

SARINA SHIRE COUNCIL
COMMONWEALTH INQUIRY
INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT & COST SHIFTING

Introduction

Sarina Shire Council appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments in relation to the current inquiry by the Commonwealth Government into the incidence of cost shifting from State Government to Council.

It is acknowledged that, as there is a number of changes to roles and responsibilities for all forms of government in serving the general community, there needs to be a shift in some service delivery areas to best meet these changing community needs and expectations.

Councils however seem to have acquired substantial liabilities and responsibilities from both State and Federal Governments over the past 10 years without adequate financial compensation/consideration.

This submission by Council will attempt to identify cost imposts on its financial capabilities to meet these responsibilities.

Summary

In an effort to simplify this submission, the issues identified by Council as being non-traditional Council functions have been extracted from its current Corporate & Operational Plans and are shown on the following table:

Programme 1 – Cultural, Recreation & Community Facilities		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Boat Ramps	Council required to provide carparking facilities, lighting, refuse disposal equipment and the like.	\$10,500
Sporting Fields - including Swimming Pool	Council required to provide land and staff support, ground maintenance.	\$25,000

Programme 2 – Community Health & Welfare		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Black Spot Television Project	Council required to facilitate upgrade of television services with some Federal Government Assistance.	\$8,000
Immunisation Programme	Council conducts clinic for Shire residents.	\$3,500
Counter Disaster Operations	Council supports and coordinates SES, Counter Disaster and Risk Management functions with limited government funding.	\$91,730
Welfare Housing	Council facilitates and administers low cost housing for Shire residents with State Government Funding support.	\$1,000
Youth Services	Council contributes funding for wages of a Rural Youth Worker and Trainee and also financially supports the operation and maintenance of a Youth Centre, skate park and 1/2 basketball court in Sarina.	\$20,500
Representation on Various Committees	Council provides representation on various Health & Welfare Committees in the region including Mackay Regional Council for Social Development and the Sarina Rural Medical Workforce Group and Shire Community Development Committee (in the absence of a Community Development Officer).	\$16,000

Programme 3 – Transport & Drainage Infrastructure		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Bus Set Down Areas/Shelters	Council required to provide bus shelters/set down areas for school children.	\$15,000
Railway Crossings	Council to provide safety equipment at various railway crossings as well as to provide infrastructure, road realignments as a result of QR operations.	\$10,000
Quality Assurance	Council required to comply with QA systems and provide staff support for implementation and ongoing operation.	\$23,500

Programme 4 – Economic Development & Planning		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Integrated Planning Act	Council required to review its Planning Scheme to comply with IPA	\$180,000
Planning Groups	Council required to be represented on various Planning Committees (WHAM 2015, WHaMB ROC)	\$13,500
Coastal Management	Council required to administer beach esplanade areas on behalf of the State Government.	\$7,500
Integrated Catchment Management	Council to provide staff, elected Member support to ICM Committee as well as DNR&M through the Regional Strategy Group.	\$8,000
Social Infrastructure Study	Council required to undertake Social Infrastructure Study of Shire for the Mackay Regional Planning Study.	\$5,000
Economic Development Officer	Council employs an Economic Development Officer to address economic and Industrial development issues in the Shire.	\$70,000
Tourism	Council supports both Mackay and Sarina Tourism bodies as well as prepare and implement a Tourism Strategy for the Shire.	\$15,000

Programme 5 – Corporate Governance & Performance		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Audit/AAS27 Accounting Requirements including Funded Depreciation	Council required to comply with new regulations with added staff support and computer upgrades, particularly software.	\$32,000
Asset Management Systems	Council required to compile and administer systems to comply with State Government legislation.	\$8,000
Human Resources/Industrial Relations Issues	Council required to negotiate Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and establish various committees to support the Agreement.	\$15,000
Workplace Health & Safety Act	Council required to comply with the Act and provide necessary staff support.	\$52,000
Rural Numbering System	Council required to implement Rural Numbering System with no government support and little benefit for Council.	\$80,000
Corporate, Operational Plans & Annual Reports	Council required to formulate documents under Local Government Act.	\$5,000
Native Title Issues	Council required to consult with local groups to comply with Native Title when considering projects in the Shire.	\$3,000

Programme 6 – Water Supply		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Water Act 2000	Council to comply with various requirements of the Act including purchase of water and possible loss of revenue through water allocations being separate to property valuations for rating purposes.	\$25,000
Total Management Plans	Council required to prepare and implement Total Management Plans for water supply systems.	\$5,000

Programme 7 – Environmental & waste Management Services		
Activity		Estimated Annual Cost (Net)
Environmental Protection Act	Council required to comply with legislation and various Environment Protection Policies including preparation of Integrated Environmental Management System for Council.	\$5,000
Effluent Disposal	Council required to ensure that disposal of treated sewage effluent is land based by 2008 to comply with Act.	\$50,000
Refuse Disposal	Council required to ensure that its refuse tips comply with Act.	\$50,000
Pest Management	Council required to prepare Pest Management Plans and administer relevant State Government legislation.	\$2,500
TOTAL		\$856,230

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the information provided within this submission that the devolution of responsibilities for various areas of service delivery from State Governments to Councils is considerable.

Clearly, the community has driven some of these changes, however adequate financial compensation to Councils as a result of these changes has not been received.

In compiling this submission, difficulties have been encountered in assigning accurate cost estimates to certain devolved activities, however the amounts used are considered to be sufficient for the current purposes.

Please feel free to contact the writer should you require any further assistance or clarification in relation to this submission.



Neil Ischenko
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