

# **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

**TO THE REPORT BY THE SENATE RURAL  
AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS AND  
TRANSPORT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE**

**THE ALBURY-WODONGA DEVELOPMENT  
AMENDMENT BILL 1999**

**OCTOBER 2000**

## **Recommendation 1**

The Committee recommends that the *Albury-Wodonga Development Amendment Bill 1999* be passed.

## **Response**

The *Albury-Wodonga Development Amendment Bill 1999* was passed by the Senate on 6 April 2000 and the *Albury-Wodonga Development Amendment Act 2000* received Royal Assent on 3 May 2000.

## **Recommendation 2**

The Committee, recognising the inequity that has existed since establishment of the AWDC(NSW), AWDC (Victoria) and Commonwealth AWDC by the ex-gratia payment of rates to local government authorities in Victoria, but no similar treatment for the Albury City Council and Hume Shire Council in New South Wales, recommends

- (a) that the responsible NSW Minister consider ex-gratia payments equivalent to rates on AWDC(NSW) Land since 1992;
- (b) that, once the Commonwealth's amending legislation commences and the land assets pass to the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth address this inequitable treatment of local government authorities by instituting ex-gratia payments equivalent to rates for Corporation land in both NSW and Victoria.

## **Response**

The Government notes the recommendation.

(a) The Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald wrote to the NSW Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Harry Woods MP, on 1 May 2000 advising him of the Committee's recommendations.

Mr Woods responded on 25 August 2000 agreeing to the payment of rates to the Albury City and Hume Shire Councils at the same level as the payment to the Wodonga Council, but he did not support retrospective payments.

(b) The Government is currently considering its position on the payment of rates when the landholdings of the Albury-Wodonga (Victoria) Corporation and the Albury-Wodonga (New South Wales) Corporation are transferred.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Committee notes the AWDC held assets of \$138.4 million as at 30 June 1999, the sale of which will continue over the next 10 years. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the Commonwealth consider the reinvestment of interest repayments by AWDC to the Commonwealth into infrastructure projects in Albury-Wodonga.

### **Response**

The Government notes the recommendation.

Funds from Commonwealth consolidated revenue were originally used to purchase the land for development of the Albury-Wodonga area. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the revenue from the sale of this land is returned to consolidated revenue and not hypothecated to another purpose.