



VICTORIAN INSTITUTE of RATE ADMINISTRATORS

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VIRA NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Following the last publication of our Newsletter I admit to being surprised at the number of members who actually take the time to wade through my President's Report. The unprecedented number of requests for copies of the joint VIRA/MGV submission mentioned in that report is further evidence of members interest and support for the Institute and profession.

Mr Geoff Winston, Executive Officer of the Victorian Local Government Industry Training Committee, has prepared a report on Professional Development for Rate Administrators. The report is intended as a basis for academic and professional qualifications attainable by members which will be recognised both within the Local Government Sector and by other industries. The recommendation of the report is that Rate Administrators must initiate a change in job title away from the concept of last century's Rate Collectors who went from door to door collecting rates. The title of Revenue Manager reflects a far more accurate description of the position today.

All speakers at the Professional Development Seminar held at Caulfield in May last year, made mention of this fundamental necessity in order to affect a change in image within Local Government and in particular with the general public.

I would like to recommend to all Rate Collectors to approach their Chief Executive with the view to a change in job title as recommended at the Seminar and subsequently strongly supported by the ITC. The twenty-four page report by the ITC will be copied and forwarded to all financial members for inclusion in their Handbook. Again, our thanks go to Geoff and George at the ITC for their continued support.

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On another note, our Senior Vice President has represented the Institute at a reception at Queens Hall, Parliament House which was held on the eve of the Putting People First seminar conducted at Ringwood.

Further to this Mr Terry Vickerman CEO of the Shire of Cranbourne presented a paper on day two of that seminar on the subject of "Management in a Changing Environment". With the help of Barry Adams we were very fortunate to have Terry present a paper along the same lines at our November General Meeting at Croydon. Terry addressed the meeting as an after

a copy of any desired article could be obtained through the State Secretary.

Brian Mitchell, Shire of Woorayl put forward the suggestion that the next meeting of the South East Region take the form of a workshop to discuss matters relating to the transition to the new Local Government Act. Ian Holland, Convenor for the region took up on the idea and with the help of the Institute's Executive prepared and conducted a very successful workshop at the Shire of Korumburra on 8/12/89.

It has always been the intention of the Institute to conduct seminar/workshops on the new Act and our March 1990 General Meeting will be held along similar lines.

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dinner speaker and his subject was so well received that questions from the group finally had to be curtailed. Those present found Terry's address very informative and I for one was made disappointed that I was not able to attend the complete two day seminar a week earlier.

Money has been set aside in this year's budget to purchase Institute folders for Members to keep copies of our Newsletter in. Bob Smart, City of St Kilda has offered to catalogue the articles in Newsletters dating back to 1973. Once Bob has completed his task the catalogue will be distributed to all members as a guide to articles and issues which have been addressed by the Institute over the years, and while some members may not have a complete set of Newsletters

As promised, Geoff Cook from the Shire of Strathfieldsaye, has arranged a meeting which is intended to formalise a region of the Institute which will serve to assist Members in the Central and Northern part of Victoria. Geoff has already spoken to some members in the area and his initial findings indicate a need for members to meet to discuss local issues as well as general matters of the profession such as implementation concerns of the new Act. Traveling to Melbourne or Geelong to attend Institute meetings is not always feasible.

Information regarding the meeting is contained elsewhere in this Newsletter. Our thanks to Geoff.

***Gerry Pekin
PRESIDENT***

ARE ACQUISITIONS AN IMPOSITION?

Have you ever wondered why it is compulsory for a vendor or their conveyancer to lodge a Notice of Disposition with the appropriate Authorities but not compulsory for them to lodge a notice of Acquisition to any Authority except the Commissioner of Land Tax?

During my experience in the Rate Office I have found that the purchasers' name and current addresses are more accurate on the Notice of Acquisition than the Notice of Disposition as it is the new owners (or their conveyancers) who complete this document and as such are more concerned about their correctness.

If any inaccuracies on the notice result in Rate Notices incorrectly being served and consequently legal action being instigated when rates or charges remain unpaid, then any dispute arising therefrom lies between the current owners and his own conveyancer, no third party need be involved.

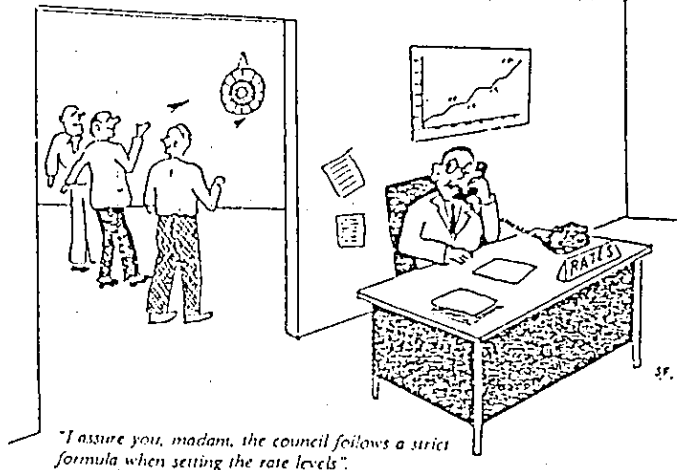
If both Notice of Disposition and Notice of Acquisition were compulsory, then should either one of these forms "stray" receipt of the other should ensure that the change of ownership is still recorded with the appropriate Authorities at an early date.

I am sure that all Councils or Authorities have been accused from time to time of "losing" a Notice of Disposition whereas I have never encountered a conveyancer who

would admit to having overlooked sending a Notice of Disposition.

Certificate applications record the name and address of the purchaser's conveyancer whereas the vendor's conveyancer is rarely noted.

I recall a recent occasion where as a result of investigating a returned rate notice the purchaser's Solicitor recorded on the Rate Certificate Application was contacted, he confirmed that settlement had in fact taken place some months prior. When he was requested to forward a Notice of Acquisition his answer was a definite, "No, it is the vendor's Solicitor's responsibility to forward the Notice of Disposition", even though it was impressed upon him that it was in his client's interest, and a file note



of this refusal would be made. (Within a few days however, the requested acquisition notice was lodged at our office).

By Betsie Young
Asst. Rate Collector
City of Knox

V.I.R.A. GENERAL MEETING

Local Government Act 1989 Workshop

- WHEN:** Friday, 16th March 1990 - 9.30 am.
- WHERE:** City of Benalla
Civic Centre, Fawcner Street, Benalla
- PROGRAM:**
- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 9.30 am. | Registration |
| 10.00 am. | Workshop Session - Local Government Act 1989 |
| 12.30 pm. | Lunch |
| 2.00 pm. | VIRA General Meeting |
| 4.30 pm. | Close |
- REGISTRATION:** \$25.00 per person (Includes lunch cost)

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE

Following the conclusion of the General Meeting, a social weekend will be arranged. It is anticipated this will be at either Cobram/Barooga or Corowa and will include golf, tennis and other activities.

If you intend to participate in the Social Weekend, please contact Geoff Fleming, City of Oakleigh, phone (03) 567 3651 no later than Thursday, 15th February, 1990.

MAV SEMINARS

The MAV have advised that they will be holding seminars in February/March 1990. The content will be an in-depth focus on the more comprehensive provisions of the Local Government Act 1989, with particular emphasis on the development and use of rating models.

REGIONS

NEW REGION PROPOSED FOR VIRA

It has been proposed to establish a new Region of the Institute in the north-central part of Victoria.

Municipalities situated in the "general" area of Bendigo are invited to attend a meeting to discuss professional advantages in forming a Region of the Institute which would serve Members and other interested colleagues in the field of rate/revenue management in Local Government and Water Boards.

Executive Members and Regional Convenors of the Institute will attend this meeting which has been arranged by Mr Geoff Cook, Manager, Administration and Community Services for the Shire of Strathfieldsaye.

If you would like to attend the meeting and register your support for this initiative, please contact Geoff Cook on (054) 43 9555. Geoff needs to know numbers attending for catering purposes and would be happy to forward a copy of the meeting agenda.

The meeting, which will be opened by Mr B Edwards, Strathfieldsaye's Shire Manager (Chief Executive Officer), will take place at the Shire of Strathfieldsaye's Municipal Offices, Condon Street, Kennington on Friday 23rd February 1990 commencing at 10.30 am.

SOUTH EASTERN

The final meeting for 1989 of the south-eastern region was held at the Shire of Korumburra on Friday 8th December. The meeting was conducted as a workshop session with the topic of discussion - Perceived Problems in the new Local Government Act.

The 1990 meetings will be advised in the next issues of the newsletter.

GEELONG

1990 meetings for the Geelong Region are as follows:

- 4th February - Shire of Bellarine
- 16th May - City of Geelong
- 15th August - City of Newtown
- 6th December - Geelong and District Water Board

BALLARAT

1st February - Ballarat Water Board
Subsequent meeting dates and venues will be arranged at this meeting.

*Regional Meetings
are an opportunity
for members
to share ideas.*

With elections now behind us in Victoria and the Government having (once again) announced the relevant dates at the last moment, it is interesting to look at how elections are tackled in other States, in order to compare it with the Victorian experience.

Municipal elections in Tasmania were conducted on Saturday 1st April (Yes! I said 1st April) and it is difficult to conceive of anything more different from Victorian elections, than Tasmanian ones.

For a start, rather than being conducted on the extended preferential basis, as they are in Victoria, the Tasmanian local government elections use the "Hare-Clarke" system which is a type of proportional scheme somewhat similar to that used in the City of Richmond. An explanation of the intricacies of the "Hare-Clark" voting system would take more pages than are available in this newsletter, so I will skip going into any further details of it in this article, other than to say that it can produce significantly different results to an election in Victoria where the candidates must go to preferences in order to decide who is elected.

As far as the composition of the Voters Roll (or list of electors, as it is called here) is concerned, each voter can have up to 3 entitlements. One is that of a property owner - so long as you are an Australian Citizen and that is the only "automatic" qualification to get your name on the roll - and the others are those of a company nominee and what is called a "Power of Attorney" vote. This is the vote exercised by the nominated voter for a

non-naturalized property owner, who, not being naturalized must nominate an Australian citizen to vote on his/her behalf if they wish to exercise a vote.

Other categories of voters (not being property owners) are Occupier voters and Resident voters. Occupier voters are these who are the spouse of the owner and "Resident" voters are the over 18 year old offspring of property owners or flat-dwellers, tenants, etc.

The concept of the "unenrolled voters vote" is still in fairly frequent use here by people who haven't applied for enrolment prior to the roll close-off. Such votes are taken back to the Town Hall after the election in the special envelopes in which they are sealed by the voters and eligibility details are checked out by Rates Department staff (as far as is possible) on the night of the election. Few are successful.

One of the most peculiar aspects of local government elections here is that there are NO endorsed candidates of political parties standing for municipal elections. This is probably a reflection of what must be the most striking difference between Tasmania and Victorian elections, which is that NOBODY is allowed to hand out any "How-to-Vote" cards, display any posters or do any soliciting for votes on election day!

"...One of the most peculiar aspects of local government elections here is that there are NO endorsed candidates of political parties standing for municipal elections..."

There are NO scrutineers at individual polling places and all of those front lawns which have sported signs advertising the favourite candidate of the resident in the weeks leading up to the election, are conspicuously bare on the day of the election.

In the City of Launceston, each of the four wards has a distinctive colour for its respective voters roll cover, and the ballot papers for each roll are similarly coloured. Each polling place in each ward is equipped with the voters rolls for all four wards and a supply of ballot papers for each ward.

At the end of the night, a "primary count" is done at each polling place, then all ballot papers are placed back in the ballot box, which is then locked and brought back to the "Tally Room" at the Town Hall for the actual count.

Yes, that's right, despite the fact that the complicated "quota system" of the Tasmanian "Hare-Clarke" elections seems (at least to me) to be far more complicated than the Victorian preferential system, the actual vote counting and allocation of preferences and determination of required "quotas" is done at a centralized tally room.

Before you start shaking heads and say "It isn't possible", perhaps I should inform you of another little difference between Victorian and Tasmanian elections: - voting here is NOT COMPULSORY!

The election in Launceston this year produced what the old hands called a "fairly good turnout", of 24% of those enrolled. With voting not being compulsory, obviously the Rates Department staff do not have to go through the annual Victorian nightmare of the "follow-

up" procedure, and from an administrators viewpoint, that has to be a plus. But from the point of view of the ease of manipulation of election results, one has to wonder about the possible outcome of the State Government's suggested interest in the prospect of conducting elections in future by total postal ballot.

"... voting here is NOT COMPULSORY!..."

As to whether there are any lessons for Victoria to learn from this procedure is concerned, the circumstance in the two States are different and so are the perceived needs. One area however in which the Tasmanian procedure is perhaps paradoxically more suited to Victorian circumstances than to its own, is the order in which candidates names are displayed on the ballot paper.

The printers of the ballot papers are given a special mathematical formula in which to produce the number of papers required for each ward.

It used to be that any candidate blessed with the name of "Aanensen", would poll more donkey votes than one named "Zurek". Victoria introduced balloting for positions on the paper in order to curb this genetic "rigging" of a poll, but that system does not wipe out the donkey vote favouring the first candidate on the paper.

Continued Page 8

TALES FROM TASMANIA

continued

In Tasmania, the position of candidates names on a ballot paper is rotated so that nobody could receive an unfair advantage from a donkey vote. No matter how many candidates appear on the paper for a particular ward, their names will be rotated in such a manner as they each appear an equal number of times at the top, the bottom, or anywhere in between.

As stated earlier, it would seem that this system is more suited to the compulsory voting system as applies in Victoria, where a large proportion of voters front up only to escape a non-voters fine. One wonders at its relevance to

a "non-compulsory" voting system as applies in Tasmania, where it would be presumed that a voter appears through personal or pecuniary motivation.

Again, as stated earlier, there are not necessarily any lessons to be learned from this broad and brief comparison between voting systems, as the perceived needs and political climates of each State are different, but it can be interesting to see how the other half lives!

Steve Collins

CITY OF LAUNCESTON

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FACES GOING PLACES

Louise Sharp
Assistant Rate Collector, City of Box Hill
formerly Administrative Officer, City of
Nunawading.

Russell Hodges
Rate Collector, Shire of Grenville
formerly Rate Collector, Shire of
Sherbrooke.

Jill Cussons
Formerly Asst. Rate Collector, City of
Springvale.

Bruce Smith
Rate Collector, City of Camberwell
formerly Rate Collector, City of Kew.

Brian Mitchell
Rate Collector, Shire of Woorayl,
formerly Rate Collector, City of Richmond.

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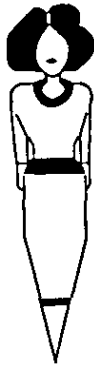
249-251 Normanby Road, South Melbourne,
Victoria, 3205

MISSING PERSON'S NOTICE

Anybody knowing the whereabouts of Russell Hodges, late of Sherbrooke and Jill Cussons, late of Springvale (better known as Bonnie and Clyde) is urged to contact Mr Rod Hughes.

Both fugitives are considered dangerous and should only be approached when bearing amber fluid gifts.

Hodges was last seen in the forward pocket of the Collingwood football ground!



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NEW AWARD FOR RATE COLLECTORS?

With award restructure the flavour of the month, here is an extract which may be of interest.

RATE COLLECTOR

13. (a) Where the revenue of a municipality exceeds £100,000 a rate collector shall be paid a minimum annual margin of 551.

Where the revenue of a municipality does not exceed 100,000 the rate collector shall be paid a minimum annual/margin according to the grading herein.

Minimum Annual Margin

Grade A £ 502

Grade B £ 444

The grading of a rate collector shall be based on the officer's degree of responsibility in the Council's service.

This award came into operation on the 1st May 1955 and I will not mention anyone who was employed at that time and still is a practising rate collector.

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