



VICTORIAN INSTITUTE of RATE ADMINISTRATORS

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VIRA NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By now those members who have received their Institute Handbook will have seen the submission prepared by the previous Committee requesting the provision of a qualification course for Rate Administrators.

This submission contains a brief history of the Institutes endeavours since the first application in 1969. The two previous requests failed for the reasons outlined in the latest submission.

This submission has undergone some recent developments which I would like to bring to your attention.

Anyone who has had the opportunity to read the reports put out by the National Review of Local Government Labour Markets will be aware of its commitment to establish "whether Local Government has available to it an adequate supply of appropriately skilled personnel".

The Review recently held a National seminar at the Melbourne Hilton Hotel on *Education and Training Issues for Local Government*. The Executive saw fit to take this opportunity to pursue the Institute's submission of an accredited qualification course. Noel Buck from the City

of Nunawading and I represented the Institute at the seminar.

The seminar concentrated on tertiary education, multi skilling and wider career paths in Local Government. The program provided for several speakers and ample opportunity for all present to contribute through workshop sessions.

With the direction the Review is taking on education issues for Local Government Geoff Fleming, Dale Muir and myself attended a meeting, arranged by Noel Grant, at the MAV with Mr Geoffrey Winston from the Local Government Training Commission and Mr Laurie Groom from Groom & Groom, consultants to Local Government.

A meeting of almost 3 hours duration produced what we believe is a positive step in the right direction. The proposals put forward at this meeting were documented in a follow-up letter from Mr Winston and subsequently presented to Mr Graham Holmes, Director General of Local Government and Chairperson of the Steering Committee of the National Review of Local Government Labour Markets; at a prearranged meeting.

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Assistant Co-ordinator: Noel Grant - Phone (058) 58 2505 Fax: 582 406

The purpose of the meeting with Mr Holmes was to gain the support of the Local Government Department and the National Review. Mr Holmes has already committed the support of the Local Government Department and has offered to further seek the support of the Minister. He has also agreed to raise our request with the Review's Steering Committee.

Where to Next?

The enthusiastic support of ALL Institute members and interested persons for the provision of an accredited qualification course will be sought at a "Career Development Seminar" to be conducted in early 1989. The purpose of this Seminar will be to establish the needs of practitioners in our field and to determine parameters

of the course to achieve these needs. Your attendance at this seminar is therefore vital to the success of this long term objective of your Institute.

It is anticipated that a circular regarding the seminar will be issued to all Rating Authorities and Members of the Institute during January/February 1989. In the meantime, the Secretary and I welcome any enquiries relating to the concept of furthering the technical and general knowledge of Rate Administration personnel.

Gerry Pekin
PRESIDENT



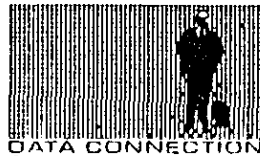
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ELECTORAL SCANNING POSTMORTEM

Former Rate Collector at the City of Broadmeadows, Geoff Woods retired in November after 43 years in Local Government. We would like to thank Geoff for his support and contributions to the Institute and wish him all the best on his retirement. Geoff has been kind enough to provide the Newsletter with the following article which we are sure will be of interest to you.

Most Administrators are now aware that the Australian Electoral Commission offered its services to Local Government to produce voters' roles and handle the follow-up of non-voters.

It was considered a pilot study and because of time constraints there was doubt whether to proceed or leave it till next year.

Broadmeadows, Richmond and Sandringham decided to proceed.

As the Commission did not wish to deviate too far from its own roll that provided for the States, a uniform type of roll for Local Government was decided upon.

First a display roll for general use and sale which included most of the particulars usually found in conventional rolls. Secondly a marked or "clocked" roll to be used at the Polling Booths which could then be scanned page by page to ascertain the non voters.

The main difference being, that the "clocked" roll allowed for only one line of information and the entitlement address for absentee owners or occupiers was shown, instead of their Residential address and property address.

There are some of the frustrations suffered by Broadmeadows.

Our Software firm had to program our roll to suit the needs of the printers for the Commission.

This didn't work on time, so some hurriedly put together conventional rolls had to be printed to satisfy the Local Government Act and be used at nomination time.

When the display rolls did arrive they were not right but were accepted. The "clocked" rolls also carried the incorrect information.

Broadmeadows had an election in all Wards

causing a thin spread of experienced staff. Although a short training session was held and firm instructions given to all staff, some misuse of the rolls occurred, like marking off postal voters on the booth rolls. This was a no no and caused duplications from the scanning.

All of the rolls used were coded and recorded against the various polling places.

After the election, specially coded rolls for the over seventies, postal voters and specific excuses were marked and sent with booth rolls to be scanned.

The reporting system is good.

The non-voters were listed.

The voters were listed and showed the coded number of the roll which could be traced to the polling place.

A list of duplicate voters was produced.

Forms 15 and 16 were produced but were not posted until 7 November. Although not shown on the non-voters list, the forms included the over seventies.

I was disappointed with the result but would not like members to shy away from using this method as it has all the potential for trouble free handling of voters' rolls and follow-up.

The representatives of the Commission, the printers and the software firm were all co-operative but an overall co-ordinator of the project is required.

The referendum and State Election must have also had an affect on the priorities of the Commission and the printers.

Even the referendum pointed out that Local Government comes a very poor third.

GEOFF WOODS
(Former Rate Collector, Broadmeadows)

NORTHCOTE GENERAL MEETING

The City of Northcote played host to the Institute on Friday 18 November, 1988. The meeting was held at 6.00 p.m. in order to give all rates staff the opportunity to attend. Purely from an attendance point of view, this timeslot proved most successful.

The Valuer General, Mr Alan D'Arcy spoke to members on the structure and role of his department. One point of interest Mr D'Arcy raised was that three year valuation cycles, are at this stage, highly unlikely.

Cliff Wenlock of the Geelong Region and Murray Hockey of the South Eastern Region, summarised the most recent meetings of their respective Regions.

At this stage the Institute's former President and now Life Fellow, Mr Lance Collins was called upon to make an important presentation to Mr Murray Hockey, Rate Collector at the City of Sandringham, and Mr Bob Patterson, Rate Collector at the City of Box Hill. Lance's speech is reproduced here for those unable to attend.

*"Mr President,
Members,
Guests*

Thank you all for attending here this evening and thank you for the opportunity for myself to participate in the meeting procedures.

A career in Local Government - particularly in Rate Administration - can often be very frustrating and at times I am sure we all tend to wonder if perhaps we should have chosen a different path.

However, that career can be very rewarding - and not the least of these rewards is the fellowship engendered amongst ones colleagues in membership of a professional Institute such as that which we are enjoying tonight.

But participation in a passive sense is not sufficient. To reap the maximum rewards, participating to the n'th degree should always be the prime objective.

Look back through your association with the Institute and if you can honestly say to yourself, "I have given of my best, I have been of assistance to my fellow members, I have been part of a team that has directed the Institute on a continuing path of advancement, and above all I have earned the respect of my peers" then you have achieved more than most.

Respect and reward are not lightly extended but tonight we have among us two such achievers who have been justly acknowledged by the Executive and members as worthy recipients of the Institute's award of "Certificate of Appreciation".

To those of you who have received your handbook this evening, I commend your attention to the wording of these Certificates and whilst you are thus furthering your education I invite Murray Hockey and Bob Patterson, as recipients of these Awards, to come forward and accept their presentation.

Firstly to you Bob, as the Elder Statesman, and, I believe, a foundation member and committeeman both of this Institute and its predecessor, the Rate Collectors Institute of Victoria, I charge you, as honorary historian and a prospective retiree, not yet to say "enough" but to progressively document your vast knowledge of these various associations together with the members who contributed so much to their successes.

Secondly to you Murray, as the longest serving President and Committeeman of the VIRA may I add to the recognition bestowed upon you this evening my personal thanks for the support and assistance, together with Bob, extended to me during my term on the Executive.

Congratulations to you both and may you long continue to achieve the high standards you have exhibited to date.."



HEIDELBERG MUNICIPAL CHARGE ANALYSIS

The following letter has been supplied by Les Boulter and is reproduced here in part with the consent of Tim Brown, Manager - Management Services of the City of Heidelberg.

30 November, 1988

The Hon Andrew McCutcheon, M P
Minister for Local Government
500 Bourke Street
MELBOURNE 3000

Dear Mr McCutcheon

re: Local Government Bill

We note that the thirteenth revision of this Bill has now been introduced in the Legislative Assembly and understand that debate in the Assembly adjourned to the 8th December.

A brief examination of the Bill suggests there are still a number of issues which require further consideration.

We therefore make the following observations :

- Clause 144(1): Provides that a Council must prepare its estimates by the 30th November. Whilst we have no disagreement with this in principle, there may be occasions where because of shortages of staff, this target is impossible to meet. We consider the Minister should have the power to grant an extension of time in these cases.

- Clause 158: Similar comments apply as for Clause 144(1) in that some Councils may find it impossible to strike the rate by the 30th November. The Bill does not explain what is to occur if the deadline is not met.

- Clause 159: This clause provides for a municipal charge, basically as a replacement for the minimum rate.

The existing minimum rate provisions have applied for around twenty years and were intended to ensure that all properties paid a reasonable amount of rates to cover the costs of provision of services. At

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present 44.42% of properties in the City of Heidelberg are subject to the minimum rate and the amount raised from the minimum represents 32% of rates.

The Bill makes no provision for a minimum rate, but provides for a "municipal charge" which would be a flat amount charged on every property. The amount to be raised from the municipal charge is subject to a limit. The proposal has dramatic implications for Heidelberg as can be seen from the following figures:

On this basis, the maximum municipal charge would be \$106.92 (\$2,590,811 - 24,232 properties). Clearly, many properties now subject to the minimum, would pay only the municipal charge plus the general rate raised by applying the rate in the dollar to the site value.

The shortfall of \$1,554,099 would have to be recovered from the remaining assessments. In other words, the rate in the dollar would have to rise significantly to offset the loss of the minimum rate.

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MINIMUM RATE V. MUNICIPAL CHARGE

At Present :

	\$	%
General Rates	8,809,147	(68.00)
Minimum Rates	4,144,910	(32.00)
Rates Levied	<u>12,954,057</u>	

Proposed :

General Rates	\$10,363,246	(80.00)
Municipal Charge	2,590,811	(20.00)
Total	<u>\$12,954,057</u>	

We believe this is completely unreasonable and consider the minimum rate provision should remain, or the 20% restriction on the municipal charge removed, to ensure that Councils are able to recover a reasonable minimum payment from all properties. We consider a figure around \$300 would be the absolute minimum acceptable to most Councils.

In our experience, developments such as villa units in place of a single residence, impose additional demands on Council services (e.g. - meals on wheels, home help, handyman service, libraries and roads) without contributing a great deal extra in rates. The abolition of a minimum rate will make this situation worse

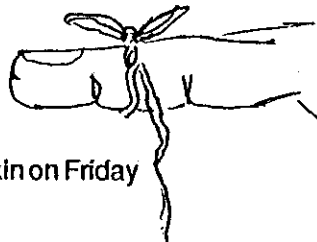
If the Bill is passed now, we believe it will be impossible for it to become operative in its present form and that amendments will be required.

Yours sincerely
G BRENNAN
Chief Executive Officer

Members who have not already made an analysis of the effect of the proposed municipal charge on their municipality should refer to articles published in January/February and July/August 1989 editions of the Newsletter.



DON'T FORGET !!!



Our next meeting will be at the Shire of Deakin on Friday
17 March 1989.

As in the past, the country meeting will be followed by a weekend of social, sporting and more social activities. Further details will be included in the next newsletter, however if you have any queries give Murray Hockey a call at the City of Sandringham.



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CARAVAN PARKS AND MOVABLE DWELLINGS LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Ken Burton - City of Hamilton

These proposals have been put by the Ministry of Housing and Construction to regulate Caravan Parks and confer tenancy rights on people who live in Caravan Parks and movable dwellings. The legislation is currently before the Parliament.

I have looked at the proposed legislation and find sections of the Bill most disturbing and therefore wish to highlight some of them in this article for the benefit of members of the Institute.

The Bill establishes "a right to reside on the site" under Section 5(1) and ensures also that rent increases cannot occur more than once every 180 days except if :-

- the resident was notified of the increase prior to occupying the site or
- the owner increases the rent payable by all residents on the same dates each year.

Notice of a proposed rent increase must be given at least 60 days prior and be in writing. This means there is no implementation program for those involved during the first year of the Act.

In the first year of the regulations it does not matter that you have put rents up at the same time each year in the past. You will still have to establish a pattern under the Bill. This in effect means an occupier of an "on site" van would not have to pay an increase in rental in the first year until the end of March for estimates made in September of the previous year as there had been no pattern established previously.

A further difficulty arises in vacating a site. Regardless of the wishes of the caravan park owner, he must give at least 90 days exclusive and uninterrupted possession of a site, however a resident need give only 7 days notice of intention to vacate. If the site is abandoned by the occupant then the owner must still keep it avail-

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able for 30 days unless "in all the circumstances it would be unreasonable to expect him or her to return" or the Residential Tenancies Tribunal can, upon application, make an order that the resident has abandoned the sit. Some may suggest that it would be quicker to wait the 30 days than await the outcome of the Tribunal decision.

Do they expect a park owner to keep the site vacant or a caravan owner to keep a van vacant for at least 30 days on the off-chance that the resident may return?

Unless an order is obtained from the Tribunal, a caravan park owner must not charge a resident additional rent in respect of any visitor, invitee or licensee who stays in a caravan owned by the resident.

This indicates that the common scale of site fees for amount per person will be inappropriate. It is logical that one person will rent the site and invite others to stay in the caravan with them and take free advantage of all the parks facilities.

A resident who vacates without giving 7 days written notice of same must pay 7 days rent or hire charge.

The proposed Bill does not state how you locate the resident to collect the 7 days rent or hire charge.

I believe the proposals give a resident more rights and privileges and make the conduct and management more difficult than the Landlord and Tenancy Act.

If these proposals are legislated it will no doubt force the closure of many small parks and this would be a great shame for holiday makers throughout Victoria. A copy of my report to Council has been sent to the Ministry of Housing and Construction, and to the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands with a covering letter outlining concerns about the proposals.



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APPOINTMENTS PENDING

CITY OF HAWTHORN (Cashier)	<i>Applications close :</i>	7.12.88
CITY OF FOOTSCRAY: (Assistant Rate Collector)	<i>Applications close :</i>	12.12.88
SHIRE OF METCALF (Rates Officer)	<i>Applications close :</i>	15.12.88
SHIRE OF PAKENHAM (Rates Officer)	<i>Applications close :</i>	16.12.88
CITY OF KEILOR: (Rate Collector)	<i>Applications close :</i>	19.12.88



POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

ANNE VAN SCHAİK: Shire of Kyneton, Rate Collector

JUDI WILDING: City of Knox, Assistant Rate Collector

BETSIE YOUNG: City of Knox, Assistant Rate Collector



FACES GOING PLACES

NEW APPOINTMENTS :

GARY DORE: *Rate Collector*, Shire of Sherbrooke, formerly Rate Collector, Shire of Buln Buln.

ANNE VAN SCHAİK: *Rate Collector*, Shire of Kyneton.

MARJORIE TEMPLETON: *Administrative Officer*, Shire of Bulla.

BARRY NIMBS: *Assistant Rate Collector*, Shire of Sherbrooke, formerly Administration Officer, City of Oakleigh.



APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

ROSLYN BRAUER: *Senior Finance Manager*, City of Colac.

SANDRA WILSON: *Revenue Officer*, City of Maryborough.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

- * The new V I R A Handbook was given out to financial members at the Northcote meeting.
- * V I R A President Gerry Pekin and Secretary Geoff Fleming are off to the inaugural meeting of the South Australian Institute of Rate Administrators. Look out Adelaide !!!
- * The City of Geelong maybe the only municipality in Australia made up of two parts which are separated by another municipality.
- * Following the Northcote meeting Mike Piritidies, Rate Collector at the City of Fitzroy was seen at a prominent night club into the early hours of the morning.
- * Some members have not yet paid their 1988/89 subscriptions. Please do so.
- * The three year valuation cycle, according to the Valuer General, is at this stage, highly unlikely to be introduced.
- * For security purposes, the City of Richmond used chemically sensitized paper with an exclusive water mark for the production of their 1988 election ballot papers. Samples of the ballot papers were given out at the Northcote meeting.
- * Our Secretary, Geoff Fleming is trying out for a position on the "mean machine" and is currently undergoing an intensive training course.
- *Note the haircut!!*
- * Due to incorrect advertising of the time of the meeting for striking the rate, the City of Brighton is required to re-issue their 14,500 rate notices.
- * *The latest draft of the Local Government Bill before Parliament definitely includes the municipal charge with minimum rates to be phased out over a four year period.*
- * Great to see the influx of female members, however one has complained that she can't do much with a V I R A tie. Apparently the ladies don't wear ties at Springvale.
- * In accordance with the Commonwealth Currency Act we are only required to accept silver coins up to the value of \$5, other denominations up to the value of 20 cents and Commonwealth Banknotes up to any amount. So hand back the \$30 of 1 cent coins given to pay for a parking fine.

The following request comes from Andrew Sullivan, Revenue Collector at the City of Springvale. If you have any comments give Andrew, or Geoff Flemming at Oakleigh a call.

I was wondering if we could find out what fee

members charge for providing names of owners of property, firstly for the one-off request over the counter but also for lists of certain property types to Real Estate Agents etc. I realise that it is up to each Council to determine this fee but I thought it might allow us to compare to make sure no-one misses out.

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