

COMMONWEALTH COST SHIFTING INQUIRY **SUBMISSION**

FROM: THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CEDUNA

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BACKGROUND:

The District Council of Ceduna is the western most District Council of South Australia, one of the most remote and isolated Councils.

Ceduna is the major centre to a large and diverse business and industry sector on the Far West Coast of Eyre Peninsula. It is the established focal point of a wide range of services. The Eyre Highway or National Highway One passes directly through Ceduna with approximately 236,000 tourists passing through the town annually (Nicholas Clarke & Associates, May 1996).

Ceduna has a population of 3,614 people as at the latest ABS Census. A high proportion of this number of people live in Ceduna/ Thevenard with the towns of Koonibba, Smoky Bay, Denial Bay and Nunjirkompita having smaller populations within the Council's boundary.

Ceduna has the highest percentage of Aboriginal people of all local government areas in South Australia, with the population currently standing at 24% of the population. This is one of the highest percentages in Australia and perhaps for a locality that includes a medium sized town (Nicholas Clarke & Associates May 1996). A number of Aboriginal communities in adjacent unincorporated areas rely on the available services in Ceduna and therefore, use the town as a base for a variety of reasons. These outlying communities should be considered a part of the Ceduna community.

Ceduna has been described as having one of the most complex multi-cultural communities in the country (Nicholas Clarke & Associates May 1996) with many other nationalities also prominent in the town and immediate region

The town of Ceduna is located on the Far West Coast of South Australia, on the scenic shores of Murat Bay on the Great Australian Bight, approximately 800kms from Adelaide and 1900 road kms to Perth. The word Ceduna is believed to have come from the Aboriginal word Cheedoona that means "a place to rest".

The District Council of Murat Bay was proclaimed on 20th June 1925 with Mr CA Tonkin as the first Chairperson. On 11th July 1979 the Council introduced the Mayoralty, with Mr JC Bergmann being the first Mayor.

The longest serving Mayor was Mayor M Puckridge, from 2nd May 1987 to 30th June 1998. Mr PS Morrison is the longest serving Chairperson from the 10th July 1946 to 7th July 1959. Mr G Pfitzner is the longest serving Chief Executive Officer (or Town Clerk), serving from 14th May 1970 to 22nd December 1980.

In 1987 Council abolished the ward system and currently has elected membership of a Mayor & eight Councillors representing the whole district.

The District Council of Ceduna shares its boundaries with the District Council of Streaky Bay (to the south and east) and the Outback Areas Community Development Trust Area (Out of Districts) to the (west and north).

Ceduna is the base for a large contingent of Government organisations in particular, Aboriginal organisations. The town is the headquarters for Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council, Maralinga Tjarutjta Inc and the Yalata Community Administrative Services.

Agriculture is one of the main economic drivers of the region with the main focus being sheep, high protein hard wheat, barley and other cereals. Production is carried out in arid and semi- arid conditions with dry land farming techniques being successfully applied. The product output varies from year to year, as it is totally seasonally dependent.

The emergence of the aquaculture industry in recent years on Eyre Peninsula has provided huge economic benefits to this region. The Council area is widely recognised as a prime region for aquaculture development because of the sheltered bays, good water quality and water flow. The surrounding pristine waters offer huge potential for industry expansion. It is expected that there will be a further diversification of the aquaculture industry into other species such as: fin fish, abalone, tuna and scallops in the coming years.

The oyster industry has been established for 10 years in Denial Bay and Smoky Bay with industry not being able to keep up with the domestic market demand. Ceduna and Smoky Bay produce half of the State's oyster product.

The two largest mining commodities being exported through the Port of Thevenard is salt and gypsum. The region has the largest deposit of gypsum in the Southern Hemisphere with 1.2million tonnes being exported per annum. An average yield of 100,000 tonnes of salt per year is exported through the Port of Thevenard to the Eastern States of Australia and overseas.

Over the past few years there has been increased interest in the untapped mining potential of the nearby Gawler Craton. During 1994 aeromagnetic surveys were carried out over the northern part of the Gawler Craton on upper Eyre Peninsula. The survey revealed a large magnetic anomaly situated in Yumbarra Conservation Park to the north of Ceduna. From the initial research it is thought that the site has many similar characteristics and has been compared to Roxby Downs. In November 1999 a landmark decision was made with the Upper House of State Parliament supporting the re-proclamation of a portion of Yumbarra Conservation Park to allow the exploration and mining in the area of the magnetic anomaly. The initial stages of exploration are already underway with the aeromagnetic surveys being completed recently. The initial results have indeed been impressive.

Some 236,000 tourists pass through the Ceduna each year with the majority only making a brief stop in the town. There is significant potential to expand this industry through the increase in tourism ventures and the active promotion of the natural resources in the region. Many unique attractions surround Ceduna and these include: Davenport Creek, the offshore islands- St Peters Island, St Francis Island and the Nuyts Archipelago, Smoky Bay, Denial Bay- oyster farming and the rich fishing

grounds. In recent years the development at the Head of the Bight by the Yalata community for whale watching- (Southern Right Whales) provides one of the best viewing areas in the world. An increasing number of tourists' use Ceduna as the major base for visiting the whales and this is continuing to develop especially with bus tours. The sealing of the runway 11-29 at the Ceduna Airport allows for better access to the town by bigger planes.

Ceduna is dependent on the sustainability, further diversification and growth of these existing industries. The Council actively encourages the development and investment of new industries and business to the town and region. This will provide a range of opportunities for the community and this in turn can only assist in the prevention of the population drift away from the town and region.

A number of significant infrastructure projects have successfully reached fruition over recent years with more in the concept phase. These projects will only enhance further development in Ceduna and help shape the future of the town.

A brief demographic profile of the Council area is:

<u>D.C. of Ceduna</u>		<u>Out of Districts</u>
Population:	3559	738
Under Age 15:	25.2%	23.6%
Over Age 65:	9.3%	6.5%
Aboriginal Descent:	22.4%	34.4%
Size (Area):	5431sq Kms or 543,120 Ha	
Roads:	1712kms	
Elected Members	Mayor And Eight (8) Councillors	
Staff	35	

Financial Information (Actuals Year Ending 30 June 2001)

Operating Revenue:	\$4,156,185
Operating Expenses:	\$4,187,792
Capital Revenue:	\$ 245,805
Capital Expenditure	\$1,865,647

Financial Information (Budget Year Ending 30 June 2002)

Operating Revenue:	\$3,897,658
Operating Expenditure:	\$4,775,949
Capital Revenue:	\$ 810,063
Capital Expenditure:	\$3,057,205

Actuals to be finalised in audit for 2001/ 2002

Financial Information (Budget Year Ending 30 June 2003)

Operating Revenue:	\$5,388,617
Operating Expenditure	\$4,413,173
Capital Revenue:	\$ 204,100
Capital Expenditure	\$1,788,695

ADDRESSING THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference No. 1 Local Government's Current Roles & Responsibilities

In 2002/ 2003 the Council functions included in the budget are:

Administration (Governance)

Public Order & Safety comprising:

- Dog Control
- Fire Protection (prevention & suppression of fires)
- Crime Prevention

Health

- Health Inspections
- Other Health (mosquito control, vaccinations, public health)

Social Security & Welfare Services

- Aged & Disabled Services (Senior Citizens, Home & Community Care)
- Other Social Security & Welfare (Youth Services, Aboriginal Liaison & Services)

Housing & Community Amenities

- Council Owned Property
- Town Camp (Aboriginal Accommodation)
- Other Community Development (Economic Development, Land Development)
- Sanitation & Garbage (Garbage Control & Collection)
- Sewerage (Septic Tank Effluent Drainage Schemes)
- Urban Stormwater Drainage
- Other Community Amenities (Cemeteries, Community Self Help TV – SBS, Public Toilets, Street Lighting, Water Schemes)

Environmental Protection

Recreation & Culture

- School Community Library
- Other Cultural Services (Local Arts support)
- Sport & Recreation (Swimming Pool, Town Halls, Parks & Gardens, Playgrounds, Jetties & Pontoons)

Agricultural Services (Rural Counsellor Services)

Mining/ Manufacturing & Construction

- Development Act Management

Transport & Communication

- Road Construction & Maintenance
- Footpaths Construction & Maintenance
- Aerodrome Operations
- Other Transport (Boat Ramps, Marinas etc)

Economic Affairs

- Tourism (Visitor Information etc)
- Festivals
- Events

Other Purposes Not Easily Classified

- Pest Plants & Animal Control
- Vandalism
- Local Organisation Support (Sports Clubs etc)
- Machinery Operating
- Private Works

- Special Projects (Indigenous etc)
- Depot cost
- Capital Expenses

The Local Government Act of SA (1999) states the role, function & objectives of the Council is a such:

Section 6 Principal role of a Council

A council is, under the system of local government established by this Act, established to provide for the government and management of its area at the local level and, in particular-

- (a) to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision-maker in the interests of its community; and
- (b) to provide and co-ordinate various public services and facilities and to develop its community and resources in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner; and
- (c) to encourage and develop initiatives within its community for improving the quality of life of the community; and
- (d) to represent the interests of its community to the wider community; and
- (e) to exercise, perform and discharge the powers, functions and duties of local government under this and other Acts in relation to the area for which it is constituted.

Section 7 Functions of a Council

The functions of a council include-

- (a) to plan at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of its area;
- (b) to provide services and facilities that benefit its area, its ratepayers and residents, and visitors to its area (including general public services or facilities (including electricity, gas and water services, and waste collection, control or disposal services or facilities), health, welfare or community services or facilities, and cultural or recreational services or facilities);
- (c) to provide for the welfare, well-being and interests of individuals and groups within its community;
- (d) to take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards;
- (e) to manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in an ecologically sustainable manner, and to improve amenity;

- (f) to provide infrastructure for its community and for development within its area;
- (g) to promote its area and to provide an attractive climate and locations for the development of business, commerce, industry and tourism;
- (h) to establish or support organisations or programs that benefit people in its area or local government generally;
- (i) to manage and, if appropriate, develop, public areas vested in, or occupied by, the council;
- (j) to manage, improve and develop resources available to the council;
- (k) to undertake other functions and activities conferred by or under an Act.

Section 8 Objectives of a Council

A council must, in the performance of its roles and functions-

- (a) provide open, responsive and accountable government;
- (b) be responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individuals and groups within its community;
- (c) participate with other councils, and with State and national governments, in setting public policy and achieving regional, State and national objectives;
- (d) give due weight, in all its plans, policies and activities, to regional, State and national objectives and strategies concerning the economic, social, physical and environmental development and management of the community;
- (e) seek to co-ordinate with State and national government in the planning and delivery of services in which those governments have an interest;
- (f) seek to facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment and to ensure a proper balance within its community between economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations;
- (g) manage its operations and affairs in a manner that emphasises the importance of service to the community;
- (h) seek to ensure that council resources are used fairly, effectively and efficiently;
- (i) seek to provide services, facilities and programs that are adequate and appropriate and seek to ensure equitable access to its services, facilities and programs.

Terms of Reference No. 2. Current Funding Arrangements for Local Government, including allocation of funding from other levels of government and utilisation of alternative funding sources by local government

The District Council of Ceduna's estimated funding for 2002/ 2003 is made up of the following:

Administration:

Grants Commission (Financial Assistance Grant)	\$ 1,232,912
State Government (Solar Eclipse Event Grant for Infrastructure assistance)	\$ 114,000
Interest on Investments	\$ 20,800
Sundry Income	\$ 57,900
Rates	\$ 1,684,832

Public Order & Safety:

Statutory Charges	\$ 10,050
User Charges	\$ 1,100
Reimbursements	\$ 1,510

Health

Operating Grant (State Govt.)	\$ 3,000
Statutory Charges	\$ 3,000

Social Security & Welfare Services

Youth Services	
Operating Grants & Subsidies (Local Support)	\$ 67,545
Reimbursements	\$ 28,900
Capital Grants (State \$20,000, Local \$50,000)	\$ 70,000

Housing & Community Amenities

Council Housing	
Capital Grants (Local Assistance)	\$ 5,000
User Charges	\$ 12,000

Other Community Development

Sale of Assets	\$ 250,000
Community Loan Repayments	\$ 52,849

Garbage

User Charges	\$ 25,500
Other Income	\$ 64,779

Sewerage

Capital Grants (State Govt - \$57,000 Local \$25,500)	\$ 82,500
Rates	\$ 234,216

Other Community Amenities (Water Scheme)		
Rates	\$	62,000
User Charges	\$	111,315
<u>Recreation & Culture</u>		
School Community Library		
Operating Grant (State Govt)	\$	1,000
Other Cultural Services		
Other Income	\$	400
Sport & Recreation		
User Charges	\$	6,000
<u>Mining/ Manufacturing & Construction</u>		
Development Act		
Statutory Charges	\$	30,100
User Charges	\$	500
Reimbursements	\$	6,070
<u>Transport & Communication</u>		
Road Construction & Maintenance		
Sealed Roads		
Operating Grants (Roads to Recovery & Grants Commission)	\$	422,290
Other Roads		
Operating Grants (State Govt – Boundary Roads)	\$	3,556
Aerodrome		
User Charges	\$	187,000
Other Income	\$	8,500
Parking Control		
User Charges	\$	4,500
Statutory Charges	\$	2,300
Footpaths		
Capital Grant (State Govt)	\$	46,600
Community Bus		
User Charges	\$	5,980
<u>Economic Affairs</u>		
User Charges	\$	25,000
Operating Grants & Subsidies (\$4000 State Govt)	\$	19,000
Other Income	\$	117,260

Other Purposes Not Easily Classifies

Sale of Assets	\$	126,500
Other Income (intenal Plant Hire income)	\$	582,905
Loan Reimbursements (community group)	\$	10,570
Reimbursements	\$	97,165
Utilisation of Existing Reserves	\$	728,805

Summary of 2002 / 2003 Budgeted Operating Revenue:

Rates General:	\$1,684,832
Rates Other:	\$ 290,324
Statutory Charges:	\$ 42,450
User Charges:	\$ 396,490
Operating Grants & Subsidies:	\$1,863,603
Investment Income:	\$ 20,800
Reimbursements:	\$ 154,795
Asset Sales	\$ 114,930
Other Income:	\$ 820,393
Capital Grants	\$ 240,100

The above is a summary of the expected revenue for the 2002/ 2003 financial year.

Capital Grants made to Local Government are often on a 1:1 funding basis. This adds to the financial strain on Councils due to the desire to improve their communities, however the crunch comes when the capital infrastructure requires maintenance or replacement.

Terms of Reference No. 3 *The capacity of local government to meet existing obligations and to take on an enhanced role in developing opportunities at a regional level including opportunities for councils to work with other councils and pool funding to achieve regional outcomes.*

Included with this submission is a submission prepared by a group of councils, of which we were one, into the review of the local government financial assistance grants arrangements, sought by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. It was in my opinion irresponsible for the above review into the financial assistance grant arrangements not to address the interstate distribution of the general purpose and local road grants or the quantum of funds available under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995.

I believe that our Council's capacity to meet existing obligations and to take on an enhanced role in developing opportunities at a regional level are severely hampered by the obvious inequities that exist in the distribution of commonwealth funds.

Council's within our region have for some time had to work together and pool funding to achieve outcomes. This has been brought about to ensure our region survives, rather than develop, as it should in a balanced social, economic & environmental manner. There are many examples of pooling funding, sharing resources etc to achieve regional outcomes. Some that readily spring to mind are:

Boards & Associations: -

Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association (ie 11 Councils forming a subsidiary & fund the operations)

Eyre Regional Development Board (again major financial support from Councils)

Tourism Eyre Peninsula (again major financial support from Councils)

Eyre Peninsula Water Catchment Management Board (Funding raised by Councils)

Eyre Peninsula Regional Health Board (Local Government representation)

Natural Resource Management Group – (Local Government & Regional Development Board representation & funding)

SA Country Arts Board (Local Government representation & funding)

Our Council's involvement with other organisations in the region: -

Great Australian Bight 1000 West Coast Strategy (3 Councils including us involved in a 1000 kms of coast - management strategy includes funding & management)

Flinders Regional Area Consultative Committee (Commonwealth Committee)

State Aboriginal Services Advisory Committee (State Committee)

Great Australian Bight Marine Park Consultative Committee (Commonwealth Committee)

LGA of SA Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (State Committee)

Yumbarra Ministerial Advisory Committee (Mining Exploration Committee)

Department of Human Services Aboriginal Services Implementation Committee (State Govt. Committee)

Sharing of staff expertise examples – Building, Planning & Health Officers sharing with neighbouring Councils, Aboriginal Liaison Officer works with State Government, other Councils & Aboriginal communities nearby. Council contributes to an Economic Development Officer position in the Western sector of Eyre Peninsula. (Other Councils and communities in the Out of Council area to west and north also utilise this officer)

These are just some examples to demonstrate the innovative practices undertaken in our region to allow us to firstly survive and secondly try to create employment & wealth that hopefully will encourage further community & economic development.

Terms of Reference No. 4. *Local government expenditure and the impact on local government's financial capacity as a result of changes in the powers, functions & responsibilities between state & local government.*

This should also include the commonwealth government in our situation.

Having been employed in local government for 11 years, I have witnessed cost shifting and shifting of responsibilities from other spheres of government to local government which is having an immense impact on our finances & resources. The best way to explain this is by way of examples:

Aboriginal issues.

Our Council has a high proportion of aboriginals in its community but is also the nearest service centre for major aboriginal communities outside our council area (eg Maralinga / Oak Valley, Yalata & Pitjantjatjara Lands). With this come the itinerant problems such as illegal camping, behavioural issues, domestic violence, health & educational issues and so on. This is a most demanding and resource draining area and has significant costs attached which are very difficult to quantify.

It is fair to say that in the past Ceduna had the reputation of being one of the most racist towns in Australia. This was until approximately ten years ago. At that time most leaders of the community realised that attitudes had to change if our town were to grow and be one of which we can all be proud to be a resident. It also needed to occur to assist in reducing the longer-term consequences of a region self destructing at a huge cost to all governments.

Since then Council has worked consistently to improve liaison and communication between the District Council and representative organisations of the Aboriginal people, including Wangka Willarurra Regional Council, Koonibba Community Council, Yalata Community Council, Ceduna Aboriginal Community Council and Tjutjunaku Worka Tjuta, (TWT) which provides CDEP program activities in Ceduna. Council, both directly and through its officers, have implemented an action program to maintain, implement or improve its commitment to the Aboriginal people in our district.

The following are some illustrations of these actions:

- recognise the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council as our counterpart and develop links with the Regional Council as first point of reference on Aboriginal issues;
- develop greater knowledge and awareness of the issues that impact on Aboriginal people in relation to the role and function of local government;
- clarify the roles and responsibilities in situations where separate Aboriginal communities on Aboriginal Lands Trust Land are within the Council area;
- encourage Aboriginal people to have a say in Local Government by providing equitable access and involvement in Local Government (e.g. through voting, nominating etc);
- increase the knowledge of the Aboriginal people of the role, services and facilities provided by local government;
- always attempt to employ at least the same percentage of Aboriginals in the workforce of Council as to the percentage of Aboriginals in our community.
- increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and support programs such as the CDEP;
- maintain the database on each Aboriginal organisation in our area and services they provide;
- established advisory committees to Council to have Aboriginal representation when & where appropriate;
- continue workforce exchange programs to assist skills development;
- encourage local schools and libraries to teach and maintain appropriate information on the history and culture of the local Aboriginal people;
- Support local Aboriginal organisations in celebrations, promotion of NAIDOC Week, public awareness of culture etc by Council representatives attending such functions;
- invite Aboriginal leaders to Council functions;

- Research background information on Aboriginal culture and history of local area for Council.
- display posters and brochures to encourage Aboriginal involvement in Council, Community etc;
- share in economic development as partners for the benefit of all the community (e.g. Water Project \$5m - \$2.5m from Commonwealth, \$2m from State Government, assist/ contract with the Koonibba Aboriginal Community Council for essential & municipal service delivery and other Infrastructure improvements);
- openly discuss and assist neighbouring Aboriginal Community Councils with typical council roles and functions (e.g. building approval and planning approvals, health inspections, administration sharing assistance, animal and pest plant control, immunisations, soil conservation and library services);
- Promote the positive aspects of Aboriginal / Council relationships and co-operation.
- Employment of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer to have better communication links with the Aboriginal communities. This Officer is critical in native title, youth, homelessness, law & order, health; council services to aboriginal people and education discussions involving aboriginal people.
- Council has significant aboriginal representation on nearly all its committees. (eg Social Services Committee, Ceduna Interpretative Centre Advisory Committee, Ceduna Koonibba Water Scheme Committee, Davenport Creek Management Committee, Youth Centre Management Committee, Town Camp Planning, Development & Management Committee, Great Australian Bight 1000 – West Coast Strategy Steering Committee as well as encouraging aboriginal persons to stand for council elections).

HOW DO WE DO IT?

Developing greater knowledge and awareness of issues that impact on Aboriginals and improving liaison arrangements

The District Council of Ceduna has used a consultative approach to develop greater knowledge and awareness of issues that impact on Aboriginals and to improve liaison arrangements.

Council now meets regularly with the Chairperson and Regional Manager of the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council and the CDEP program manager.

The CDEP program has been very successful and works with Council on projects. Council has engaged this program to undertake contract work, such as clearing lanes, footpath maintenance and landscaping etc.

Council has from time to time introduced committees and Authorities to assist with aboriginal matters. Currently the Davenport Creek Authority is in place to manage a coastal creek area, which has significant importance to Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal people have representatives on this authority. Council supplies the administration for the Authority. The Ceduna Koonibba Water Authority has representatives from the Koonibba Aboriginal Community Council on it to assist in the operation and maintenance of a \$5m water scheme that serves their community and others to the west of Ceduna. These Authorities and committees have improved the liaison and knowledge and awareness of the role and function of local government in Aboriginal affairs.

Increased employment opportunities:

Council has undertaken many initiatives to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginals. Some examples are:

A. **ATSIC Middle Management Program:**

Council in co-operation with the local ATSIC Regional Office assisted with the middle management training of an ATSIC staff member who actually transferred to the Council administration and was involved in management decisions, policy implementation, planning and human resource management for a period of three months. This was very successful and productive for her, Council and the ATSIC Regional Office. It also acted as a bond and commitment to co-operate between the Regional Council and District Council administrations. Council would have no hesitation in participating in such a training program again.

B. **CDEP Program:**

C.

We are extremely proud of their efforts and contributions to the community. Council contracts work out to this program which now runs various business enterprises. It has its own joint venture Oyster farm.

D. **Work Scheme Opportunities:**

E.

Council undertook projects under the *New Work Opportunities* program of the Department of Education Employment and Training. A large contingent of Aboriginal workers was involved. This is another example of Council and Aboriginal co-operation for the benefit of the whole town.

D. **Equal Employment Opportunities:**

Council has a policy of attempting to maintain its own Aboriginal employment levels at equal to the proportion of Aboriginals in the district. Currently 30% of Council's entire workforce is Aboriginal.

E. **Other Opportunities:**

Council has been involved in programs such as *IN Work* and Training Aboriginals. Under these programs young unemployed Aboriginals were employed in traineeship positions for periods ranging from 12 week to 52 weeks. We have had great success with these programs. Many of the Aboriginals trained have secured permanent employment as a result of these training programs and consequently are now role models for other young Aboriginals.

F. **Ceduna Koonibba Water Authority**

Council has established an authority to construct and manage a water scheme supplying areas to the west of Ceduna including Koonibba Aboriginal Community. This included aboriginal employment. At the peak employment period of the scheme construction, eighteen (18) of the twenty-one (21) employees were Aboriginal. Since the completion of construction four (4) of those employees have been employed permanently by Council.

G. Koonibba Aboriginal Community Council Essential & Municipal Works

Council is also involved in improving infrastructure at Koonibba. Additional employees required for this work have been recruited from the Koonibba community. Other Aboriginal communities are now approaching Council to assist in a similar way as Koonibba. All work will be done on a contractual basis with Council attempting to train the employed Aboriginal people, so in the future they can carry out the required services to the appropriate level without Council assistance.

H. Special Projects Team – Council Works

Establishing an all Aboriginal Special Projects work team of five employees to undertake special works assignments for council and surrounding Aboriginal homelands and communities.

I. Delivery of Environmental Health Services & other services to Homelands

Council has a contracts to deliver environmental health and municipal services to Aboriginal homelands and communities (again employing specialists staff & an aboriginal trainee) This includes grading roads, dust control, dog control, vermin & pest plant control, building inspections, garbage removal, infrastructure advice & assistance etc.

J. Employment of Community Artist

Council utilises the employment of an Aboriginal community artist to undertake community murals with involvement of aboriginal children and non-indigenous children to assist him.

Communities on Aboriginal Lands Trust Land:

There are two adjacent Aboriginal communities that form part of our community. Council has established co-operative arrangements for assisting Koonibba Aboriginal Community Council and Yalata Community Council. It should be noted that Koonibba is within the District Council area, but is rated on the same basis as a farm. Yalata is outside the District Council area, but its residents are part of the Ceduna community, and visit frequently for social and commercial purposes. Koonibba Community (30 kms to the west of Ceduna) and Ceduna District Council have established reasonably clear lines of responsibility in relation to the District Council providing services for the Aboriginal Land Trust Land on which Koonibba is situated. Council grades the school bus routes at its expense, whilst other roads in the Koonibba Community are graded at cost to the Community Council (through an ATSI Grant). Our Council assists with dog control at no cost to the Koonibba Community. Our animal and pest plants officer also works with and advises the Koonibba Community Council on relevant issues. Council also assists the Yalata Aboriginal Community Council in any way it sees fit and is keen to strengthen relationships with this neighbouring council. In the past the District Council and Yalata Community Council have had joint meetings to discuss relevant matters. Council assisted Yalata in securing State Government funding for their “Head of the Bight” whale lookout facilities. The D.C. of Ceduna has given expertise assistance to Yalata at no cost on issues such as the Head of the Bight tourist development due to it having “spin offs” for the Ceduna economy.

Aboriginal people having a say in local government:

Ceduna District Council had the first Aboriginal Councillor in South Australia and has had several Aboriginal councillors since. We actively encourage Aboriginal persons to nominate for Council. Local Government election materials are supplied to all the appropriate Aboriginal organisations promoting and encouraging Aboriginal people to nominate.

Increasing the knowledge of Aboriginal people of the services provided by local government:

Council has a "council page" in the local newspaper each month to communicate to all people what services are available, general points of interest to the public, new work being undertaken by Council, etc. This has been very successful and is a great way to generate interest in council matters as well as keeping the public well informed. Council keeps the Aboriginal community well briefed on matters concerning them as well as seeking their advice on matters pertaining to them through its open communication channels with the various Aboriginal organisations. Council also invites Aboriginal leaders to its civic functions and in particular the members of the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council who are our counterparts as the elected representatives of the Aboriginal people of the community. Council representatives and staff have a great relationship with the local ATSI Office and Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council.

Economic Development:

Council actively encourages Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons, and companies to enter into joint ventures for the economic benefit of our community. The Denial Bay Clearwater Oyster lease is an example of these joint ventures or economic developments that are certainly adding value to the local economy and have heavy involvement from both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

Education / History / Promotion of Aboriginal cultures.

Council encourages the education systems to cater for all people and in particular recognise the cultural differences and important Aboriginal history of our area. Council is actively pursuing the development of an Heritage/ Interpretative Centre (tourist based) to promote the Aboriginal history of our areas. Our school / community library undertakes promotional displays at times like NAIDOC Week etc. Council flies the Aboriginal flag in our main shopping district to recognise the large proportion of Aboriginal people in our district. The Council also was a major sponsor of the recent State CDEP Conference held in Ceduna.

Working together:

A number of other examples can be given where the Aboriginal Community and Non-Aboriginal community have / are / will work together for the betterment of our towns and district. Some examples are:

- The production of \$80,000 worth of TV commercials to promote pride in our multi cultural town. (very successful)
- Ceduna and Districts Development Board prepared an economic development plan for the district with heavy Aboriginal involvement and representation. A Federal grant was won (\$21,000) for this but is also supported by Council (\$20,000) and ATSI (\$15,000)

- ATSIIC and Council have combined forces to gain funding from the Federal Government to extend the Todd Trunk Water Main from Ceduna to areas west. ATSIIC allocated \$2.5m and the State Government \$2m towards the project which will cost \$5m approximately. An Equal Employment Opportunity award was won for this project due to Council's commitment to employ and train aboriginal people (see attached submission)
- Council also fought strongly for Aboriginal representation on the Ceduna and Districts Aged Care and Health Services Board (Multi Purposes Service Hospital). Aboriginals are now represented on this Board which is responsible for co-ordinating the health needs of the district for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal persons. An Aboriginal nursing home has been established as a result. The Board is also assisting Yalata with its aged care facilities and other health needs.
- Council and Aboriginal organisations were instrumental in implementing "dry areas" to the whole of Ceduna and Thevenard to assist in combating the "binge" drinking problems in highly visible areas.
- ATSIIC sponsorship of the Ceduna Oysterfest to promote and increase the knowledge and awareness of Aboriginal culture within our community. This has been extremely successful.
- The revamped Ceduna Town Hall is used to display Aboriginal Art from local artists and Yalata when exhibitions are put together. The Aboriginal community has been encouraged to use this community facility and have been actively doing such for conferences and other celebratory occasions.
- Council and the Eyre Regional Development Board in conjunction with the Wangka Wilurrara Regional Council undertook a tourism strategy plan for Eyre Peninsula. This plan's main focus was on Aboriginal tourism ventures etc.
- Council was also very vocal and instrumental in getting Aboriginal representation on the Eyre Regional Development Board.
- Council has been participating in meetings with the Far West Aboriginal Working Party to discuss the potential mining of the Gawler Craton to the north and west of Ceduna. Native Title issues, employment opportunities, infrastructure improvements etc. have been discussed.
- ••••• The Council's citizen of the year for 1997 was an Aboriginal woman who had excelled in developing an aboriginal childcare centre. It is interesting to note both aboriginal and non-aboriginal children attend the childcare centre.
- The Council encouraged the Ceduna Business and Tourism Association to sign a working protocol with the Ceduna Aboriginal Community Council. The parties have agreed to establish and develop in an ongoing manner a working relationship which:
 - a. recognises and supports the aims of and objectives of the National Reconciliation process;
 - b. aims to address local issues of importance to the Ceduna community in a manner that is sensitive to both cultural diversity and community aspirations;
 - c. Seeks to improve the economic status of the Ceduna community by promoting the business and tourist advantages of Ceduna and surrounds.

The above three objectives will be developed in a working relationship, which is ongoing and reviewed regularly by the parties. Both parties will have reciprocal representation at Board meetings to discuss local issues and associated strategies. Neither party will undertake any action in the name of the protocol without a formal agreement from the other party.

There are many examples of our community embarking on the process of reconciliation and working together to improve the life situation for aboriginal persons

in our region. It is hoped all our community continues to share in our future and make it one where we the residents of Ceduna and District can claim to be leaders in bringing even greater cohesion and co-operation between indigenous and other Australians.

Ceduna District Council wants its area to become one of the best multicultural communities in Australia. We believe in recognising each others cultures, by working together and physically demonstrating our reconciliation through projects and examples as provided above as much more concrete than anything placed on paper. I personally believe Ceduna and Districts are further down the reconciliation path than many outside our district realise. I believe through the above combined projects and co-operation openly demonstrated that the District Council of Ceduna and the community are showing a commitment to improving services to Aboriginal persons.

The situation now

It is fair to say that in the past Ceduna had the reputation of being one of the most racist towns in Australia. This was until nine or ten years ago. At that time most leaders of the community realised that attitudes had to change if our town were to grow and be one of which we can all be proud to be a resident.

Ceduna District Council wants its area to become one of the best multicultural communities in Australia. I believe we must recognise how far we have come, but most importantly we must continue to recognise how far we have got to go.

We have been through the very hard times, but now I believe our community is a leader in the reconciliation process and a community that will achieve its vision through adopting the 'family' approach to life in Ceduna.

Council is embarking on many exciting projects that will have a positive effect on the lives of many Aboriginals living in and near our district. These projects include:

The development of a marina and heritage centre

The completion of the development & operation of a "Town Camp"

The completion of the development of a Youth Centre

The development of mining within the region

The continuation of contracting work by Council in Aboriginal communities

The continuation of advisory committees to ensure consultation with the Aboriginal persons continues & we work together for the benefit of the entire community

Involvement by Council in inter-agency committees addressing the needs of Aboriginal persons (housing, infrastructure, health & education) e.g. Dept. Human Services – Delivering of services to Aboriginal people in Ceduna, Local Government Association's – Delivery of Services to Aboriginals (a Local Govt. perspective) etc.

Council's strategic plan outlines this commitment.

There is high unemployment with Aboriginal persons; there is a need to extend CDEP's to more than two days per week.

Council has undertaken much responsibility & expenses in social service areas that normally would be the responsibility of both State & Commonwealth agencies. The above gives an indication of the additional responsibilities & expenses undertaken by

Council not normally experienced by other local governments nor this Council some 10 plus years ago.

How do we improve the situation (the future)?

There needs to be a better way of making the dollars go further and a better way of ensuring positive outcomes are received with the funds expended in this area. Some aboriginal communities are in deep trouble from a management and financial aspect. Their remoteness and isolation often does not allow good recruitment of staff to assist. For too long many people of all persuasions have been “dodging” the issues. The time is now appropriate for open and frank discussion to take place on how neighbouring communities, Local, State & Federal Governments can get better value from grant funding allocated to these communities. In saying this I can only comment on communities I know of. Some work very well whilst others struggle with maintaining their communities.

Our Council feels it has undertaken much work and responsibility, which should have been the responsibility of State & Federal Government. It is obvious from the above there has been an unfair burden placed on our small rural council by other spheres of government through their agencies not carrying out their responsibilities as they should have in the past. It is time the cost and responsibility shifting in this area stops being “hand balled” to local government because other government agencies consider it is “too hard” to deal with the problems. If Council wants its community to continue to improve it has no choice but to commit. The District Council of Ceduna at huge expense to it’s ratepayers is “having a go” at assisting the aboriginal communities in and near our district. I firmly believe that reform in this area has to be seriously looked at by Local, State & Commonwealth Governments to allow the best positioned to be able to service the aboriginal communities in their various needs. This is particularly appropriate for those situations where the communities are really struggling to survive. However appropriate levels of financial, human & physical resources must accompany the shifting of responsibility if it is to continue?

Council expenditure in this area is very difficult to quantify but would be approximately \$800,000 pa that is approximately half the rates raised.

Other Examples of cost & responsibility shifting

Jetties:

Recently the State Government upgrade three jetties in our district and then leased them to Council which now is obligated to maintain them at a standard similar to when they were leased. The community sees these as vital to its tourism market & economic development and really did not wish for them to be demolished and really had no choice other than lease them from the State Government. The three jetties in our district will cost on average \$30,000 a year to maintain which equates to approximately 2% of our rate income. This has been a new expense to us.

Youth Centre:

Again Council is caught in a dilemma when dealing with the social issues as explained above in the aboriginal issues. This area should be entirely a State Government issue. This again is a new expense to Council. Whilst the State Government does assist in this area it also costs Council approx. \$55,000 pa. or in rates terms – 3.3% of its rates raised

Boat Registration & licensing:

Often when the State Government indicates it is to withdraw a service to the community, pressure is placed on the local Council to fill the void. With boat registrations & licensing of the boat operators such is the case. Our Council has filled this void as a cost to Council.

There are many other smaller examples of cost & responsibility shifting such as crime prevention, care & control of crown lands etc. The non-payment of rates by the State Government has always been debated in local government circles. This debate should be brought further to the fore as Council's now pay GST.

Terms of Reference No.5. *The scope for achieving a rationalisation of roles & responsibilities between the levels of government, better use of resources and better quality services to local communities.*

The Local Government Association of SA has initiated a project dealing with this matter. The following is an extract from the LGA of SA's project statement: -

An Overview of the Integrated Governance Project

This paper is an overview of the LGA's Integrated Governance Project, formally titled "Integrated Governance – Initiatives in Policy, Planning and Service Delivery". The paper provides information on the background of the project and the process to be undertaken in implementing the project's objectives. The contact details of relevant LGA staff are provided. The Local Government Research and Development Scheme have funded the project.

Background

The Local Government Act 1999 requires Councils to establish "strategic management plans" that address strategies to work regionally and with state and federal governments in:

- policy and planning activities; and
- collaborative service delivery (where appropriate).

These plans are not required to be adopted by Councils until July 2002, however, in readiness to meet this deadline Councils will be desiring to gather information regarding the strategic plans and policies of key government agencies.

At the General Meeting of the LGA held on 31 March 2000 it was resolved that Local Government develop and endorse a Governance Partnership Statement that articulates to all spheres of government, Local Government's desire to work collaboratively for the benefit of the State as a whole. The meeting also resolved for work to commence on the development of an Industry Partnership Statement that would articulate the relationship that Local Government is keen to establish with industry.

Project Objectives

The Integrated Governance project has the following four objectives:

1. To position Local Government to negotiate protocols and mechanisms to facilitate

joint policy/planning and collaborative service delivery between Local, State and Federal Governments.

2. To facilitate the conduct of projects to assist Councils (individually and regionally) to identify opportunities for joint policy, planning, and service delivery activities with the other spheres of government.

3. To explore and research the issue of functional and financial reform within the context of policy and planning activities conducted jointly with the other spheres of government.

4. To facilitate discussions with key Ministers (Commonwealth and State) regarding the new statutory responsibilities of Local Government and to establish mechanisms for discussions and consultations to take place with appropriate protocols established.

Description of the Project

The Integrated Governance Project commenced in February 2000 and will be implemented over the next 18 months – 2 years. The project will involve the following:

- * consultation with Local Government to identify key policy and planning areas
- * capturing information on the various policies/plans of State and Federal Governments of interest to Local Government and making these available electronically (including spatially) to Councils
- * establishing mechanisms to engage in debate and discussion with State and Federal Governments regarding their plans and policies
- * develop in consultation with Local, State and Federal Governments, discussion papers relevant to strategic management plans and policies of State and Federal Governments. These papers will be made available to Councils to assist them with considering these plans and policies in a local or regional strategic planning context case studies – by region and/or with individual Councils in key areas of common interest between Federal, State and Local Governments or between State and Local Governments regarding matters consistent with the project brief preparation of a Governance Partnership Statement and exploration of an Industry Partnership Statement and possibly "issues statements" addressing key areas of common interest, for example: environment, community services

Outcomes of the Project

The Project has three main outcomes:

- (a) Local Government Strategic Management Plans have regard to State and Federal Government policy, plans and strategic directions.
- (b) Identification of opportunities for collaboration in service delivery.
- (c) Clarification of roles, responsibilities, opportunities and processes for functional and financial reform.

This project was commenced with the previous State Government and hopefully will be furthered with the new State Government. In my opinion this project is full of merit and the LGA of SA is congratulated for advancing the issue which sits significantly with the terms of reference of this inquiry. I expect the LGA of SA will be submitting a detailed submission to the inquiry.

6. Terms of Reference No. 6 *Then findings of the Commonwealth Grants Commission Review of the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 of June 2001, taking into account the views of interested parties as sought by the Committee.*

Again I make the comment that my council strongly objected to the final sentence of the terms of reference of the above review: - "The Review will not address the interstate distribution of the general purpose and local; road grants or the quantum of funds available under the Act".

My Council becomes very irate when debating this and the question of the distribution of funds between States is of such fundamental importance in the future of Local Government in South Australia. Why can't the distribution of funds be such that the councils of South Australia (ie we are one of those most affected) receive the special assistance as defined under the Commonwealth Grants Commission Act – "for the purpose of making it possible for the State, by reasonable effort, to function at a standard not appreciably below the standard of other states".

My Council can not believe that Commonwealth Members of Parliament can go on ignoring the inequities that are so blatantly obvious when it comes to South Australia receiving its fair & rightful share of the Commonwealth Grants Commission allocation of funding (ie particularly the Road Grant – which has been recognised as an inequity by making adjustments in the Roads to Recovery Funding allocation). I again refer you to the included submission to the review.

Summary:

The words of the Local Government Association of SA best summarise the situation in South Australia in regards to cost shifting and/ or lack of support.

"In aggregate the South Australian local government sector (and the vast majority of individual councils) is running operating losses (about \$80m per annum) on an accrual basis. In simple terms councils have taken on additional responsibilities over the past two decades in the form of new roles and responsibilities imposed by other governments or as a direct result of responding to community demands. A corresponding decline in funding support from other spheres of government has seen councils "balance the books" by reducing the level of maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure assets. As a result the overall condition and value of these assets has declined. The recent study of council infrastructure ("A Wealth of Opportunities") estimated that South Australian councils are under-funding infrastructure renewal by \$95 million per annum and this gap will increase significantly over the next 25 years. The study suggests that all councils must immediately double their expenditure for the next 3-5 years and increase this further thereafter. Simplistically the sector needs to raise significantly more revenue (in absence of further significant efficiency gains and assuming activity levels are not reduced).

1. Grants from State Governments to Local Government

*Councils are already aware of how poorly we fair in financial support from the Commonwealth relative to other states and territories. Information now obtained from the Commonwealth Government's publication, Local Government National Report 2000-2001 appears to suggest that, on a **per-capita basis**, South Australian councils receive the lowest national quantum of State Government grants at \$11 per person followed by Victoria at \$17 per person. Queensland Councils are at the top end of the*

scale receiving \$190 per person (see following graph). Whilst the focus of State grants to Local Government varies significantly from State to State and year to year, the major purpose remains 'housing and community amenities' (eg, sewerage, STEDs and water supply) followed by 'transport and communications' (roads, but excluding Commonwealth Local Road funds). After once-off variations are removed, total funding by the States to Local Government in 1999-2000 remained very similar to the previous year. Net grants from the SA State Government to councils for 1999-2000 totalled \$16 million. The majority of this funding is for public libraries and, to a lesser degree, STEDS (septic tank effluent disposal schemes).

Our Council believes the LGA of SA is proactive in pursuing the intergovernance model with the State Government. Small Councils and communities do not have the capacity to continue to extend their functions and through the desire to maintain their communities are finding themselves in a position of significant difficulty (ie financial, physical & human resources).

The continuation of responsibility & cost shifting has the capacity to cripple small communities & Councils like us.

My Council hopes this brief submission into the inquiry gives you an insight into the harsh realities that face small rural & remote Councils like the District Council of Ceduna. We welcome further explanation of this submission.