



VICTORIAN INSTITUTE of RATE ADMINISTRATORS

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VIRA NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The second instalment has now past and the first arguments regarding interest for late payment have been fought as a warm up to the April Rate Rush and interest "war". It is interesting to note the number of people hoping to avoid interest on the second instalment by paying the balance of rates by April 10. However we all realise they are still late on the second and only paying the other instalments before the last dates for payment.

I was very pleased with the meeting at Wodonga and the weekend that followed at Howlong. Much of the credit for the success goes to Kevin Saunders from the Rural City of Wodonga and I would like to take the opportunity to thank him through this newsletter. The meeting was most informative, dealing with issues such as new receipting technology to the Cash Transactions Reports Act 1988 and our responsibilities in regard to this.

It was pleasing to meet Bob Angus, Rate Clerk at the City of Albury who is keen to establish a similar Institute for New South Wales as was done in South Australia.

Thanks also to those members who contributed to the discussion paper on "An Effective Tax Base" for the Ministerial taskforce on

Future Directions. The input has been invaluable in producing a document that will have a major impact on discussions regarding the future of Local Government in Victoria.

I am looking forward to next year's country meeting that will be held at the Shire of Wangaratta and thank Rod Grant for the offer. I would urge all members to make this meeting a must on their calendar.

Exciting events currently underway with the Institute include the establishment of a new Region in East Gippsland. The impetus for this comes from Paul Telfer (Shire of Avon) who first approached the Committee in October last. Ian Holland (City of Frankston), on behalf of the committee has been liaising with Paul in the formation of this and

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I congratulate them both on their initiative. The inaugural meeting took place on Friday March 22 at the Shire of Morwell and thanks goes to Barry Herbert for organising the hospitality.

The Office Technology Seminar which I mentioned in the February issue of the Newsletter is to be held on May 10. Preparations are advancing well and it will be a major event on the Local Government calendar, not just for those involved in rate administration but it will cover all disciplines. For the Seminar to succeed every

member must promote the day to their respective municipalities. The Seminar and Trade day will be followed by our general meeting and dinner to be held at the City of Camberwell.

Information and registration forms will be available to members and Local Government generally in mid April. The seminar will also be publicised in Local Government FOCUS newspaper, The Age newspaper and also in Tony Smark's Local Government Job Directory.

Geoff Fleming, PRESIDENT

NEW REGION FOR VIRA

The Institute's move towards the establishment of regions has gained further impetus with a recent proposal to form a new East Gippsland Region.

The new region has been proposed by Paul Telfer of the Shire of Avon and is intended to cover the area from Morwell to Orbost. Paul's proposal has been enthusiastically received by local rate administrators and the Institute's Executive has seen fit to assist with the formation of the new region.

A meeting of the South-East Region was held at the Shire of Morwell on March 22

during which the formation of the new region took place. Barry Herbert of the City of Morwell kindly provided the facilities where Paul Telfer was duly appointed the new convenor of the East Gippsland Region.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm in the foyer of the Kernoot Hall adjacent to the Civic Centre. The proposal to form the new region was unanimously passed by the meeting and Paul has been assured by the convenor of the South-East Region and the Institute's President that every support will be made available to him and the new region.

STOP PRESS

Institute Golf Day

May 20 1991 in conjunction with the Municipal Group of Valuers.

The Day will be sponsored by Bishop Collections Pty Ltd.

For registration and further information contact Geoff Fleming or Greg Stevens at the City of Oakleigh.

Ballarat Region

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Ballarat Region of the Institute will be held at the Shire of Buninyong on Thursday May 16, 1991.

Contact the Region's convenor, Malcolm Mathews at the City of Ballarat for more details.

SCANNING - 1990 COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The 1990 council elections saw many prominent Victorian councils use Reark LaserComp to produce and scan their voters rolls for the 1990 council elections. The general feedback from the councils using this virtual unknown scanning system was encouraging and positive.

Two of the most impressive features of the system was the **EASY TO READ ROLLS**, this eliminated errors and was less of a strain on the eyes of the people using them, the other was the fact that **SPECIAL PROGRAMMING WAS NOT NEEDED**. LaserComp could take a file (spool or fielded) from any system eg: Wandek, AWA pics or Genasys and convert them into a format which was then used to produce the special scannable rolls. This is a major benefit the system

has over other scanning systems available today.

Like any new system there were some small problems which were sorted out with minimum fuss. This was expected by the councils. A meeting of users was held after the election and valuable feedback was gathered. From this feedback and further research by Reark LaserComp the system has been streamlined. The format of the roll will vary only slightly from last years.

After talking to Reark LaserComp's General Manager Mr Roger Phillips I can assure you that Reark LaserComp is here to stay and their commitment to Research and Development can only mean that our jobs at election time will be a lot less trouble (isn't that great).

If you need further information on this system do not hesitate to contact either Roger Phillips or Gary Petersen on 690 9377.

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DRAFTING OF THE PROPOSED LAND INFORMATION CERTIFICATE

The North Central Region of the Institute has resolved to take the lead regarding the development of the proposed Land Information Certificate pursuant to Section 229 of the 1989 Local Government Act.

Section 229 (1) of the 1989 Act states as follows: "A person may apply to a Council for a certificate in the prescribed form specifying the prescribed information in relation to matters affecting any Land in the municipal district."

The prescribed form and the prescribed information is what this exercise is all about. The purpose of the Sub Committee, headed by Graeme Tindle is to establish a draft of the form the certificate should take and what information it should contain. The certificates included in this exercise are listed in the box below.

The approach used was to remove duplication and simplify the issue of the handwritten certificate - consequently the development of a front sheet detailing all property/ownership situations where a NIL CERTIFICATE was not appropriate.

In most municipalities Certificates are generally prepared in the Rate Section, as this section is where the property records are maintained. It therefore follows that an all embracing certificate should be issued and that an inclusive fee be charged for this service.

The Committee has recommended a Land

The Certificates

Section 265a	Valuation Certificate	\$3.00
Section 387	Rate Certificate	\$5.00
Section 569B (8A)	Recreational Land Contribution	\$3.00
Section 600C	Road Status Certificate	\$3.00
Section 656E	Water Drainage Certificate	\$5.00
Victorian Building Regulations	Flood Certificate	\$5.00
Planning and Environment Regulations	Town Planning Certificate	\$11.00

The Sub Committee has put together a document providing the basis for a standard certificate embracing the various certificates that can be applied for under the Local Government Act 1958 (as amended).

The fees for the above certificates apart from the Town Planning Certificate were last amended in the 1980. (\$3.00 to \$5.00).

The proposed Land Information Certificate was prepared primarily for Rural Municipalities which do not have many certificate applications, whereas the principles used could readily be applied to the computerisation of the certificates required.

Information Certificate Fee of \$100.00 and was felt that such a fee appropriate in the following circumstances.

- Where an inappropriately small fee is prescribed, the importance of the certificate is lessened, and more often than not junior office staff will be given the task of writing out certificates.
- The certificate, used at the time of transfer of land ownership, is conclusive proof of the information stated in the certificate - the fee should reflect the importance of the information provided.
- A realistic fee will deter application for

information sake, particularly where the rate and charge amounts are shown on the last issued rate account (for example real estate and vexatious enquires).

d) All relevant property information is provided rather than relying on adhoc application for specific certificates.

e) Public liability charges have increased significantly in recent times, and it is a legitimate cost that should be apportioned against certificate application fees.

f) Where undue hardship is incurred by such a fee relief could be granted at Council/Officers discretion.

The North Central Region is seeking input on the draft certificate from all interested members of the Institute. Copies of the Draft certificate can be obtained from Noel Grant at the Shire of Deakin on (058) 58 2505.

The responsibility for such an important document cannot rest entirely with the North Central Region when it will be used by all Councils right across the state.

Graeme Tindle
North Central Region
Sub Committee Chairman
Telephone (057) 92 1200.



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SPECIFICATIONS ON MAGNETIC INK CHARACTER RECOGNITION (MICR)

When producing MICR encoded documents the following items need to be done before printing can be started.

Form Design

A deposit form must be designed and then submitted to the bank for approval. The form must comply with the banking standards and can be no smaller than 197 mm wide and 70 mm deep and no larger than 204 mm wide and 94 mm deep and printed on 92 gsm sorta speed. The bank will then issue an authorisation form which then allows the base stock eg: Rate Notice to be printed.

After the tape and pre printed stationery along with the bank authority is received by the laser printing bureau the notices are then printed and MICR encoded with the variable data from the magnetic tape.

During the laser printing of the documents samples must be taken every couple of thousand documents depending on the size of the run and forwarded to the MICR evaluation centre whose address appears on the authority for approval. This is so the bank can check to make sure that the MICR encoded deposit slip can be read in the MICR readers at the bank.

Record layout

To successfully laser print a MICR encoded document the laser printing bureau must be supplied with a tape consisting of data with fixed length records and accompanied by a record layout. The printer can also use an ascil delimited file but the easiest and most cost effective tape layout is the layout with the fixed lengths. A typical example of a layout follows.

Field	Field name	Characters
1	Assessment number	(16)
2	Name	(35)
3	Address line 1	(36)
4	Address line 2	(36)
5	Address line 3	(36)
6	Due date	(12)
7	Property description (location)	(48)
8	Property description 1	(48)
9	Property description 2	(18)
10	Ward description	(18)
11	First instalment	(11)
12	Total rates and charges	(13)
13	Total interest	(11)
14	Total amount due	(13)
15	Rate identification	(11)
		362

Record length = 362. And a record per line
(line=362 Bytes)

The MICR line

The typical MICR line consists of the following fields

Field 1 * Aux serial number = Maximum number of characters. (Your reference eg: Electricity account number.)

Field 2 * B.S.B number = Maximum number of characters

Field 3 * Account number = Maximum number of characters

Record length = Maximum number of characters of each field totalled.

An example of a MICR line:

Field 1	Field 2	Field 3
Aux serial number	B.S.B	Account Number

It would be best that each field be separate as we can layout with appropriate spacing.

Each bank has a different layout, for

instance with the National Bank the transaction code does not appear on the MICR line. The Commonwealth Bank once again has a completely different MICR line again. It is advisable to work closely with your contact within the particular bank to set up the MICR line.

The auxiliary serial number is a number chosen by the council. This could be an assessment number or one made up so that the council can match up the payment to the particular location.

The B.S.B number is on the bank authorisation which must be obtained from the bank before commencement of the printing as mentioned on previous page. The account number is also on the authorisation.

The production of MICR encoded documents is a very exacting and costly process as the paper used is more expensive than the standard paper and so is the ink as the ink is iron oxide based.

ODD SPOT

Members will know that the country meeting and weekend combines work with fun and frivolity. Sometimes the frivolity overflows.

One well known president of this Institute who shall remain nameless was, on the Sunday morning, seated in a secluded, private part of the motel contemplating events while reading the newspaper.

An immediate past president took advantage of the situation and doused him with a plastic dust bin full of cold water. Not only was the recipient soaked but so was the newspaper and roll of toilet paper. This leads one to ask; How did Geoff get out of there?

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