



- 7 NOV 2002

Wheatbelt Area Consultative Committee (ACC) Inc.

The Hon. Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services,
Territories and Local Government
GPO Box B58
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Minister

Please accept this letter as a submission into the Local Government Cost Shifting inquiry.

It is clear that the increasing demands on Local Government have not been met by a proportionate increase in funding.

We would like to acknowledge that there is a great value in the review to determine relationships between Local Government and the services it provides.

The board believes the review will assist with regional funding needs and meet local and other regional needs without State involvement or, it will develop a more productive partnership between the three tiers of Government.

The board has consulted with Local Government in the Wheatbelt and would like to put forward the following issues for inclusion in the inquiry:

1) The major issue with regard to Local Government cost shifting in the region is the provision of medical and health related services. The Board and Local Government believe it is not Local Governments role to source and pay for doctors. Larger communities, and those closer to the coast are not required to supply houses, cars, medical centres and top up payments. They have a moral obligation to their constituents to get involved. Local Government simply does not have the funds to afford doctors.

House of representatives Standing Committee on
Economics, Finance and Public Administration

Submission No: 319

Date Received: 13/11/02

Secretary:



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND REGIONAL SERVICES

"This project is supported by funding from the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services through the Regional Assistance Programme"

2) Due to an inadequacy from the State Government, Local Government in the Wheatbelt is also paying for aged care facilities in towns. Although some State funding has been sourced, without Local Government's willingness to provide these services in towns, it is very unlikely that the State Government would have provided these facilities.

3) Another area of cost shifting is the pensioner rebate system. Originally quite a simple system to administer, however due to an election promise by the Gallop Government, the system has become a nightmare for small Councils to administer, many of these located in the Wheatbelt. If Local Government is fortunate enough to be equipped with a full time rates officer, it is not a problem, however in small councils where a staff member covers many jobs, this becomes very difficult.

4) The FESA levy which is to be issued on all rate notices is another example of the State Government getting the local authorities to do their work. This will also create more work for already stretched small councils. If Councils were compensated for the agency work they do for the State Government, then the system would be much easier to manage as more staff could be employed - benefiting communities throughout regional WA.

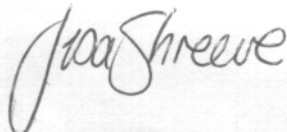
Councils are certainly best suited to managing their communities needs however, they need the resources to do so.

There are many other examples we could provide where Local Government has been asked to fund services ranging from Water Supplies to Youth Centres. Licensing is another example where Local Government is paying for the privilege of collecting tax for the State.

The Wheatbelt ACC looks forward to reading the results of the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

PP



Kerry Oliver
Chairperson
Wheatbelt ACC Inc
31 October 2002