



# COOMA-MONARO SHIRE COUNCIL

81 COMMISSIONER STREET COOMA  
PO BOX 714 COOMA NSW 2630

TEL: (02) 6450 1777  
FAX: (02) 6450 1799

OFFICE HOURS: Monday - Friday 8.35AM - 5.00PM

All correspondence to be addressed to the General Manager

ABN 40 548 783 283

Enquiries: Mr Neil Watt (NW:BH)  
Our Ref: GO/COO/1  
Your Ref:

26 July 2002

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

House of representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration	
Submission No:.....	132
Date Received: .....	26/7/02
Secretary: .....	<i>Burdell</i>

Dear Secretary

## INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COST SHIFTING

I have attached a submission for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Economies, Finance and Public Administration.

The submission has been provided in a format suggested by the Australian Local Government Association and is a summary of the situation currently occurring with Council and many other councils in New South Wales.

Council and I wish you and the Committee a successful Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

NEIL WATT  
GENERAL MANAGER



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## INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT & COST SHIFTING

<b>COUNCIL</b> Cooma-Monaro Shire Council	<b>POPULATION</b> 9 200
<b>SIZE</b> 4 881 sq km	<b>BUDGET</b> \$ 15 764 648

### ★ HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL

Cooma-Monaro is the result of an amalgamation of Cooma Municipal Council and Monaro Shire in 1981.

### ★ REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCIL'S MEMBERSHIP

Up to the year 2000, Council was a member of the South East Regional Organisation of Councils with Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Bombala and Snowy River Shire Councils. This organisation was disbanded due to the lack of common issues involving the five councils

Cooma-Monaro has concentrated on developing resource-sharing arrangements with Bombala and Snowy River Shire Councils. These arrangements include:

- Monaro Regional Library and Information Service
- Recycling Collection
- Planning advice/assistance
- Animal control
- Monaro Noxious Weeds Coordinating Committee
- State of Environment Reporting
- Economic Development
- Tourism Promotion
- Bushfire Management
- Waste Services
- Health Link Project
- HACC Transport Service
- Stormwater Management Support Services

**★ CONTRACT WORKS COUNCIL HAS UNDERTAKEN FOR ANY STATE, FEDERAL OR OTHER AGENCY DURING 2001/2002 AND ITS VALUE**

The following works/projects Council has undertaken include:

- State Highway 19 and Main Road 394 Maintenance works for the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority to the value of \$ 22 000.
- Health Link Project for the Federal Government valued at \$ 40 000.
- Landcare projects for the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation, valued at \$ 41 500.
- Employment of the Community Liaison Officer for the NSW Department of Corrective Services, valued at \$ 60 000
- Employment of a Meals-on-Wheels Coordinator for the NSW Department of Community Services valued at \$ 22 000.
- Provision of a Youth Centre for the NSW Department of Community Services, valued at \$ 10 000 per year
- Providing water sampling for the NSW Department of Health to the value of \$ 2 500.
- Providing pension rebates for rates as required by the NSW Department of Local Government, valued at \$ 297 000.
- Providing Home Living Support services for the NSW Department of Community Services valued at \$ 22 000
- Providing Community Care assistance to residents for the Federal Government valued at \$ 50 000.
- Providing Woodsmoke program for the NSW Environmental Protection Authority valued at \$ 70 000
- Manage the Grasslands Project for the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation valued at \$ 12 000.
- Control noxious weeds on crown land for the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation valued at \$ 5 000

**★ OUTLINE ANY ACTIVITY COUNCIL HAS UNDERTAKEN WHICH WOULD NOT NORMALLY BE PART OF COUNCIL ACTIVITIES OR TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY FEDERAL OR STATE GOVERNMENT DURING 2001/2002 AND ITS VALUE**

- Health Link Project	\$ 40 000
- Landcare Projects	\$ 41 500
- Employment of Community Liaison Officer	\$ 60 000
- Home Living Support Services	\$ 22 000
- Community Care Assistance	\$ 50 000
- Woodsmoke Program	\$ 70 000
- Grasslands Project	\$ 12 000

**★ DOES COUNCIL BELIEVE THAT THE DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS HAS PLACED ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BURDENS ON COUNCIL?**

The additional services provided by local government as a result of new or amended legislation has placed financial burdens on council. Many of these new services relate to environmental or community issues.

**★ OUTLINE WHAT SERVICES HAVE BEEN DEVOLVED AND APPROXIMATE ANNUAL COST AND INCOME**

<u>Service</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Income</u>
- Animal Control under new NSW Companion Animal Act including NSW Register	71 000	21 000
- Production of Social Plan under 2002 Guidelines	10 000	-
- Development of Protocols relating to Indigenous Peoples Affairs	1 000	-
- Implementing new Australian and New Zealand Food Standards	5 000	1 000
- Implementing new Sewerage Management Legislation	8 500	-
- Implementing new Pesticides Act	5 000	-
- Implementing Essential Fire Services Legislation	5 000	-
- Complying with Pollution of the Environment Operations Legislation	5 000	-
- Complying with State of Environment Reporting Legislation	16 500	-
- Meeting new Environmental Protection Authority waste requirements including the establishment of Rural Transfer Stations	142 500	-

**★ OUTLINE COSTS INCURRED BY COUNCIL IN MEETING FEDERAL AND STATE COMPLIANCE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

- Complying with new Australian Building Code (additional requirements)	\$ 5 000
- Complying with NSW Principal Certifying Authorities legislation	\$ 10 000
- Meeting requirements of NSW Water Catchment Blueprints	Unknown Cost
- Meeting requirements of NSW Threatened Species Act, Native Vegetation Act, Water Conservation Act, Commonwealth Biodiversity Act, NSW State Environmental Planning Policies and NSW Planning Regional Plans	Unknown Cost
- Complying with NSW Occupational Health & Safety Legislation	\$ 60 000

**★ HAS COUNCIL HAD TO EMPLOY ADDITIONAL STAFF TO PROVIDE DEVOLVED SERVICES OR MEET ADDITIONAL COMPLIANCE/ ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

Additional Staff have been employed to implement the new Occupational Health and Safety legislation and also to implement new Environmental legislation. Although only two extra staff have been employed, this does not reflect the real situation. Most of the additional responsibilities loaded on councils are either not being implemented or are being implemented at the detriment of traditional local government services due to the shortage of funds.

**★ OUTLINE ANY COUNCIL SERVICES THAT COULD BE BETTER PROVIDED BY ANOTHER SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

The control of noxious weeds could be provided by the State as most weed concentrations cover a number of council areas. Problems arise with different council control policies and ability to fund control programs. Also the Rural Fire Service should be completely transferred to the State rather than having part control by local government and part control by the State.

**★ OUTLINE ANY SERVICES CURRENTLY PROVIDED BY OTHER SPHERES OF GOVERNMENT THAT COULD BE BETTER PROVIDED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Many community services could be provided by local government if suitable funding was provided. Also many of the land conservation issues could be managed by local government if appropriate funding was available. The Financial Assistance Grants could be distributed to local government direct using the current formulae but bypassing State Governments.

**★ CONCLUSION**

The gradual transfer of services from the NSW State Government and the increase in new legislation imposed on local government has generated significant concern amongst local government organisations. The NSW Government has introduced so much new legislation over the past five years, that some Sections of Acts conflict, which make them impossible to implement. It appears that the Government is now attempting to introduce an Integrated Act to overcome this problem. Most people in Local Government believe that it is the level of government that can most efficiently provide these additional services, if there was guaranteed long term funding available to local government.