



**WAGGAMBA SHIRE COUNCIL**

*We Serve the Community*

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23 September, 2002

The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Economics,  
Finance & Public Administration  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
**CANBERRA ACT 2600**

House of representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration	
Submission No:.....	284
Date Received:.....	26/9/02
Secretary:.....	

Dear Sir

**Re: Inquiry into Cost Shifting onto Local Government**

Prepared by Waggamba Shire Council

Waggamba Shire Council discussed the Federal Minister, Wilson Tuckey's inquiry into cost shifting and the invitation to provide feedback at their General Meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2002. Prior to this meeting Council did provide survey data to the Local Government Association of Queensland to assist with their initial submission.

The following information is a summary of Council's response to issues within the scope of the inquiry they wished to submit for consideration.

Waggamba Shire Council's Corporate Plan is probably the closest snapshot to a summary of this Shire's roles and responsibilities. There is no doubt that areas within our Corporate Plan overlap responsibilities that once would have been perceived as State responsibility.

...2.

1. Some points relevant to our Council's Corporate Plan:-

- (a) This Council does at times support through either funding or other resources, areas such as education, law and order, and health that arguably are not directly Council's role. The basis for the decision to, for example, air-condition schools, assisting with school bus transport, school swimming lesson costs or funding towards crime prevention programs is the knowledge that it would either never happen or take forever to be approved or accepted through the relevant department. Therefore Councils attitude has been "let's make it happen by doing it with Council funds". This was supported at public meetings before the adoption of Council's Corporate Plan but is recognised as a considerable drain on our finance and administration resources.
- (b) Council tends to support Committee run organisations such as Blue Care nursing or Kaloma (a rest home for the elderly). Council may assist with funding or with membership on the Committee, but prefers not to be responsible for the day to day management and running of the projects and programs.
- (c) Levee bank management although not mandatory was an area Council wished to maintain control of but it has come at a high cost with the State Government not wanting any responsibility or giving any assistance. One appeal alone this year cost Council \$60,000.
- (d) An area Council does want to retain some control and management over which is evolving and possibly under State jurisdiction currently is Natural Resource Management.
- (e) Stock Routes and Reserves Management, although I understand has always been a responsibility of Councils in Queensland under the Rural Lands Protection Act costs this Council approximately \$450,000 per annum to manage. All revenue from depasturage and travelling stock fees raised goes to the State Government. Most drovers who use the stock route network do not come from within the Shire, indeed they are mainly interstate. Therefore ratepayers paying for the management of our stock route network are usually not the direct beneficiary. This needs to be addressed.

2. Some concerns with taking on further roles (and associated extra funding) that small rural shires in particular would struggle with are: -

- (a) The professional expertise required e.g. having registered nurses reporting to Management, which has no background in nursing.
- (b) The workload/demand on elected members. It is often difficult to attract nominations in small shires for a Councillor position. Most tend to be property owners or business people with very limited time. Often remuneration is not the issue but time. Council believes extra roles will increase the workloads of elected members attending meetings, functions etc and reduce at election time the number of nominations. It is very common for Councillors to travel 100 to 200 kilometres just to get to the Council Chambers. Extra portfolios are not sustainable for many current high calibre elected members at the rural Local Government level.

- (c) To take on health, education, National Parks or whatever, would be an enormous task and potentially lead to such questions as amalgamation, regional authorities etc as many of these roles cannot be administered in isolation. I believe this is something most rural Councils do not want.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Stewart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Stewart

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**