

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Local Govt Revenue Raising Capacity Inquiry

The Federal Government has commissioned the Productivity Commission to study the current revenue raising capacity of local government throughout Australia. This study was promised nearly two years ago as part of their formal response to the bipartisan findings of the landmark 2003 cost shifting inquiry.

The Productivity Commission will examine all types of councils ranging from large metropolitan areas to small rural communities. It will also take into account the likely impact on residents, businesses and other organisations of changes to taxes and user charge systems applied by Councils.

Local government is very much a creation of the States and as one would expect, there are interstate differences in the way they operate. The NSW Government's controversial rates-capping policy looks set to be scrutinised by the commission, given the study's terms of reference require it to investigate the impact of "any state regulatory limits" on councils' revenue raising capacity.

The study is potentially a major step towards much needed reform of local government financing, and it is most welcome. At least the federal government is responding to widespread concern about issues such as the huge backlog in the maintenance of infrastructure.

For further information visit www.pc.gov.au:80/study/localgovernment/index.html

Regulation for Out of School Hours Care

Following amendments to the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2000*, services offering out of school hours care are required to register with the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) by 1 July 2007.

This is the first stage of a two-stage regulatory process being implemented to improve the safety and wellbeing of children using out-of-school hours care services in NSW. Services are required to complete a questionnaire when registering that will provide DoCS with important information about the current levels of out-of-home care being provided.

The second stage of the process will involve the development of a regulatory framework based on the information collected from the questionnaire and with reference to the *National Standards for Outside School Hours Care*.

The new regulatory system would be in addition to the standards that already exist and complement current arrangements to help strengthen the safety of services being provided. For details contact the Children's Services Directorate on 1800 155 633, or visit: www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/comm_partners/childrens_OSCH.htm.

Tidy Towns Participation.

Entries are now open for the 2007 Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities Program. This is the largest community recognition and support program in Australia. Since its inception in 1981, it has evolved into a program which addresses our unique Rural Environments. This includes environmental initiatives, community participation, awareness and the original beautification component.

To enter simply complete an entry form by the 15 June 2007 and fill in the relevant submission to be forwarded by 3rd August 2007. Further information and submissions are available on the website www.kabnsw.org.au.

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