiddle Mass is to be held on Sunday 8 April.

All local cafes and restaurants are mentioned in the festival program, regardless of whether they sponsor the event or not. Buskers will perform around the town.

Ticket prices are affordable at $40 - $50 for a three-day pass. A free concert is to be held in Richmond Park on the Sunday afternoon of the festival.

There will not be any sale of food or alcohol or participation in any parallel trading so as not to disadvantage existing shopkeepers.

A particularly strong feature of the festival is its focus on skills development, with world-class professional entertainers providing workshops to local musicians, including children.

The Fiddle Festival is a suitable event for sponsorship on the following grounds:

- As a three-day event, it provides opportunities for local traders to do business;
- Provides an affordable, quality cultural experience not normally available to Hawkesbury residents;
- Promotes skills development among local musicians of all ages;
- Attracts wide publicity; and
- May attract matching funding from Western Sydney Arts Incentive Scheme should it proceed in 2002.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. Sponsorship of the Mass Fiddle Rally in the Park, in the amount of $4,000 (four thousand dollars), be provided. This amount is available from existing funds within the current cultural budget.

2. Permission be given to the Richmond Main Street Committee to undertake the activities of the National Fiddle Festival in Richmond Park and footpaths within Richmond, subject to the following conditions:

   a. No undue interference to other patrons of the park.
   b. Pedestrian access along footpaths and the pathway within the park must be maintained at all times.
   c. The applicant to obtain approval from the owners of other proposed venues for activities related to the event.
   d. The applicant submitting to Council a public liability policy for $10,000,000 (ten million dollars) with the interest of Hawkesbury City Council noted on the policy.
   e. The reserve being left clean and tidy with the applicant being responsible for collection and disposal of all waste. The applicant is required to pay a refundable bond of $750.00 (seven hundred and fifty dollars) less any cost incurred by Council to clean or restore the area.
   f. No amplified noise above 5dB(A) above ambient level.
   g. As Richmond Oval is under the care and control of Hawkesbury Sports Council, the applicant is to contact them with regard to its use.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 4 Oooo

ITEM: 5 **Richmond Club - Main Street Proposal (CDSE Scheme)**

FILE NUMBER: GT070/024//OGA30NBX.C03

PREVIOUS ITEM: 328, Ordinary (12.12.2000)

REPORT:

At its Ordinary Meeting held on 12 December 2000, Council resolved to establish a Community Development and Support Expenditure Scheme Local Committee (CDSELC) in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department of Gaming & Racing. The primary objective of the CDSELC is:

> *"to identify priority projects and services within a local government area and to prepare a list for local CDSE qualifying registered clubs".*

Representatives from the Richmond Club made a presentation to the August GPC meeting in relation to a proposal to improve the street scape of Richmond using funds to be made available under the CDSE Scheme.

Council subsequently resolved to congratulate the Club on the initiative and requested a further report outlining mechanisms in achieving a successful outcome. Accordingly, meetings have been held with representatives of the Club to discuss measures to achieve a successful outcome. Basically, the proposal is for the Club to provide approximately $60,000.00 per annum through the Community Development and Support Expenditure (CDSE) scheme to assist in improving the street scape including shop frontages in the main street areas of Richmond. The Club acknowledges that a healthy, vibrant town centre is of benefit to the community as a whole, as well as to the Club and its members.

The Club's proposal is that funding be provided by the Club, Council and if the property is in private ownership, from the property owners and/or tenants who will directly benefit from the scheme.

Projects could be selected for the program on the basis of the street scape study that Council has prepared for Richmond and recommendations from the Heritage Committee. This arrangement would be similar to the way which the restoration of Thompson Square took place, with owners of property providing funding on a three for one basis, and the result of the project being the establishment of a popular and commercially viable precinct.

The Club has requested the commitment of Council to the program at this stage and it is suggested that the proposal be supported in principle and that the proposal be referred to CDSE Local Committee (which is currently being established) for consideration as a recommended priority project for inclusion in the list of projects to be forwarded to CDSE qualifying registered clubs for possible funding under the CDSE Scheme. It is also proposed that consideration being given to providing matching funding, ie, $60,000 in the 2001/2002 estimates. It being noted that Council has already allocated significant funding in the current year for main street projects including

$88,000 to the Hawkesbury City Chamber of Commerce. Also, funds have been allocated for improvements to Richmond Park including upgrading playground equipment, installing irrigation systems, fencing, tree planting and new street furniture. Additionally, drainage upgrades are proposed for the main street areas and there is a regular program of street cleaning and waste removal.

The Club has indicated that it would like the Council to administer the scheme with funds to be provided to Council on a monthly basis. It is noted that under the CDSE scheme, it is anticipated that the Richmond Club would be providing in the range of $120,000 to $130,000 per annum and the $60,000 proposed for this scheme is from that allocation. It is considered that the scheme will provide opportunities for improving the street scape within the Richmond town centre area and provides an opportunity to implement some of the recommendations already developed by the Richmond Main Street Committee and Heritage Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The Richmond Club be advised that Council supports, in principle, the Richmond Street Scape Improvement Project and that the Project will be referred to the Community Development Support Expenditure Scheme Local Committee for consideration as a priority project to be included in the recommended list of projects to be funded under the CDSE Scheme.

2. Consideration be given to allocating matching funding for the program in the 2001/2002 Estimates.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 5 Oooo

ITEM: 6 **Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy - FloodSafe Communication Program**

FILE NUMBER: GR060/062/CSV/OGA30NBX.C08

REPORT:

In 1997, the NSW State Government responded to the risk of flooding in the valley by forming the community based Hawkesbury-Nepean Flood Management Advisory Committee to undertake investigations and make recommendations to the Government regarding management of the flood risks. The Committee presented its report entitled "Achieving a Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy" in November 1997. The State Government agreed to fund the implementation of the strategy, costing $58.3 million over a five-year period commencing in July 1998.

The lead agency in the implementation of the strategy, as a whole, is the Department of Land and Water Conservation. The strategy consists of a number of key components, one of which is a comprehensive public flood awareness program for which the State Emergency Service (SES), as the lead agency, and together with the six local councils are responsible for implementing.

The strategy recognised that it is essential to educate the community to enable it to make informed choices about living, working and investing in the floodplain by alerting them to the implications of the hazard and the risks inherent in living in a floodplain. A public education program is essential if effective flood evacuation and response to flooding is to be achieved. Part of the project is the creation of a program identity for this public awareness or flood information program. The program identity of 'FloodSafe' has been adopted and a logo developed.

The FloodSafe Public Communication Program has been designed to meet the flood awareness outcomes specified in the NSW Government Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy. The program will focus on increasing the public's knowledge about flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean area and enabling flood-affected communities to be prepared for safe evacuation in the event of an extreme flood.

In developing the FloodSafe program, quantitative and qualitative research has been carried out with the community and volunteers, as well as literature reviews. Extensive consultations and presentations have also been made to a range of individuals and organisations, including local councils, government departments and emergency personnel at a national and international level. The FloodSafe Public Communication Program is a comprehensive plan for public communications to be carried out before, during and after a serious flood in the Hawkesbury-Nepean.

The program includes an implementation plan, with timelines and detailed briefs for each output. It aims to increase appropriate knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of flood-affected individuals, households, neighbourhoods, organisations and businesses, to minimise loss of life, loss of well-being and amenity, and property damage in the event of flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley.

A Hawkesbury City Council staff member is represented on the FloodSafe Public Communication Coordination Group which coordinates the Public Communication Program.

Hawkesbury City Council has had a major role in many of the projects associated with the Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain Management Strategy as it is one of the largest affected geographical areas. In regard to the dissemination of information, Council staff will be working with the SES Communications Manager and Community Education Officer to produce materials which will feature both the FloodSafe and Council logo.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The project name FloodSafe be accepted.

2. The implementation of the program be accepted in principle.

3. The use of Council logo on FloodSafe material be approved at the discrepancy of the Manager of Policy & Corporate Communications.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 6 Oooo

ITEM: 7 **Kurrajong Tourist Booklet**

FILE NUMBER: GC130/032/CSV/OGA30NBX.C04

REPORT:

A request has been received from the Kurrajong Business and Community Forum for support for a booklet promoting Kurrajong as a tourist destination. It is estimated that the booklet would cost in the order of $6,440 for 1000 copies, made up as follows:

- $250 for film, developing and printing costs (a local photographer is providing his services free of charge).
- $1,000 for professional desktop publishing/editing of photographs and text
- $5,190 for artwork and printing as quoted by Moorcroft Printing of North Richmond.

It is understood that the Hawkesbury Gazette is also to be approached for assistance, with both Council and the Gazette being asked to contribute $3,000 in cash and/or an in-kind donation in the form of artwork and printing.

The booklet would be retailed at $7 to $8 per copy, with proceeds going towards improvements to Kurrajong Village such as a community notice board, large plant pots in the street, or hanging flower baskets.

Previous initiatives of this organisation include the distribution of 15,000 Kurrajong/Kurmond Tourist Guides, 1,500 postcards and 300 T-shirts.

RECOMMENDATION:

That this request be referred to Tourism Hawkesbury for support of this venture and Kurrajong Business and Community Forum be advised accordingly.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 7 Oooo

ITEM: 8 **Rotary Club of Richmond - Request for Reimbursement**

FILE NUMBER: M29/01/CSV/OGA30NBX.C07

REPORT:

The Rotary Club of Richmond lodged a Development Application on 10 January 2001 for the erection of a Collection Booth and Shelter at Gate Four at the Hawkesbury Showground to improve services on behalf of the Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association. A request for reimbursement of the financial outlay associated with the application has been received.

The building of the structure will improve the operations of entry to large events at the Showground from two lanes of entry to four. The purpose is to increase the traffic passing through the entry points and reduce traffic congestion on the main roads leading into the Showground. Safety concerns have increased the need for improved entry service.

The structure itself is expected to be valued at between $23,000 and $28,000 once built, however, is only expected to cost up to $5,000 of Rotary fundraising money due to the promised supply of construction materials like metal, bricks and colorbond by local firms, businesses and other Hawkesbury organisations. Labour for building the structure will also be donated by members and other tradesmen in the local area.

RECOMMENDATION:

That a donation of $497.00 (four hundred and ninety seven dollars) be made to the Rotary Club of Richmond to reimburse funds for the Development Application lodged to erect a Collection Booth and Shelter at Gate Four at the Hawkesbury Showground with funds to be provided from the donations budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 8 Oooo

ITEM: 9 **Donation of Healthy Heart Awards Funds to Hawkesbury Food Program**

FILE NUMBER: GP070/026, GP070/024/CSV/OGA30NBX.C06

REPORT:

Council has recently won the State Award, and subsequently the Federal Award, in the category of Best Nutritional Project for a submission regarding the Hawkesbury Food Program in the Local Government Healthy Heart Awards 2000 sponsored by the Heart Foundation and Kellogg's.

The submission, put together by a member of Hawkesbury District Health Service Community Health Team with assistance from some student volunteers, was submitted on behalf of the Hawkesbury Healthy Cities Project Team.

The Hawkesbury Food Program aims to improve the health and well being of the community by improving access to, and consumption of, safe, nutritious and affordable food. The program uses a multi-strategy approach to food and nutrition, incorporating a 'settings based approach' and by strengthening local sustainable agriculture throughout the Hawkesbury local government area.

Hawkesbury City was identified as needing a food program to address a number of issues:

- rising incidence of diet-related diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke and some cancers;
- a population spread over a large geographic area, with associated transport problems which impact on access to shops;
- pockets of people with low socio-economic status - Hawkesbury has the highest proportion of people living in rented property and more than twice the number living in caravans or improvised housing as compared to the rest of Wentworth Area Health Service; and
- having historically been a primary supplier of food, there is increasing pressure to develop agricultural lands.

The Hawkesbury Food Program is a collaborative project between Hawkesbury District Health Service; Hawkesbury City Council; Centre for Research in Healthy Futures - University of Western Sydney Hawkesbury; NSW Agriculture; Hawkesbury Skills Inc.; Earthcare (a subsidiary of Henry Doubleday); Hawkesbury Care Inc.; and Hawkesbury Interagency. A part-time funded project officer position exists for coordination of strategies and administration purposes. The majority of work is carried out by representatives from the above organisations in addition to members of the community.

The prestigious award, including a plaque and a cheque for $2000.00, was presented at the National General Assembly of Local Government held in Canberra at the end of last year.

It is proposed that the funds received for the award would be best served if they were donated to the Program to further support the distribution and promotion of fresh food available in the Hawkesbury.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the $2000.00 (two thousand dollars) received from the Healthy Heart Awards 2000 for the Hawkesbury Food Program be donated to the Hawkesbury Food.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 9 Oooo

ITEM: 10 **Request for Donation - Student Exchange Through Sister City Association**

FILE NUMBER: GP092/004/CSV/OGA30NBX.C09

PREVIOUS ITEM: 75, GPC Section 3 - Organisation & Resources (02.05.2000)

REPORT:

Council at its meeting held on 9 May 2000 resolved:

> "to *support the Sister City Association arrangement by providing each of the six students selected with $500.00 (five hundred dollars) each to supplement costs associated with their trip to the Hawkesbury's Sister City in Japan. The total amount being $3000.00 (three thousand dollars.)"*

In December 2000, six students departed for Temple City in the USA also as part of the Sister City exchange visit program. The six students were: Debbie-Lee Byers, Kimberley Commerford, Kaylie Pritchitt, Lauren Smelcher, Julia Thornton and Merinda Wilson.

Due to the timing of the departure, the Hawkesbury Sister City Association has provided each student with $500.00 (five hundred dollars) and now request reimbursement.

Council has previously supported the student exchange program to Tamba in Japan as a way of promoting the relationship between the Hawkesbury and its Sister City. In addition, Council also provides $17,500 annually for the Hawkesbury Sister City Association to fund its activities.

This donation for the exchange visit of students to Temple City would be in addition to the annual $3,000.00 (three thousand dollars) given to the students going to Tamba, Japan, for this financial year.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. Hawkesbury Sister City Association be reimbursed for the donation of $500.00 (five hundred dollars) to each of the 6 (six) students for their December trip to Temple City, USA. The total amount being $3,000.00 (three thousand dollars).

2. In addition, support of $3000.00 (three thousand) be provided to students travelling to Tamba, Japan in this financial year, as per the previous arrangement for the exchange program.

3. A review be undertaken regarding the total amount given each financial year for student exchanges to both Hawkesbury Sister Cities of Tamba, Japan and Temple City, USA.

ATTACHMENTS:

There are no supporting documents for this report.

oooO END OF ITEM 10 Oooo

ITEM: 11 **Review of Forgotten Valley Community Transport Program**

FILE NUMBER: GC200/004/CSV/OGA30NBX.C02

PREVIOUS ITEM: 290, Ordinary (10.10.2000)

REPORT:

At its Ordinary Meeting on 10 October 2000, Council resolved to release *The Draft Review of the Forgotten Valley Community Transport Program* for public comment. The Community Transport Program is one of a number of Programs provided by the Forgotten Valley Mobile Resource Unit (FVMRU).

The *Draft Review* was prepared to identify a strategy to address the current funding shortfall being experienced by the Community Transport Program. The $17,000 (seventeen thousand) in funding provided by the Department of Transport is not sufficient to meet the costs of operating the Program. Since 1994/95, the Program has generated substantial operating losses and has been reliant upon the diversion of funds from the Department of Community Services (DoCS) funded programs operated by the FVMRU - the Unit currently receives $223,000 (two hundred and twenty three thousand) in DoCS funding. Council has received correspondence from DoCS advising that the continued use of DoCS funds to support the provision of the Community Transport Program:-

> "*is a misappropriation of funds and places the continued DoCS funding and all other DoCS funded services through this auspice* [Hawkesbury City Council] *in jeopardy*"

Following Council's decision to release the *Draft Review*, Council staff facilitated a public meeting held at Wiseman's Ferry on 25 October 2000. At the public meeting, a strong view was expressed by a number of residents that the recommendations outlined in the *Draft Review* were unacceptable and that the Program should be retained in its current form. This position was based on the view that the Community Transport Program needs to continue to operate as a fully-funded stand alone service (despite the fact that the funding provided by the Department of Transport is intended to supplement existing transport services not to operate a stand alone service). Those residents who expressed this view were of the opinion that Council should seek additional funding to make up the current shortfall in funds provided by the NSW Department of Transport that would be needed to continue to operate the Program as a stand alone service.

In response to this request, Council staff have contacted the Department of Transport and the Ageing and Disability Department which have indicated that no additional funding will be made available for the Program (given that funding is already provided to other services to provide community transport services to residents of Forgotten Valley).

Council staff have also written to Baulkham Hills, Gosford and Hornsby Councils to request their consideration of a proposal to fund the shortfall. To date, responses have been received from Hornsby and Gosford Councils indicating that they are not in a position to provide recurrent funding to support the community transport program as:

> "*such a service is not the responsibility of local government, but rather a State Government responsibility*".

Baulkham Hills Council has requested additional information to "*determine whether a contribution is appropriate*". Council staff are awaiting further advice from Baulkham Hills Council in relation to this matter.

In preparing the *Draft Review*, Council staff were conscious that the changes advocated by the document would create a degree of community concern. Unfortunately, the operation of the community transport program has had a long history of controversy and conflict. The issues facing the program are complex and long-standing, and were first identified in the Operational Review undertaken by DoCS in 1994 which culminated in Council agreeing to assume interim responsibility for the operation of the Unit. The *Draft Review* represents the first comprehensive plan of action to resolve the long standing issues that were first raised in the 1994 DoCS review.

The Final Report , outlines 27 recommendations which, if implemented, will enable the Program to continue to operate without a diminution in existing levels of service provision. This will be achieved by the negotiation of formal client agreements with the 4 (four) funded community transport services which operate in the local government areas that converge on Wiseman's Ferry (ie the Hawkesbury, Gosford, Baulkham Hills and Hornsby - Ku-ring-ai Community Transport Services). These services are currently funded to meet the community transport needs of the residents of Forgotten Valley. A commitment has been received from these services to participate in a coordinated approach to enable residents to access a larger pool of community transport funding so that they can be provided with a comprehensive and fully funded range of community transport services (a position which they do not currently enjoy).

In this respect, the financial difficulties faced by the Program are not necessarily about a need for additional funding but rather the better utilisation of the funding which is already provided to meet the community transport needs of residents of the Forgotten Valley.

To this end, the Final Report recommends the proposed transfer of management responsibility for the Community Transport Program from FVMRU to the Hawkesbury Community Transport Service (HCTS) - both of which are currently auspiced by Council and managed by Council staff. This recommendation was made in view of the inability of the Program to operate as a stand-alone service. The level of funding received by the Program does not allow for the employment of the worker hours required to effectively operate the program. The transfer of management to HCTS will provide residents of Forgotten Valley with access to full time community transport staff and to the expertise of a large and efficient community transport organisation. In response to issues raised at the public forum, Hawkesbury Community Transport will establish a Community Advisory Committee to ensure the views of users of the service are considered in decisions regarding the operation of the Transport Program.

The recommendations proposed in the Final Report provide for:

- continued provision of uninterrupted door to door transport services for eligible residents;
- access to full-time staff to effectively manage the day to day operation of the Program;
- the retention of a pool of three vehicles to be garaged at Wiseman's Ferry;

- the retention of a local staff presence at Wiseman's Ferry;
- the negotiation of arrangements with other providers to expand the provision of a comprehensive and fully funded range of community transport services;
- a financially viable operating budget;
- provision for local consumer representation on a Community Advisory Committee.

Current Situation

Council staff have implemented a number of cost-saving measures to reduce the operating losses currently being sustained by the Program. Despite these measures, financial statements for the six month period ending 30 December 2000 indicate that the Community Transport Program generated an operating loss (before depreciation) of $10,106 (ten thousand one hundred and six). Its unfunded vehicle replacement liability as at 30 December 2000 amounted to $38,169 (thirty eight thousand one hundred and sixty nine). Department of Transport guidelines recommend the replacement of vehicles every five years - as such, the Programs minibus will require replacement in the next financial year.

Projections indicate that the Program (as it is currently structured) will not be in a position to operate beyond the end of February 2001 without access to additional funding. The additional funding is required to cover the cost of operating the program for the remainder of the 2000/2001 year - pending the receipt of the first funding instalment for the 2001/2002 financial year (subject to continued funding by the Department of Transport).

In previous years, the deficits sustained by the Program have been met by diverted DoCS funding. The Department has indicated this its funds can no longer be used for this purpose and has indicated that the use of its funds to support the Community Transport Program would place the continued funding of all other Council auspiced DoCS funded services in jeopardy. Council currently receives $923,000 (nine hundred and twenty three thousand) from DoCS to support a range of Council auspiced services.

As it currently stands, the Forgotten Valley Community Transport Program is insolvent. There are insufficient funds set aside to meet its long-term asset replacement needs and the program does not have access to the cash flow required to meet its day-to-day operating expenses beyond the end of February 2001. Consequently, Council staff will not be in a position to continue the operation of the Program beyond this date without breaching Council's funding with the Department of Community Services (and place the continued funding of Council auspiced DOCS funded services in jeopardy).

Options

In view of the advice received from DoCS, and the difficulties in securing additional funding to maintain the Program in its current form, the options available to Council to maintain existing levels of service provision beyond the end of February 2001 include:

1. Hawkesbury City Council to allocate funds to cover the projected operating shortfall for the remainder of the 2000/2001 financial year - a minimum of $20,211 (twenty thousand two hundred and eleven) would be required. This may bind Council to an open-ended financial commitment to directly subsidise the provision of services funded by the NSW Government.

2. Hawkesbury City Council to transfer the auspice of the Program to another agency. It is unlikely that, in view of the financial position of the Program, another agency will agree to take on responsibility for operating the Program.

3. Hawkesbury City Council to invite residents of the Forgotten Valley to re-establish an Incorporated Body to assume responsibility for the management of the transport program. This option was presented to the public meeting held on 25 October 2000 and was understandably, in view of the financial difficulties faced by the program, dismissed.

4. Hawkesbury City Council to relinquish its auspice of the Program to the Department of Transport. This will enable the DoT to prepare a fresh tender to seek an alternate provider which may be in a position to operate a service within the funding level allocated.

5. Hawkesbury City Council to endorse the recommendations of the <u>Final Report</u> for implementation.

In the absence of a viable alternative strategy, the recommendations outlined in the <u>Final Report</u> represent an option available to Council staff to maintain a fully funded range of community transport services to residents of the Forgotten Valley beyond the end of February 2001.

RECOMMENDATION:

That:

1. The Final Report: Review of the Forgotten Valley Community Transport Program be received.

2. The 27 recommendations outlined in the Final Report be endorsed for implementation.

ATTACHMENTS:

AT-1 *Final Report: Review of the Forgotten Valley Community Transport Program* (separate document previously distributed).

oooO END OF ITEM 11 Oooo