



Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid

Hearing Date: 14 March 2024

Questions taken on notice

Directed to: Latrobe City Council, Steven Piasente

Received Date: [Office use]

1. **The CHAIR, page 3**

Question Asked:

Thank you very much. One of the things that many of the other councils has been working on I believe is putting together costings to determine the amount of expenditure and things like this that were done in preparation for the games going ahead. I think many councils have been contacted by the Auditor-General to put together those costings. Have you put together those costings for the council?

Steven PIASENTE: ...I do not think we did provide – I will take that question on notice to the Auditor-General – a quantified cost. We may have, but I will take that on notice and follow that up.

Response: Council calculated direct costs of Commonwealth Games planning at approximately \$245,000. These relate to staffing costs for Games related planning and preparation. There is no mechanism for accurately calculating in-direct costs.

2. **Joe McCracken, page 5**

Question Asked:

Are you able to send us a copy, or perhaps you might take it on notice, of a list of when the meetings were that you had with government, just so we can sort of see a time line of when all of that happened?

Steven PIASENTE: I think generally pretty early on I was heavily involved and then, when I had a manager take on some of that, I had them transition to doing more of the work. I think I could probably quantify that in time blocks as to over these particular months I was heavily involved and then other staff became more involved in some of those meetings.

Joe McCracken: And also dates, just so we can get an idea of when it happened. Are you able to do that, please?

Steven PIASENTE: I think, yes, in a general sense in terms of the general dates.

Response: Meeting requests commenced from the middle of April 2022, from then on requests became more frequent from July 2022, with attendance by CEO or General Manager, on occasion the Mayor attended. Meetings were generally held every 1-2 weeks from July 2022. Meeting requests varied in duration from 30 mins, to several hours.

Meetings noted in the attachment may not have been attended by Latrobe City Council and are only of invitations received by the CEO. As planning became more routine and operational, meeting requests were likely received and attended to by the Executive Manager Commonwealth Games in addition to those listed in the attachment.

3. **Joe McCracken, page 5**

Question Asked:

Yes. Are you able to provide a copy to the committee of Latrobe city's submission?

Steven Piasente: I think so. It was pretty light on. I have not actually read the final version of the report. I do not think it has been released publicly. There was an early version that was provided back to us for commentary, and I think there were not many lines in it that actually referenced Latrobe city. It was heavily redacted. We provided some feedback in relation to that, so I think we will be able to provide what our feedback was.

Joe McCracken: The reason I ask is that we will probably see the final report, but we will not see what input that you or others might have had. That is why it is good to see what you have said so that we can get a full picture, that is all. If you are comfortable to do that, that would be fantastic.

Steven Piasente: I will take that on notice, yes.

Response: As Council officers had been advised by the Auditor General of the confidentiality obligations under the Audit Act 1994, we sought advice from VAGO on this matter.

VAGO advised that they do not support Council providing this information.

4. **Melina Bath, page 7**

Question Asked:

...I am aware that in 2020 the government as part of the big build had \$60 million allocated for social and private rental increases for low-income earners. You may need to take this on notice. How many of those new dwellings have been delivered in the Latrobe City Council area, and what is the net housing stock increase?

Steven Piasente: I would definitely have to take that on notice. I had seen a number of permits come through and also announcements from government around that, but I would not have the detail of the actual numbers being delivered.

Response: Council does not have this information. Homes Victoria would be best placed to provide a response to this question. Council has not received a breakdown of the specific projects in Latrobe City but the following information is available on the Homes Victoria website – please refer to link

<https://www.homes.vic.gov.au/whats-happening-my-area#latrobe>

5. **Tom McINTOSH, page 12-3**

Question Asked:

Yes. You made some comments before about the energy sector. Obviously change is happening there – you have had the privately operated generator exit the market. You talked about local suppliers and their work going forward. The program of work with the sort of \$40 billion to \$60 billion of investment in offshore wind – granted your council is not as close to it as perhaps South Gipps or Wellington, but do you see that supply chain opportunity there for businesses within your council? Is that something you are supportive of and wanting to be a part of?

Steven PIASENTE: Yes. So we have done some work around a transition document called *Our Transition*. I can provide a copy.

And p.13 **Steven PIASENTE:** *Our Transition*. That document does not just focus on the energy sector. There are a whole range of other transition opportunities. One of those is right nearby where we are today in Latrobe at our airport, which is around advanced air mobility. So it is a whole range – and advanced air mobility, I might add, is about large drones. We are doing some testing around how they might be able to be used in the future, with Swinburne and Textron and some other industries. They are just a couple of examples of some of the things that we are seeking to support in terms of transition. We are happy to provide that.

Response: The ‘Our Transition’ plan is available at the following weblink:

<https://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-04/Our%20Transition%20-%20April%202023.pdf>

6. **David DAVIS, page 13**

Question Asked:

...But I just want to follow on from Ms Bath. With the public housing issues and the affordable housing issues and the potential legacy public housing, it would be very helpful for us if there was a sort of a stocktake document that you had that looked at public and social housing and affordable housing in your municipality and that perhaps even tracked that. What we are interested to see is that the state government is held to account here and that there is a significant increase in the availability. Do you have such a stocktake document? I guess that is what I would say.

Steven PIASENTE: I would have to take that on notice. I know a couple of senior members of my team are very passionate around this issue, and they have done some work previously around what social and affordable housing might mean in

terms of our policies, so I am happy to provide that detail where I can. I do recall, I think it was some time ago, the state government had proposed some changes to how funding might be provided for social and affordable housing into the future. And when that was being proposed I did see some data around where Latrobe sat particularly in terms of social housing. It was very high as a percentage in comparison to most other municipalities. And as I touched on earlier, a lot of that is concentrating in particular areas. So I think the policy position the council has developed would assist the state government to deliver a different outcome in the future, which may be beneficial to this local community. So I can provide that detail where I can. I am happy to take that on notice.

Response: Council relies on data provided by Homes Victoria regarding a stocktake of housing as well as demand (and location) which is provided annually. According to the data, in the 22/23 financial year, 6% of all dwellings are social dwellings, that is a total of 2,152 (dashboard attached).

The priority access preferences indicate that Traralgon (1063) is the most in demand location, followed by Morwell (886) and then Moe (788). For the Register of Interest preferences, Traralgon is in highest demand (795), then Morwell (747) and then Moe (657). One-bedroom dwellings are the most in demand for both the Register of Interest and the Priority Access lists.

Council has access to spatial data for current DHS housing stock and has identified in its *Social and Affordable Housing Strategy 2021* (attached) to undertake further strategic planning work to develop a more holistic oversight of social and affordable housing – i.e. including social and affordable housing provided by the private/community sector.

7. **Michael GALEA, page 14**

Question Asked:

Just briefly, we have talked a lot about obviously the big towns in the valley as well a bit today. There are also some smaller communities that you have as well, from Yinnar and Boolarra in the south to Toongabbie and Glengarry in the north. The Tiny Towns grant program has been underway quite recently. Is council supporting any of its communities for a grant as part of that program?

Steven PIASENTE: I cannot recall. I might have to take that one on notice, but yes, we do have a diversity of townships in Latrobe city that would be keen to seek some of those funding opportunities. But I will take that question on notice as to whether we have supported any through that program.

Response: Council promoted the Tiny Towns Fund to each of the small town committees in order that they were aware of the opportunity to submit applications.

Council is not aware of any applications made directly by any of the small towns, however Council did submit 5 applications as follows:

- BBQ Shelter - Churchill
- Water Fountains (3) – Churchill, Tyers and Yinnar
- Cricket Practise Nets - Toongabbie

8. Additional question on notice from Michael GALEA to Mr Piasente

Question Asked:

Mr Silvester from the Latrobe Valley Badminton Association has told the Committee that he is disappointed with a lack of permanent line markings on the major courts at the Gippsland Regional Indoor Sports Stadium. He is similarly concerned that this may not be addressed as part of the proposed upgrade to the stadium. As the operator of the stadium, does Council have a position on this request, particularly with regard to opportunities through the upgrade?

Response: Commonwealth Games planning for Badminton at the Gippsland Regional Indoor Sports Stadium (GRISS) was based upon the use of competition flooring being bumped-in as a part of the “overlay” set-up. Additional permanent line markings were not planned.

Council officers work on-going with the Badminton Association to ensure that they have sufficient access to courts to meet their needs. Permanent court line markings can be amended at any point in the future should that demand change.