

Inquiry into the Sustainability and Operational Challenges of Victoria's Rural and Regional Councils

Presented by:

David Morcom

CEO Wellington Shire Council

9 October 2017

1. Rate Capping

- Does not provide a level playing field across all Councils
- Metropolitan Councils:
 - can raise substantial additional revenue from statutory fees & charges
 - have smaller geographic areas with less infrastructure costs
 - average rates are similar to Rural / Regional Councils – challenging for Regional / Rural areas due to an ageing demographic and higher unemployment
 - no emergency management requirements / impacts

2. Council Comparison

	Large Shire Wellington Shire Council	Metropolitan City of Stonnington
Population	42,871	111,606
Area	10,924 km ²	25.6 km ²
No of Rate Assessments	33,611	63,737
Rates Income	\$53.9 million	\$104.5 million
Average Residential Valuation	\$275,000	\$1,216,000
Average General Rate per Residential assessment	\$1,493.04	\$1,335.19
Roads Sealed	1,193 km	266 km
Roads Unsealed	1,443 km	0

2. Council Comparison cont.

	Large Shire Wellington Shire Council 2016/17	Metropolitan City of Stonnington 2016/17	Variance
Statutory Fees & Fines	\$653k	\$21.4 million	\$20.7 M
User Fees & Charges	\$6.4 million	\$20.1 million	\$13.7 M
Other Income	\$2.6 million	\$ 11.2 million	\$8.6 M
TOTAL	\$9.7 million	\$52.7 million	\$43.0 M

3. EM burdens for Rural & Regional Councils

- Annual threat of bushfires
- Major fires (>500 ha) in Wellington since 2000 to 2013
- Low to moderate flooding a frequent event (every year) in Wellington Shire.
- Major floods (2007, 2011, 2012) present the most impact and disruption.
- Geography - distance between towns and locations
- Ageing population, higher levels of people with disabilities
- Disruption to Council business & administration

3. WSC Emergency Management (EM)

WSC EM Events since 2003

- Bushfire 12
- Floods 3

WSC EM Budget allocated 2017/18

- From Rates \$611 K
- From Grants \$149 K
- Total: \$760 K

EM Staff / Resources Comparison

Council	Population	Km ²	Total Income 16/17	FTE*
Wellington Shire Council	42,871	10,924	\$103.9M	3
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	150,000	2,500	\$203.4M	6
Cardinia Shire Council	99,192	1,280	\$205.8M	3.8

(*Includes Govt funded Municipal Emergency Resource Program positions – Council funds 2)

In the past 6 months.....

- MAV Councils and Emergencies Directions Paper Consultation Session – Mar 2017
- LGV Councils and Emergencies Directions Paper Information Session – Sale, 22 Mar 2017
- LGV Council and Emergencies Discussion Paper, Wellington Shire Council Submission Apr 2017
- MAV Council and Emergencies Discussion Paper, Wellington Shire Council Submission Apr 2017
- EMV Resilient Recovery Discussion Paper, Wellington Shire Council Response Apr 2017
- VCOSS Addressing non-insurance and underinsurance for emergencies in Victoria Discussion Paper Apr 2017, Wellington Shire Council provided a representative on the Working Group
- CFA Schedule 13 Discussion Paper, Wellington Shire Council Response Apr 2017
- CFA/DELWP BMO Workshop 5 May 2017 - Wellington Shire Council attendance required on short notice for 5 May 2017
- DHHS Review of response to the thunderstorm asthma event of 21-22 November 2016, Wellington Shire Council Internal EM Group reviewed recommendations May 2017
- DEDJTR Victorian Emergency animal welfare Plan, and new template for LG May 2017
- DHHS seeking information on Wellington residents sleeping rough, May 2017
- Parliament (DELWP) Inquiry into Sustainability and Operational Challenges of Victoria's Rural and Regional Councils, Wellington Shire Council submission May-Jun 2017
- New NDDRA Arrangements from 1 Jul 2017
- CMA Regional Floodplain Strategy for both East Gippsland and West Gippsland, Wellington Shire Council participation on both committees for several months

4. Gippsland Councils – Shared Services Initiative

- 3 - 4 Gippsland Councils investigating the establishment of an ICT and Corporate Services, Shared Services Model to:
 - Eliminate duplication
 - Utilise better digital technology
 - Drive continuous improvement and innovation
 - Substantially reduce costs
 - Improve transactional and administrative services

SUMMARY & QUESTIONS

For CEO info not for presentation

Table 19. Wellington Shire History of Major Bushfires (over 500 Hectares) since 1982

Year	Start Date	Duration (days)	Incident Name	Areas Affected	Cause	Size (ha)
2014	9/2/14	7	Jack River	Jack River, Madalya, Staceys Bridge	Unknown	2,870
2013	22/2/13	7	East Caledonia	Remote country away from communities	Lightning	600
2013	15/2/13	10	Dargo – Matherson Tk	Dargo, Dargo Upper	Lightning	1,111
2013	17/1/13	42	Aberfeldy-Donnellys Tk	Aberfeldy/Dawson/Seaton/C oongulla/ Glenmaggie/Licola/Heyfield/ Upper Maffra West.	Illegal burn off	85,193
2012	27/9/12	3	Spoon Bay Track	Loch Sport	Suspicious	700
2009	23/2/09	Pt of Black Saturday	Napier Road	Won Wron		1,365
2007	11/01/07	6	Seaton	Seaton, Cowwarr		650
2006	1/12/06	69	Great Divide South	Alpine National Park South	Lightning	677,638
2004	6/01/04	12	Bombing Range	RAAF Bombing Range	Burn Off	500
2003	5/09/03	5	Golden Beach	Golden Beach	Burn Off	2,000
2003	5/02/03	28	Emu Track	Stradbroke	Lightning	500
2003	8/01/03	4	Mullundung	State Forest, grazing land & private plantation		7,500

Table 20. Wellington Shire History of Floods since 1978

Year	Start Date	Urban Areas Affected	River System	Comments
2012	Jun	Maffra/Newry Sale/Stratford Tinamba	Macalister Thomson	Wide spread road closures affecting numerous communities
2011	Aug	Sale	Avon Macalister	One Death, Desailly Flats
2007	Nov	NOT A MAJOR FLOOD	Macalister	d/s Glenmaggie 1:10 year flood
2007	Jun	Widespread throughout Shire	Avon Macalister Thomson	Avon d/s Glenmaggie 1:100 year flood Macalister at the Channel 1:40 year flood Thomson u/s Cowwarr 1:25 year flood Damage: Tamboritha Rd, Licola Rd. Bridge into town of Licola, Cheynes Bridge. Several school camps, caravan parks, fences, crops, shedding.

For CEO info not for presentation

Form Rates - Project description	Rationale	Amount
EM Team (CEM/MFPO) Budget	Maintain capability and capacity as per legislative requirements under Emergency Services Act 1986 and CFA Act 1958. Fire prevention inspections/enforcement. Maintenance of NSPs. Facilitate, support EM committees.	\$211,382
Assistant MFPO (Local Laws)	Fire prevention inspections	\$30,000
Hazard (vegetation) removal, c/f unpaid invoices	Enforcement of Fire Prevention Notices	\$50,000
EM Team Training and Exercising at Municipal level	Maintain capability and capacity as per Emergency Management legislative requirements under Emergency Services Act 1986	\$5,000
Maintain Emergency Relief Centres	Communications Kits - Mobiles & iPads	\$2,000
Maintain EM response capability - Appointment of MEM, MERO, MRM - Cost as a % of duties in PD (salary); ESTIMATE only.	Maintain capability and capacity as per Emergency Management legislative requirements under Emergency Services Act 1986	\$30,000
Maintain EM software: Crisisworks and Authority	To maintain capability and capacity to manage EM responsibilities	\$6,500
Maintain the Fire Access Roads Subsidy Scheme (FARSS) contribution	Enhancing local response capability for CFA.	\$4,000
Treatment of high fire risk roads	Legislative requirements. Road Management Act 2004, CFA Act 1958	\$120,000
Ensure ongoing maintenance of Fire Hydrants and Markers	Legislated requirement to maintain Fire Hydrants under the Water Act 1989	\$65,000
Mitigation works for 90 Mile Beach - East project	Works for the 90 Mile Beach - East project sponsored by Council.	\$67,000
SES in-kind support for the State Emergency Service, Estimate only	Currently, rent free Council land, Bldg insurance, reduced or no rates	\$20,000
	Total:	\$610,882
From External Funding - Project description	Rationale	Amount
MERP	90 Mile Beach East Project and develop new organisation wide Bushfire Management Plan	\$120,000
Vulnerable Persons Registers	Maintain VP Registers on behalf of VicPol	\$29,000
	Total:	\$149,000