

**SHIRE OF COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS  
SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S EXTERNAL  
TERRITORIES**

The Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands is currently engaged in negotiations with the Department of Territories and Regional Services about the Shire taking over many assets and services currently provide by the Commonwealth. There is a belief by the Council that the Shire could deliver many of those services in a more cost effective manner and with considerably more local input as the only directly elected body permanently on island. A number of those services are the subject of your inquiry, and the Shire would welcome the opportunity to discuss its proposals at length with the committee. The services include but are not restricted to:

The cyclone shelter (club) on West Island, utilities management, airport, harbour control, Admiralty House (untenanted), Golf Club (Donga), stevedoring and earthmoving equipment, cranes and trucks, and the running of the light industrial area. Vehicle and boat licensing has already been agreed to. Resolution of the Shire's depot needs and staff housing on West Island would need to be included in the mix, but the depot issue might be resolved if the Shire took over the current Water Corps depot and office. This space would also accommodate the licensing office. The utilities management is one area that the Shire is very keen to take on in partnership with an identified experienced operator on islands and small communities. Some discussions have already been held with this organisation with a view to making a bid for those services when the current Water Corps contract expires, or before if possible. The Minister has also urged the Shire to consider health and education services in the Territory, and may be included subject to Council's endorsement at its September 2002 meeting. The above list of services would see items of plant and some buildings come under Shire control, and again it is seen as a way of reducing duplication and delivering savings to the Commonwealth.

The Shire is also discussing joint land management plans with the department with a view to identifying the best areas for development and ensuring that Commonwealth and Shire land is used in an optimum way. An environmental study of potential development areas is also proposed to provide a guide to developers and reduce delays that have been experienced in recent times with what have proved to be unnecessary reports and studies. The significance of certain areas and the need for reporting should be able to be identified for such a small Territory providing that the proposed land use is seen to be of a low impact with no real potential to pollute.

Please reserve a time to speak to the Council during your visit to the Territory.

Bob Jarvis  
Chief Executive Officer

Ron Grant  
Shire President

