



A.C.N. 005 304 254
INCORPORATED 1977

VICTORIAN INSTITUTE of RATE ADMINISTRATORS

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Vol XVIII No 3

VIRA NEWS

JUNE, 1994

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, the V.I.R.A. year comes to another close and what an eventful year it has been.

There is certainly a blanket of uncertainty in the industry in this time of reform. As I have attended Regional Meetings throughout the State, I have emphasised that it is during these challenging times that our Professionalism needs to shine through.

Being Part of Reform rather than being taken apart by Reform is the key. *Create and take opportunities* as they arise. For at the end of the day, whether your Local Government career is secured or not, at least you can say that you have given it your best and not be left with the feeling of "if only I had done . . .".

A saying that has assisted me in attitude and decision making is "It's not the things you do in life you come to regret, it's the things you don't do".

The 1993/94 year has been an eventful year with;

RATING REVIEW SEMINAR AND WORKSHOP - SEPTEMBER, 1993

An industry first in achieving Workshop results at the end of the day captured on appropriately formatted discs for each respective Council that attended. In all, some 150 people from some 70 Councils.

V.I.R.A. BUSINESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT IN DECEMBER, 1993

What better time to respond to the ever changing environment with the development of a Business Plan that will be flexible enough to be responsive to the

changing environment and needs of our members.

It has been a tremendous exercise to closely examine the appropriateness of V.I.R.A.'s business and the need to further examine potential new business to see us through the ever changing 90's.

I.M.E.A. FORMATION OF MEGA PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTE IN DECEMBER, 1993.

The Institute of Municipal Engineers Australia (I.M.E.A.) called for a combined meeting of all Local Government Professional Associations with the view of forming a Mega Professional Institute organisation of which I believe the Professional Association would form "chapters".

Unfortunately, V.I.R.A. was not included in these discussions which I have taken up with the I.M.E.A. on behalf of our 250 members.

COUNTRY CONFERENCE - FEBRUARY, 1994.

Another extremely successful Conference with some 70 people spending the 4 days with us.

Heavy duty training and development occurring with sessions on:

- C.C.T. and you.
- Local Government Reform.
- Voter Entitlement.
- Easy Way Repayment (10 Monthly Instalments)
- And much, much more . . .

Newsletter Co-Ordinator: Clare Bowkett Ph (03) 490 4213 Fax (03) 499 1391
(Articles and contributions should be faxed to Clare on the above number.)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

A key area of V.I.R.A. business is the Professional Development Program co-ordinated by Noel Grant at the Shire of Deakin and facilitated by M.A.V. Training Services.

Hundreds of people have attended this invaluable training/development program and upon talking with George Peters (Training Services Co-Ordinator) tells me that there are waiting lists for this years program which commences in June. See details of programs in this issue of the Newsletter.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT

It has been very encouraging to see the establishment of eight V.I.R.A. Regions throughout the State.

Regions play a critical role in meeting members needs at a local level and I hold a high regard for the efforts and support provided by the Regional Convenors and their secretaries.

I extend my gratitude to the following people:

Convenor	Secretary	Region
Ian Effret	Mandy Williams	Ballarat
John Stewart	John Stewart	Geelong
Paul Telfer	Colin Adams	Gippsland
Sane Hinchliffe	Shane Hinchliffe	Mallee Wimmera
Graeme Tindle	Graeme Tindle	Northern Central
Ian Holland	Barry Adams	South Eastern
Dayle King	Dayle King	South Western

I am sure that as the reliance on the support that Regions provide to members increases, the V.I.R.A. Executive will ensure that the necessary information and resources are provided to maximise our effectiveness at a local level.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The new 1994/95 Committee has a big task ahead of them with issues such as:

- Amalgamations
- Transitional Arrangements for Rating and Valuations
- Compulsory Competitive Tendering
- Establishment of Business Units
- Business Plan Implementation

The demand for Professional Training and guidance will be higher than ever before and the need for members to strengthen the V.I.R.A. Support Network throughout the State will have to occur.

Finally, as my 2nd year term as President comes to a close, I want to personally thank my Committee,

Bob Smart	City of St. Kilda
Brian Hall	City Berwick
Alan Wise	City of Greater Geelong
Julie Pritchett	City of Werribee
Dale Muir	City of Knox
Clare Bowkett	City of Heidelberg
Noel Grant	Shire of Deakin
Gerry Pekin	Municipal Revenue Services

for their knowledge, experience support and professionalism. You could not ask for a better team and the success of V.I.R.A. has been largely attributable to their efforts.

As in the past, V.I.R.A. will continue its total commitment to its members, endeavouring to be responsive in meeting the individual needs of members.

Thank you to all for your valued friendship and support.

Martin King F.V.I.R.A. A.I.M.M.
STATE PRESIDENT - V.I.R.A.

NEW MEMBERS

Member	Laurence (Bill) Keane	Council	Wycheproof
	David Gleeson		Sherbrooke
	Jan Schulz		Cobram

WONDERING WHETHER YOU WERE GOING TO RUN THE POLL?

NO The State Electoral Office do it all for you!!

Municipal Poll of Voters Cities of Port Melbourne South Melbourne and St. Kilda

A poll of voters in the City of Port Melbourne, the City of South Melbourne and the City of St. Kilda will be held on Saturday, 21 May, 1994.

Voters of these municipalities will vote on the Local Government Board's proposal that:

the Cities of Port Melbourne, south Melbourne and St. Kilda be joined to form one municipality.

The ballot paper will ask you:

Are you in favour of the proposal?

Write YES or NO in the box on the ballot paper.

Voting is not compulsory in the poll.

Who is eligible to vote?

Electors enrolled for the municipalities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St. Kilda are eligible to vote at the poll. The rolls for the poll closed on 8 April 1994.

When to vote?

Polling day is Saturday, 21 May 1994, 8.00a.m. to 6.00p.m.

Where to vote?

A full list of polling places will appear in The Age and the Herald Sun on Saturday, 14 May 1994.

Do you need a postal vote?

If you are unable to reach a polling place on Saturday, 21 May, you can obtain a postal vote beforehand.

Postal vote application forms are available from the

Office of the Returning Officer, and from the City of St. Kilda and the City of South Melbourne. Your application form must reach the Returning Officer by Thursday, 19 May 1994.

You can obtain a postal vote in person between 8.30a.m. and 5.00p.m. up to Friday, 20 May 1994, at the following locations.

- The City of St. Kilda Town Hall, Cnr Carlisle Street and Brighton Road (entry from Brighton Road). Telephone: 018 179 596
- The City of South Melbourne Town Hall, 208 Bank Street, South Melbourne. Telephone: 595 8222
- The Office of the Returning Officer (see below).

Need further information?

If you would like further information regarding the polls or to check whether you are eligible to vote, please contact the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer's address is:

Returning Officer
State Electoral Officer,
Ground Floor, 22 William Street, MELBOURNE 3000
Telephone: 629 5995
Open: 8.30a.m. to 5.00p.m. weekdays.

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REGION NEWS

SOUTH EAST REGION REPORT

The last meeting of the Region was held at the Shire of Cranbourne and those attending were welcomed by Manager of Finance Ken Mcrae who advised Cranbourne would be proclaimed a City on April 5, 1994. Twelve members attended and three guests from Laurens & Co.

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Wayne Slack – Managing Director Laurens & Co. gave a brief overview of the Company and its' position as a major player in the "Debt Recovery Industry".

John Fitzgerald & Co. Solicitors, gave a presentation on Legal Recoveries and answered a list of pre-prepared questions given to him by members.

members appreciated the candour of John's presentation.

Martin King gave a V.I.R.A. update:

- Report on Country Conference.
- Advised the Rating Review had been deferred until 1995 and said V.I.R.A. will recommend a rating package.
- Voting Entitlement – changes yet to become a operative
- Business Plan – is in draft form and will be finalised for A.G.M. 1994.

Other Topics discussed:

- Unclaimed Monies Act
- Proposal for Councils to Provide Rebates to Nonmains Gas & Electricity Consumers
- Review of Regional Structure

It was decided to leave boundaries as is and the matter would be discussed by State Executive.

Ian Holland
CONVENOR

BALLARAT REGION REPORT

Change, change and more change.

For those of us who have been in Local Government for many years, the changes that have and are taking place is a milestone in the history of Local Government. For those of us who are comparatively new in Local Government administration, change may not be so dramatic, as one grows up with a life of continual

change.

By the time this Report is presented, one of the greatest changes to Local Government in the Ballarat Region will probably have occurred, that being the creation of a Greater Ballarat Municipality and two Rural Municipalities, replacing eight current Local government structures. If and when this does occur, we must accept the challenge, particularly in the rates administration area to make it work. I would hope that this Regional Institute could be part of the successful transition in new municipal structures with each one of us in the respective localities offering our talents and services to be part of that change.

During the past twelve months, the Region has held three quarterly meetings. The meetings were as follows:–

14/8/93

Joint Regional Meeting with North Central region hosted by the City of Maryborough – Guest Speakers – Alan Wise from Greater Geelong Municipality (Bellarine District), – Noel Grant, Shire of Deakin.

3/11/93

Quarterly Meeting hosted by the Shire of Ballarat – Guest Speaker – Sue Hough, Financial Counsellor with the Ballarat Children's Home and Family Services.

3/2/94

Quarterly Meeting hosted by the Central Highland Region Water Authority, Ballarat. General discussion and problem solving being the agenda.

All the meetings have been well attended, and I trust that you have all benefited in some way or another. One benefit must be knowing the face at the other end of the telephone when you have a problem to solve.

I thank V.I.R.A. President, Martin King, and the members of his Committee, namely Alan Wise, Noel Grant, Clare Bowkett, Gerry Pekin and Brian Hall for their support at each Regional meeting.

I acknowledge also the hospitality of the authorities who hosted the quarterly meetings.

It is proposed, possibly in July to hold a joint meeting with the South Western region with the venue yet to be named.

One of the highlights of my year as Convenor was being able to attend the Annual country General Meeting and

REGION NEWS CONTINUED

Conference held at the Mulwala Services Club from the 18th – 21st February, 1994. A well rewarding and social occasion, which I hope many of you will have the privilege to attend in the future.

Finally, I wish to record my thanks to Secretary, Mandy Williams, for her assistance to me personally and for her contribution to the success of the Region.

I thank you all for allowing me the opportunity again to be your Convenor of the Ballarat Region of the Victorian Institute of Rate Administrators.

Alan D. Effrett
CONVENOR

WIMMERA MALLEE REPORT

Our last meeting was held on Friday the 25th March, 1994 at the recently opened new offices of the Shire of Warracknabeal.

Bernie Naylor is justifiably proud of the new offices and has plenty of room at last. Perhaps local government. Restructure was not high on the list of reasons for a new office but no doubt Warracknabeal do have room to accommodate more staff should the need arise.

Again we only had a small attendance but what wasn't there in quantity was definitely made up for in quality. Arapiles were an unusual apology having suffered a rather messy burglary the night before.

Martin King (State President & Snappy Dresser) represented the Executive and again was a fountain of information.

Most of the morning session was spent recounting the Country Conference to those members unfortunate enough not to have attended.

Lunch was then taken at a local hotel where the Convenor "hassled" all present for sponsorship for a Charity Bike Ride he was taking part in.

The afternoon session covered many areas some of which were as follows:-

- Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates was discussed with a view to tendering the processes to private enterprise.
- Adverse Possession, how where and why.
- Municipal Charge exemptions for Single Farm Enterprises.
- Section 177 of the Local Government Act, 1989 re

Occupiers paying rates in lieu of rent.

- The Unclaimed Monies Act.
- Non Mains Energy Concessions.

It was decided to hold the next meeting on the 12th of August, 1994 at the Shire of Kaniva.

Our thanks go to Martin for his attendance and information and Bernie Naylor and the Shire of Warracknabeal for their assistance in organizing the meeting and providing such a comfortable venue.

Shane Hinchliffe
CONVENOR

EAST GIPPSLAND REGION REPORT

A Meeting was held at the Shire of Avon on 20th April, 1994 with twelve present.

Topics discussed were Municipal Charge and State Deficit Levy exemptions, Elections and Voter Eligibility, Compulsory Competitive Tendering, VIRA Regional Structure, Rateability of Granny Flats, Amalgamations both Water and Municipal, Enterprise Bargaining.

Elections were also held with the Secretary and Convenor being returned.

The next Meeting is scheduled for July 28th and will be held at City of Sale commencing at 1.30p.m.

P. Telfer
CONVENOR

NORTH CENTRAL REGION REPORT

A meeting of Rate Office personnel was held at Bendigo on 5th May last. It was pleasing to see so many in attendance, coming from as far as Swan Hill, Cobram, Yea and Gisborne. The main topics considered, naturally included Local Government Restructure and Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

With the announcement of the review timetable for the restructure of the remainder of municipalities throughout the State, it is timely to consider the impact of matters such as the consolidation of property records, different computer systems, valuations dates, voter roll requirements, as well as our relationships with Rate Officers from adjoining municipalities.

The immediate future is unclear and obviously we all

REGION NEWS CONTINUED

will need to adopt a positive and professional approach to the changes that are imminent. We should all obtain as much information as possible concerning the processes involved – because the more we know, the more successful will be the transition.

Graeme Tindle
CONVENOR

GEELONG REGION

The Geelong Region held their last meeting at the City of Colac on the 19th May, 1994 with 5 members present. The main topics covered at the meeting included pensioner rate rebates, 1994 elections and the future of this region.

Following the creation of the City of Greater Geelong and Surf Coast Shire in this Region the number of Council's represented in the Region has decreased from 13 to 8 and with further amalgamations pending it was generally agreed that the Geelong Region was no longer viable, as can be seen by the number attending the last meeting, and that it be incorporated with another Region. A motion was passed that this matter be discussed at the Annual General Meeting.

The meeting also congratulated Allan Wise and Clive Wenlock on their appointments as Revenue Manager and Valuer, respectively to the City of Greater Geelong.

John Stewart
CONVENOR

— Remaining Meeting Dates & Venues —

Annual General Meeting	8th July, 1994	KNOX CLUB
East Gippsland Region	28th July, 1994	CITY OF SALE
South East Region	16th June, 1994	CITY OF SPRINGVALE
Wimmera Mallee Region	12th August, 1994	SHIRE OF KANWA

RESPONSE

—IMAGING SERVICES—

Systems and solutions for Local Government

Election Roll Processing/Printing System: Includes: Display rolls; Scanning Rolls, Scanning services and processing, Extraction of over 70's exceptions, and Failure to vote notices. Features of the system: Prompt service; Easy to read rolls, complete audit tracking and a new PC voted/not voted package giving you complete control of the failure to vote process.

MICR AND GENERAL LASER PRINTING: Desk top MICR systems (full training, support and equipment supplies); Laser printing imaged A3/A4 both single and/or double sided.

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Compulsory Competitive Tendering VIRA Country Conference, Mulwalla February 1994

by Geoff Fleming, Municipal Revenue services

Perhaps what is the greatest change to Local Government was the main subject of discussion and training at the VIRA seminar held in February.

The session was conducted by Laurie Boyd who has travelled to both England and the USA studying the privatisation of Local Government in those countries as well as to Canada and New Zealand and how it may relate in the Victorian environment. As a result the all day session was both informative and entertaining. Clearly CCT will have a major effect on the Rate/Revenue office in the future.

It was indicated that unlike the experiences on overseas, a percentage of Council expenditure must be tendered out starting with 20% in the first year and rising to 30% and then 50% Overseas the privatisation is not on a percentage but the central Government indicates the types of services to be contracted out.

Already most councils contract out a percentage of their expenditure but this is predominantly in the blue collar areas of road construction and garbage collection. As the percentage increases then Council will look to areas currently performed by office staff. These may include the Building surveyor, the Valuer (already predominant in the contracting out) and also the Rate Office.

Laurie suggested that the legislation may allow for the percentages under CCT to include all areas that have been subject to a public advertisement to obtain expressions of interest. In the rating area this could include debt collection, printing and even postage. These are the areas of large expenditure and would increase Council's percentages under CCT.

CCT can be done in a number of ways including contracting out to in-house staff, to a private sector company or to a Council owned company and by the development of a Business Unit.

Suggestions in dealing with the impact of CCT in the work place included taking a planned approach, developing a business plan, performance plan and bench marks.

This is done by:

- identifying activities,
- evaluating performance,
- identifying true and unit costs,

- doing a SWOT analysis,
- developing a strategic business plan,
- review work practices and develop revenue and pricing policies for the work area.

Council should also provide resources and training for both staff and management to assist them to be able to be competitive in the changes taking place.

It was noted also that there are many benefits to CCT for staff. These include:

- cost effectiveness,
- control,
- in some cases improved customer service,
- a review of work practices,
- the breaking down of professional barriers,
- the reduction of costs,
- improved satisfaction and a more positive work force,
- clarity of expectations and
- the amatisation of costs such as the property data base over the whole of the municipality.

Of course there are also problems associated with the introduction of CCT. These include:

- the loss of expertise,
- loss of personal service,
- reduction and loss of staff morale,
- confidentiality,
- loss of local identity,
- in the case of rates the control of the major income source and
- the control of a core data base.

Despite these difficulties and the fact that Councils now spend more than 20% of expenditure on contracted out services, the rate office is under threat of privatisation. It must be remembered that these percentages are only minimum's and will be looking for areas to contract out.

Already some Councils have indicated that they are willing to look at the rate office as an area for privatisation, so all members of the VIRA should inform themselves of what the legislation requires and how they can protect themselves. The seminar was only the start of the education process.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR RATE ADMINISTRATORS

*Presented by MAV Training Services
in association with the Victorian Institute of Rate Administrators*

Key Program Contents and Guest Speakers to include:

Module 1:

Rate Office Functions – Geoff Fleming (Municipal Revenue Services Pty. Ltd., and Noel Grant (Deputy Shire Secretary, Shire of Deakin)

Municipal Valuations – Frank Black (Lecturer, RMIT)

The Budget Process – Martin King (Manager, Financial services, City of Croydon)

Rating Provisions – Gerry Pekin (Municipal Revenue Services Pty. Ltd.)

Module 2:

Debt Recovery Management – Rod Hughes

Voting, Election and Polling Administration – Robert Smart (Revenue Manager, City of St. Kilda) and Brian Hall (Rate Administrator, City of Berwick)

Legal Aspects of Rate Administration – Elizabeth Loftus (Executive Director, Leo Cussen Institute)

Module 3:

Preparing People for Change – Bernie Cronin (Human Resources Manager, MAV)

MODULE 1

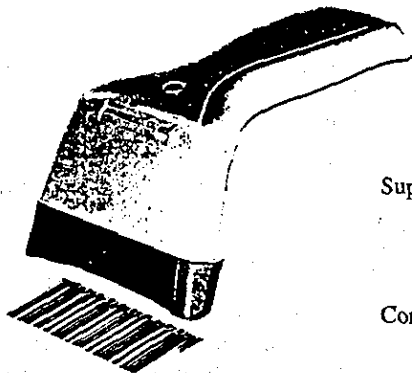
Managing the Business Unit (Part 1)
(Wednesday, June 15 and Thursday, June 16, 1994)

- Managing Change
- Rating Provisions
- The Budget Process
- Rate Office Functions
- Municipal Valuations

MODULE 2

Managing the Business Unit (Part 2)
(Monday, June 27 and Tuesday, June 28, 1994)

- Debt Recovery Management
- Effective Customer service
- Voting Election and Polling Administration
- Legal Aspect of Rate Administration



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Contact:

Craig Morton 538 9299
Geoff Fleming 510 1788

MODULE 3

Developing a Competitive Services Approach (Monday, July 25 and Tuesday, July 26, 1994.)

- What the CCT Legislation means to Rate Administrators
- Philosophy of Developing Competitive Services
- Establishing a strategy for getting Started
- Benefits, Problems and Dilemmas
- Costing – direct and indirect costs
- Establishing a supportive culture for staff
- Training and development strategies
- Focusing on performance problems
- Team building in a time of change

FACILITATOR: Laurie Boyd

Laurie is well known as a course facilitator in Local Government and is a regular contributor to MAV

Training Courses. He has 20 years direct management experience in Local Government and has worked extensively with a large number of councils on Organisational Development, Corporate Planning and Human Resource Management. He has presented and facilitated this program since 1990.

Laurie has also gained significant experience in the area of Competitive Tendering in Local Government. He has visited New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America to study local government structures and processes.

Early in 1994 Laurie visited England to study their local government structures and specifically the establishment of Business Units, Business Planning and how to get started on CCT.

COURSE ARRANGEMENTS:

The Package:	This course is intended to be run as a complete package of 3 modules.
Mix and Match:	Councils have the option of sending different individuals to the modules being offered.
Special Arrangements:	Attendance at less than the complete package of 3 modules can be arranged to suit individual requirements.

COURSE DETAILS:

- VENUE:** Municipal Association of Victoria Training Room 11-35 Milton Parade, Malvern Vic. 3144
- COST:** \$660 per participant for the package or \$260 for a single module
This fee includes course notes and materials. Plus a light lunch, morning and afternoon tea on each day.
- TIME:** Each day will commence at 9.00a.m. and finish at 4.30p.m.
All enquiries to be directed to George Peters on (03) 823 5576

**This course has been designed in accordance
with the Training Guarantee Act**

Victorian Institute of Rate Administrators

The newsletter is published four times yearly, it is a great way to have your say on any issues or let others know about particular problems you've experienced and how you dealt with them; OR perhaps ask for advice on issues you have not come across before.

Information or articles on topics such as:

Changing Legislation and its effects

Regional News

Faces Going Places

Welcome to New Members

Odd Spots

Events/Seminars

Professional Development

Relevant Cartoon Strips

would all be appreciated.

If you have any contributions or articles contact Clare Bowkett at the City of Heidelberg.

Telephone Number: 490 4213

Facsimile Number: 499 1391

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Gippsland	Paul Telfer	Shire of Avon	Tel: (051) 456 233 Fax: (051) 456 900
Mallee/ Wimmera	Shane Hinchliffe	Shire of Kowree	Tel: (055) 851 011 Fax: (055) 851 614
North Central	Graeme Tindle	Shire of Seymour	Tel: (057) 921 200 Fax: (057) 923 998
South Eastern/Metro	Ian Holland	City of Frankston	Tel: (03) 784 1888 Fax: (03) 781 3117
South Western	Dayle King	City of Portland	Tel: (055) 222 220 Fax: (055) 222 220