



Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into Local Government funding and services

Hearing Date: 7 August 2024

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: Greater Geelong City Council

Received Date: 22 October 2024

1. **Evan MULHOLLAND, page 25**

Question asked:

Evan MULHOLLAND: I have just got a quick question to start with. It was something raised earlier. Have you received any correspondence from the Department of Health or been advised that you need to co-fund the Department of Health's central immunisation program?

Troy EDWARDS: Thanks for your question, Mr Mulholland. Look, I could not say that it is on my radar. That is not to say that we have not received it.

Evan MULHOLLAND: You can take it on notice if you like.

Troy EDWARDS: Yes, definitely. We can find out. It is possible, but I just could not say with any certainty.

Response: Please refer to the attached documents related to the charge. These sentences cover the essence of the change.

2. **Bev McARTHUR, page 27**

Question asked:

Bev McARTHUR: Great. I also see you are sitting in your very elaborate new premises. How much did that cost?

Troy EDWARDS: This premises? That is a good question. I do not know that off the top of my head.

Bev McARTHUR: Take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Feel free to take it on notice

Response: \$102.5 MILLION

3. **Bev McARTHUR, page 28**

Question asked:

Bev McARTHUR: You have got I think about 11 variations in your rates in Geelong. Can you provide on notice the details of your rating system, please, and how it has increased over a period of time or decreased?

Troy EDWARDS: Yes. We can share our ratings strategy with the committee. That is not a problem at all.

Bev McARTHUR: And the various variations and what percentage they are.

Response: Please refer to table below.

2014-15 there were 12 differentials	Changes to Differentials	Relativity to Residential 2024-25
Residential		100.00%
Vacant		137.12%
Commercial	Combined with The Point - Commercial, Industrial and Petroleum 2023-24	194.73%
The Point - Residential	Combined with Residential 2023-24	0.00%
The Point - Vacant	Combined with Vacant 2023-24	0.00%
The Point - Commercial	Combined with Commercial, Industrial and Petroleum 2023-24	0.00%
Industrial	Combined with The Point - Commercial, Commercial and Petroleum 2023-24	0.00%
Mixed Use		151.62%
Farm		50.22%
Automotive Manufacture	Discontinued 2017-18	0.00%
Petroleum Production	Combined with The Point - Commercial, Commercial and Industrial 2023-24	0.00%
Aluminium Production	Discontinued 2015-16	0.00%
*Cultural & Recreational		75.00%
*under the Cultural & Recreational Land Act 1963		

4. David DAVIS, page 29

Question asked:

David DAVIS: I have got a couple of areas that I am particularly interested in – a long-term time series on maternal and child health and libraries in particular. I want to see the funding from council and state government, because my suspicion is that there has been a significant decline, which you point to in your submission. We would love a 10-year time series since rate capping started; that would be worthwhile, to see how those areas have gone. So if you can take that on notice, that would be very good...

Troy EDWARDS: Thanks, Mr Davis. Perhaps I will take on notice your question on maternal and child health funding, and we will see if we can give you some –

David DAVIS: And libraries.

Troy EDWARDS: And libraries – and we will give you some longitudinal figures there.

Response: The contribution of the State and Council towards the funding of MCH service has remained reasonably consistent as a percentage over the FY16 – FY24 period. Due to the rising costs of this service during this period, the Council subsidy expressed in dollars has increased by ~\$1.4m during this period, whereas the State Government contribution has increased by ~\$0.9m.

MCH

FY	State Contribution		CoGG Contribution		Total \$'000
	\$'000	Perc %	\$'000	Perc %	
FY16	1,357	34.5%	2,576	65.5%	3,933
FY17	1,541	36.8%	2,643	63.2%	4,183
FY18	1,559	36.9%	2,669	63.1%	4,228
FY19	1,556	35.1%	2,879	64.9%	4,435
FY20	1,625	35.7%	2,920	64.3%	4,545
FY21	1,711	34.9%	3,191	65.1%	4,901
FY22	2,086	39.2%	3,233	60.8%	5,319
FY23	1,929	33.1%	3,901	66.9%	5,830
FY24	2,287	36.3%	4,009	63.7%	6,297

Geelong Regional Library Corporation is established under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989 to provide public library services for the four local government areas of Borough of City of Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire. Over the FY14 – FY23 period, contributions by Local Government as a % of the overall funding increased from 81% to 83%. The portion of overall funding contributed by the State Government reduced from 16% to 13%.

Libraries

Funding Source	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Member Council contributions	81%	82%	80%	80%	80%	81%	84%	79%	83%	83%
State Government Grants	16%	14%	15%	14%	14%	13%	12%	17%	15%	13%
Other	3%	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	4%	2%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

5. **Gaelle BROAD, page 31**

6.

Question asked:

Gaelle BROAD: I am interested too: please correct me if I am wrong, but is your parking fee revenue around \$7.5 million?

Troy EDWARDS: Well, it could be. That sounds about right, but I would need to just check.

The CHAIR: Feel free to take that one on notice, if you like.

Response: On-street parking revenue in FY24 was \$7.31M

7. **The Chair, page 32**

Question asked:

The CHAIR: Geelong has one of the largest populations of companion animals of any Victorian municipality. I am aware that you work with Geelong Animal Welfare Society on your animal services. Can you explain, if any, what funding or support you have provided to them in order to do that work?

Troy EDWARDS: That is a good question. I will have to take it on notice. It is quite possible that we provide them with grant funding, but I would need to check that.

Response: Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS) are contracted to deliver Pound Services for the City. The facility is owned by the City and leased to GAWS for both the delivery of contracted pound services and their animal welfare shelter and vet clinic operation. GAWS are not charged rent (valued in 2022 at \$58K p/annum) or rates for the facility (classed as non-rateable in accordance with the Local Government Act) and most maintenance of the facility is the financial responsibility of Council.

The current Contract fee schedule outlines that Council pay GAWS a fee for every animal that is received at the facility, either by community members or Council officers. Council also pays GAWS for the medical treatment of these animals for the first 8 days of their stay. If an animal is not reclaimed by an owner within 8 days, the animal is gifted to GAWS as part of their shelter operation to rehome.

Annual expenditure paid to GAWS in FY24 was \$2.15M

8. **David DAVIS, page 33**

Question asked:

David DAVIS: Are you aware of an audit of state government land that has been done? Are you aware of any such audit or information?

Troy EDWARDS: I am not, but there may be other parts of the organisation that are aware.

David DAVIS: If you could take it on notice, that would be helpful. If we could understand what audit has been done on state land around Geelong and any copies of such an audit would be helpful for us. Thank you.

Response: We have discussed with our strategic planning team if they were aware of any such audit. They are unaware of any reports outlining any audit of State Government land that has been completed at this time.

Strategic planning is under the impression that the state government would most probably be completing land audits in regard to housing targets and available land, however, to the best of our knowledge, this information isn't something we currently have access to.

9. **Evan MULHOLLAND, pages 34 – 35**

Question asked:

Evan MULHOLLAND: I have just a quick question: how much revenue does your council generate from parking fees?

Troy EDWARDS: Broadly on user fees and charges we are sitting at around \$69 million, of which at least half comes from swimming, sport and leisure. It would be, I think, under \$10 million, but I will check that and come back to you. That is fees for parking as opposed to infringements, or do you want both?

Evan MULHOLLAND: Yes, broken up as well in terms of fees and fines.

Response: On-street parking revenue in FY24 was \$7.31M
Infringement revenue in FY24 was \$3.71M

10. **Sarah MANSFIELD, page 35**

Question asked:

Sarah MANSFIELD: We have heard a lot about cost shifting through this inquiry so far. I know that the libraries issue was a big one that has bubbled up in the Geelong area over the last couple of years. I am wondering – and you can take this notice if you need to – how the state government contribution to library funding has impacted the region's library services, how that has changed over the last 10 years. Particularly with the number of new libraries opening up in the region, what are the ongoing challenges that are faced by the council in terms of funding those?

Troy EDWARDS: Again, we can provide that. I know the City of Greater Geelong is a significant funder of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation, to the tune of about \$15 million. It is a significant service that we provide that is much valued. Certainly the councils do most of the heavy lifting on libraries – that would be my experience and observation – but we can pull

some figures for you there.

Sarah MANSFIELD: I would be interested to see how that has changed over time as well and whether that state government contribution has kept up with the demand for libraries and the increased number of libraries across the region.

Response: Geelong Regional Library Corporation is established under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1989 to provide public library services for the four local government areas of Borough of City of Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe, Golden Plains Shire and Surf Coast Shire. Over the FY14 – FY23 period, contributions by Local Government as a % of the overall funding increased from 81% to 83%. The portion of overall funding contributed by the State Government reduced from 16% to 13%.

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Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

During this time, the overall costs of operating the existing libraries has increased and additional library facilities have also opened, further increasing operating costs. This has resulted in the contribution of City of Greater Geelong increasing from \$8.9m in FY16 to the budgeted contribution of \$15.5m for FY25.

	Actual FY16	Actual FY17	Actual FY18	Actual FY19	Actual FY20	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Actual FY23	Actual FY24	Budget FY25
Contribution - City of Greater Geelong	\$8,935,951	\$9,294,382	\$10,202,236	\$11,024,109	\$13,548,662	\$8,325,527	\$11,287,287	\$12,527,149	\$12,600,000	\$15,511,667

11. The CHAIR, page 35

Question asked:

The CHAIR: Just circling back to my question before on animal welfare services, I have just had a look on the City of Greater Geelong website, which says that pet registration fees also fund services like dog parks and pounds. I know you will not be able to answer this for me now, so it is fine to take it on notice, but if we could just see a comparison of what comes in from pet registration fees and how much of that goes back into animal welfare. I grew up in Geelong and have seen the different iterations of GAWS and how it has operated and the support it has received, so it would be good to see the support that they are receiving now from council for the work that they give to the Geelong community.

Troy EDWARDS: Absolutely.

Response: Animal registration revenue FY24 was \$2.10M. Council paid \$189K registration levy to State per Domestic Animals Act requirement (= \$1.9M net revenue).

GAWS Contract expenditure FY24 was \$2.15M.

12. **David DAVIS, page 35**

Question asked:

David DAVIS: Just in the central city of Geelong and existing suburbs the windfall gains tax will apply, as I understand it. Have you done any analysis there?

Troy EDWARDS: We may have. I will have to double-check and come back to you, Mr Davis, but as I said, it has not been prominent in the time I have been here.

Response: Windfall Gains Tax is a State Government tax which may apply when land is rezoned resulting in an uplift in value. The State Government will assess the impact of rezoning on a case-by-case property. There are many factors which will influence each scenario, including exemptions, before and after valuations of the specific land and timing. It would not be viable for the City to undertake an audit.