



CITY OF RINGWOOD

** AN INFORMATION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS **

NOVEMBER 1991



CIVIC CENTRE

The Civic Centre is located in Braeside Avenue, Ringwood just near the Maroondah Highway.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday 8.30 a.m. – 8.00 p.m.
(5.00 p.m. January and late December)

Tuesday to Friday

8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

TELEPHONE: 870-4311

FAX NO: 879-3534

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 156, RINGWOOD, 3134

OR

AUSDOC DX 38068, RINGWOOD

THE CITY OF RINGWOOD

INTRODUCTION

The City of Ringwood is situated in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. It covers an area of 2,276 hectares (9 square miles) and has a population of 42,500.

The City is divided into three wards, North, South and East (see attached map) with three elected Councillors representing each of these wards.

Ringwood has long been the regional centre of shopping in the outer eastern suburbs, providing a wide range of comparison and convenience shops. It is the most important regional centre in the Lillydale corridor, but this growth has not come without some problems including traffic congestion and unpleasant conditions for pedestrians.

In 1981 the State Government designated Ringwood as one of 14 District Centres. District Centres aim to combine retail, office and community facilities in locations that are generally well served by public and private transport. After central city Melbourne, they are the major retail/commercial centres in Melbourne.

Its designation as a District Centre will benefit both Ringwood and the surrounding area. It is estimated that some 5,000 additional jobs will either move into the area or be created in the office sector. This will have multiplier effects on Ringwood as these new workers will shop in the Centre.

The social and leisure needs of the community will also be improved by projects such as the Entertainment precinct which will broaden the range of public facilities available.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RINGWOOD

Earliest records show that Ringwood was identified as a district in 1862 when it was part of the Berwick District Road Board. In 1871 it was annexed to the Upper Yarra District Road Board, later proclaimed the Shire of Lillydale.

In 1869 antimony was discovered and mined until 1934 on the site of the present Civic Centre. Woodcutting was carried out in the surrounding districts, with another major industry being the brickworks and kiln. Ringwood was a major fruit growing district and orchards existed in the area, particularly in North Ringwood, up until about 1975.

Ringwood was severed from Lillydale in 1924 and became the Borough of Ringwood, a municipality in its own right. The population at that time was 2,000 residents in 600 dwellings.

Ringwood was proclaimed a City on 19th March 1960 by the then Governor of Victoria, His Excellency, General Sir Dallas Brooks.

RINGWOOD CITY COUNCIL

Council, comprising the nine elected representatives (Councillors), forms the decision making body of the municipality. At a Council Meeting, consideration is given to numerous items and a decision reached on all of them. These items may take the form of requests for financial assistance, applications for planning permits or subdivisions.

There are three Committees which deal with matters in greater depth than is possible in a Council Meeting. Each Committee deals with different areas of Council business and unless the Committee has delegated power, makes recommendations to the full Council Meetings. The recommendations from these Committees may be adopted, amended or totally rejected.

The City of Ringwood has adopted a corporate approach for the management of the City. The Chief Executive, John Paech, is responsible to the Council for the running of the City, and there are three divisions, each headed by a Director who is also a member of the management team. The three divisions are:

Technical Services – headed by Graham Hayden
Corporate Services – headed by Bill Black
Finance – headed by Gordon McCulloch

Chief Executive Staff

The Chief Executive is responsible for the operations of the whole organisation. This is a management role, which is supported by the three Directors, who are part of the management team.

In addition to the many duties of the Chief Executive the responsibilities of personnel management and training are also handled by the Personnel Officer who reports directly to the Chief Executive.

A brief overview of the responsibilities of each of these divisions follows.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

This division is responsible for all the physical (engineering) needs of the municipality.

(a) Building Department

This Department processes all building applications and inspects each stage of construction to ensure that the high standards set by the Victoria Building Regulations are met. All buildings, demolition work, additions and alterations, outbuildings, swimming pools and front boundary fences must be approved by Council's Building Surveyors.

(b) Town Planning

Town Planning is concerned with controlling the use and development of all land and buildings within the municipality in such a manner that the amenity of the area is enhanced where possible, or at least not significantly reduce by the particular use or development. Control is obtained through Planning Schemes which are designed to provide a balanced approach to development. In 1989 the Planning Department received over 200 applications for a variety of residential and commercial developments.

(c) Aquatic Centre

The Ringwood Aquatic Centre is a major sporting facility patronised by people throughout the outer eastern region. It is of national standard and has been chosen as the venue for the National Springboard Diving Championships for the second time. Apart from the fully enclosed Olympic sized swimming pool, diving pool, toddlers pool, spa and sauna, it also has a junior sized pool and toddlers pool located in landscaped gardens. The main pool uses an ozone based system rather than chlorine, and this reduces the incidence of eye irritation.

(d) Design and Investigation

The Design Office is responsible for the overall design and planning of street and footpath schemes, subdivision approvals, drainage systems, street reconstruction, shopping centres, and pavilions. Public consultation on various issues is a feature of this Department.

(e) Parks and Gardens

The City of Ringwood has over 220 hectares of parks and gardens and employs a staff of 30 who are dedicated to producing high standards of maintenance and construction. This Department is responsible for the gardens at the Clocktower and in the median strips along the Maroondah Highway, the Ringwood Lake, landscaping around shopping centres, and all parks, reserves and sporting grounds in the municipality.

(f) Traffic Engineering

This Department is responsible for the management of traffic throughout the municipality and in particular the development of traffic related studies and policies for the District Centre.

(g) Works Department

Road construction and maintenance, drainage works, sanitary services (litter collection, toilet cleaning, street cleaning, disposal of waste material), building maintenance, subdivisional development, plant maintenance and the management of the golf course are the responsibility of the Works Department, and these areas demand a wide spectrum of expenditure from Council's Revenue Budget.

(h) Golf Course

The Ringwood Golf Course is an 18 hole course and is considered to be one of the most popular public courses in the metropolitan area. It sells approximately 100,000 games annually. It is situated on the old tip site, and is fully maintained by a dedicated staff of six.

(i) Workshop

The Workshop is responsible for the mechanical maintenance of some 200 plant items, ranging from an 8 cubic metre truck, 70 kw front end loaders, and a wide range of grass cutting equipment, to small chain saws and brush cutters.

(j) Garbage Collection

The City of Ringwood provides a comprehensive household garbage collection service. The service helps residents to get rid of the normal accumulation of rubbish and also encourages them to recycle and conserve valuable resources.

CORPORATE SERVICES

(a) **Administration**

The Administration Department is responsible for the keeping of records, word processing, reception, hallkeepers and general administration. This Department handles the preparation of all the agendas and minutes, leases, as well as the Community Guide, Ringwood News and the Ringwood Festival.

(b) **Community Services Department**

Council provides many programs to assist families, the aged and disabled in the community. These services are heavily subsidised and charges are determined following an assessment carried out by a trained officer. The following is a brief description of services provided:

Children's Services

(i) **Family Day Care**

This service caters for parents living and/or working in the municipality who require day care for their children. Care is provided in the Carer's own home where up to 4 preschool children may be cared for each day. This service also provides care before and after school.

(ii) **Holiday Care Program**

This program provides supervised care for children of working families during school holidays. The program runs between 8 am and 6 pm and a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreational activities are provided.

(iii) **Child Care Centre**

Council sponsors a Child Care Centre which provides full-time care on a daily basis for working families. Fees are subsidised according to means.

(iv) **Youth Worker**

A Youth Worker is available on a full-time basis to assist young people with a variety of problems and to put them in touch with services and opportunities. She is responsible for developing a Youth Policy for the City of Ringwood and its implementation.

(v) **Maternal & Child Health**

The City of Ringwood has four Maternal and Child Health Centres, each one being staffed by a highly qualified and experienced nursing sister. The service is absolutely free. The nurses monitor children's growth and development up to six years, and provide information and advice on the health of both mothers and children. Immunisation, hearing and vision checks are arranged for each child, and if necessary, referrals to specialists and other community health and support services. The service helps to set parents on the right road, provide an early warning system for possible health problems and take some of the anxiety out of coping with a new baby. The Centres also have an education role. Parents can learn individually and in groups about infant and toddler feeding, child behaviour and temperament, and how to best deal with concerns such as toilet training etc.

Aged and Domiciliary Services

The purpose of the Domiciliary Service is to provide a range of support services to enable the frail, aged and disabled to remain in their homes for as long as possible, as well as supporting families which are in need of help through illness or disability.

(i) **Home Help**

This is available to aged, disabled or chronically ill people to help them cope in their own home. It is also available for short term periods to families whose functioning is interrupted by sickness or confinement. Home Helpers can assist with washing, ironing, shopping, vacuuming and general cleaning.

(ii) **Special Services**

This is a child/adult minding service designed to provide relief for the carer of a disabled person through the support of trained staff.

(iii) **Home Handyman Service**

Available only to recipients of the aged or disabled pension, this service attends to small repairs such as cleaning spouting, changing tap washers etc, and the installation of handrails, grips and ramps.

(iv) **Meals on Wheels**

This service provides a hot, nutritious midday meal, Mondays to Fridays, to those who are unable to shop or cook for themselves. Diabetic and vegetarian meals are provided where required.

(v) **Senior Citizens Centres**

Ringwood has three very viable centres which provide a wide range of activities. Meals are available at each of these venues. A hairdresser and podiatrist are also available.

(vi) **Shopping Bus Service**

Weekly shopping trips to Eastland are arranged using Council's mini bus. This involves picking up elderly or disabled from their own homes, taking them to Eastland and allowing them shopping time before returning them home again. This service is free.

(vii) **Library Service**

The elderly and infirm are taken to the library, using volunteer drivers, where they exchange books and enjoy a light sandwich lunch prepared by the Red Cross before being driven home again. This service, available on alternative Fridays, is free.

(viii) **Officer for the Aged and Disabled**

This person is available to give assistance on a whole range of issues, including housing enquiries, information on day care activities, nursing homes and all welfare concerns. Where age or disability prevents access to the officer, a home visit is arranged to help sort out problems.

(c) Health

Council's Health Department promotes a highly successful preventative health care program for the benefit of the public. Free immunisation is provided to infants, teenagers and adults and Council is committed to the World Health Organisation's aim for global immunisation by 1990 against all the diseases of childhood including whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella and polio.

The Health Department is also responsible for checking hygiene and structural standards in food delivery vehicles, food shops, cafes, restaurants, factories, hairdressers, chiropodists, beauty parlours, motels etc. Labelling and packaging of foods are also important aspects of inspection. Rodent and wasp control is another area of responsibility together with treatment for headlice.

(d) Library

The Ringwood Branch Library is part of the Eastern Regional Library Service and is extremely popular with the Ringwood community. The 1988/89 financial year saw a total of 462,000 loans of books and other material made by library members. Story telling and other activities are arranged for children on a regular basis.

(e) Traffic & ByLaws

This Department ensures that Local Laws (ByLaws), designed to protect the community, are adhered to. These Local Laws cover such matters as parking restrictions, dog control, incinerator control, fire hazards, overhanging branches, unsightly premises etc. The Department is also responsible for the provision of School Crossing Supervisors.

(f) Civic and Ceremonial

The Mayor carries out many civic and ceremonial duties in his/her capacity as First Citizen of the municipality. The Mayor wears the robes and chain at official Council functions, and always during the Council Meetings. He/she takes precedence over all others in the municipality, except when this precedence is surrendered to royalty or an official representative of the Crown. He/she is traditionally a Justice of the Peace, Chairman of Ringwood Red Cross, and Patron of the Scouting Movement in Ringwood. At the direction of the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, he/she has the role of conferring citizenship, and this is usually carried out at a large ceremony held in the Convention Centre. The Mayor is elected by the councillors, and serves a term of one year.

FINANCE DIVISION

(a) Accounting Services

Responsible for sound financial management procedures and practices and for presenting a draft annual budget to Council for discussion and implementation.

(b) Information Systems

Council has a computer system able to provide information on financial matters, properties etc., and other applications are being developed in the building, town planning and records management areas.

(c) Rates Office

The Council Valuer assesses the rateable value on properties within the municipality after which the charges payable on that property are set and the rate notices sent out. Residents may choose to pay their rates by instalment. People in necessitous circumstances can apply to have their rate payment deferred, and eligible pensioners can claim a rebate on their Council rates.

(d) Risk Management

The Risk Management Officer attends to all aspects of asset management and monitors claims in respect to Workcare, public liability, motor vehicles and damage to Council's assets.

(e) Convention Centre

The Ringwood Convention and Performing Arts Centre is located in a modern, architecturally designed building adjacent to the Civic Centre. The complex contains a 430 seat theatre complete with computerised light and sound systems, modern theatre dressing rooms and orchestra pit, and a three room function centre which boasts its own fulltime chef. Conventions, seminars, weddings, private parties, product launches etc are held in the Centre.

BUDGET

Council's 1991/92 Budget provides for expenditure totalling \$26,003,534.

A chart of Council's Income and Expenditure is attached.

Budget 1991/92

The Council recently adopted the budget for 1991/1992. The budget requires expenditure of \$26,003,534 including loan works of \$1,085,687.

four years from now. This enables Council to tread the middle path providing a balance of growth both now and into the future. In the 1991/92 budget the projects to be funded from loans requires

debt servicing costs in the years to come.

In 1991/92 the percentage of rate revenue to be used in repaying existing loans will be 16.96%. This is compared with 17.79% in 1990/91 and 20.64% in 1989/90.

This strategy will see Council's debt servicing costs diminishing in the years ahead and these savings in loan repayments will be available for capital works thus maintaining the level of activity for one off projects.

THE FIGURES

- (1) General Rate - 1.8799 cents in \$
- (2) Residential Use Rate - 1.2219 cents in \$
- (3) Garbage Charge - \$26.20 per tenement
- (4) Drainage Rate* - .1104 cents in \$
- (5) Minimum Rate - \$388.00
- (6) Payment Dates:
 - Due and Payable from 15 November 1991
 - If paying by instalments - 1st Inst. by 31st Dec
 - 2nd Inst. by 29th Feb
 - 3rd Inst. by 31st May
 - 4th Inst. by 31st Aug

Please Note: If you have any difficulties paying your rates please contact the Rates Department straight away and they will help you.

*(*It should be noted that the drainage rate is for a nine month period only up to 30th June, 1992, at which time the responsibility for the drainage rate will be with the Melbourne Water Corporation. The equivalent rate for the nine month period will be .0828 cents in \$.)*

Grants to help Community Groups

An amount of \$114,00 has been allocated under the Community Development Programme to provide direct grants to various community groups and the sponsorship of community programmes and activities through the Community Houses.

Sporting and other organisations are also supported through the third-third-third funding programme, which assists in the provision of new and upgraded facilities throughout the municipality.

Every year the production of the budget becomes more difficult with demands increasing but revenue sources and grants are becoming more difficult to obtain. As in 1990/91 the percentage of rate revenue collected to total revenue remains the same, 46.8%, quite an achievement in these critical economic times. The rate increase is only 4.49% and total rate revenue will be \$11,454,846.

Less Reliance on Loan Funds

Council has adopted a loans strategy which means we will continue to borrow in a way which is prudent and necessary now, while continuing to reduce our indebtedness so that our City budget will be essentially loans free

borrowing of \$631,500 compared with new loan funds of \$831,200 in the 1990/1991 budget. This is a reduction in borrowings of 24% and will have a significant effect on

MAJOR PROJECTS FOR 1991/92

	\$
North Ringwood Child Care Centre	429,000
Reconstruction - James Street	177,000
Partial Reconstruction - Pitt Street	176,000
Road Resealing Programme	130,000
Development of Reserves:	
Dandenong Creek	15,000
Peter Vergers - Walkway/Bicycle Bridge	30,000
East Ringwood Reserve Upgrading	60,000
Manson Reserve - Equestrian Trail	10,000
Quambee Reserve - Playground	15,000
	<u>130,000</u>
	<u>\$1,042,000</u>

INFORMATION ON SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Some suggestions where information is available for you to follow up.

Youth Workers – are employed by the Council to work with young people developing services and programs, and providing information and assistance. The duties of Youth Workers are different at each Council.

General Information on a wide range of services and activities is available from Ringwood Croydon Advisory Service in Ringwood Target Square Shopping Centre and this is a great place to start. The Ringwood Library in Warrandyte Road also has information for the community.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Accommodation

- . Youth Needs Group – Regional Housing Worker – Phone – 729 2022
- . Maroondah Accommodation Services – 312 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon – Phone 725 2188.

Health and Support Services

- . Maroondah Social and Community Health Services, Patterson Street, East Ringwood
- . Social Security – 25 Ringwood Street, Ringwood

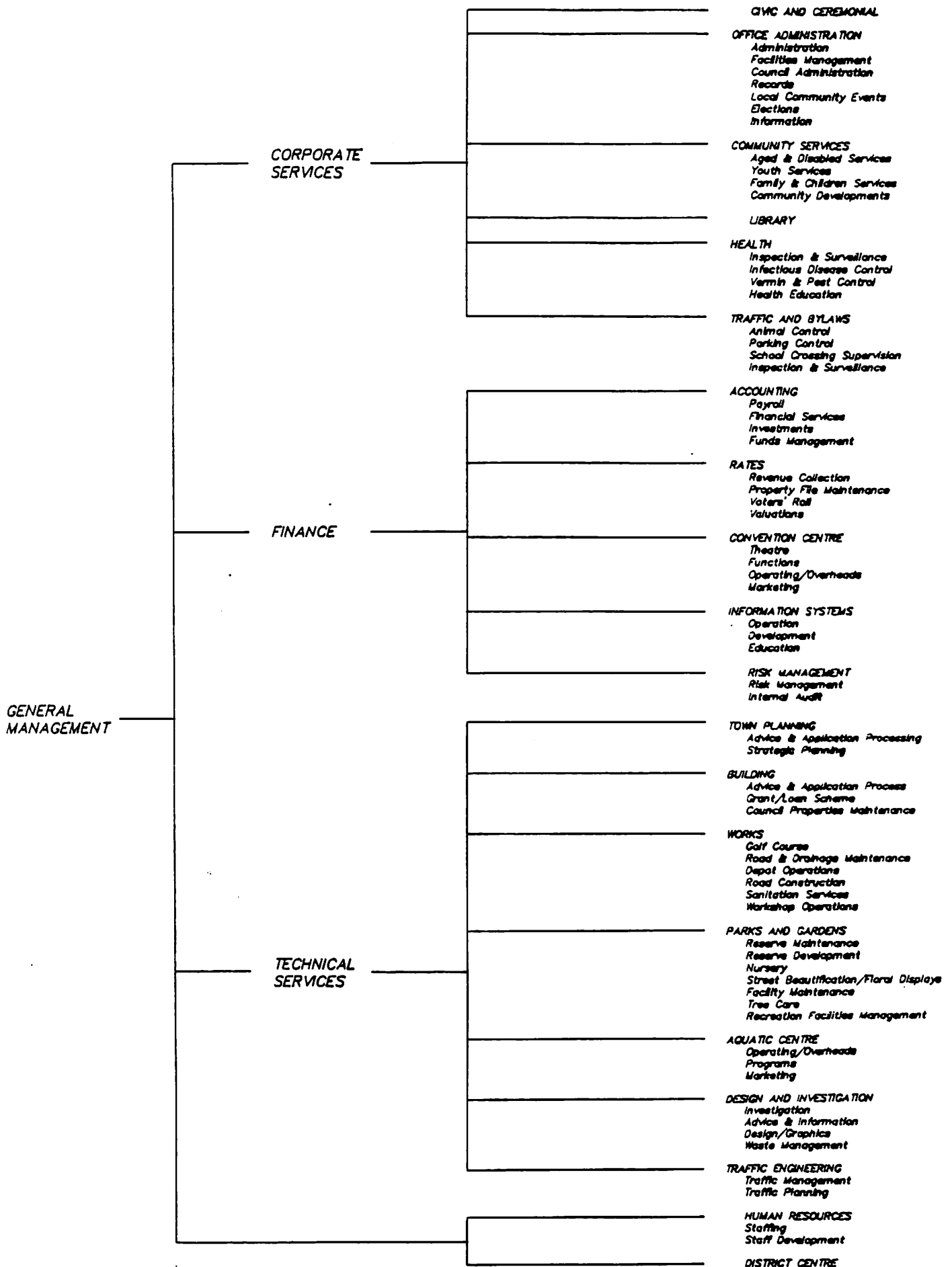
Other Resources

- . The Outer East Support Services Directory is very helpful and most Councils have a Community Guide.
- . Churches, sporting organisations, Salvation Army, Family Planning.

CAREERS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- ❖ Accountant/Administration Officer/After School Care/Aquatic Centre Staff.
- ❖ Building Surveyor.
- ❖ Chef/Community Services Officer/Counsellor/Carpenter/Community Liaison
- ❖ Driver /Depot Clerk
- ❖ Engineer/Editor
- ❖ Freedom of Information Officer/Family Day Care
- ❖ Gardener/Graphic Artist
- ❖ Home Help/Health Surveyor
- ❖ Information Systems Officer
- ❖ Janitor
- ❖ Librarian
- ❖ Mechanic/Meals on Wheels/Medical Officer of Health
- ❖ Nurse (Maternal and Child Health)
- ❖ Occupational Health and Safety Officers
- ❖ Personnel/Payroll/Plant Maintenance/Parks Officer/Public Relations
- ❖ Ranger/Rate Collector/Records Officer
- ❖ Secretary/Street Sweeper/Staff Project Officer
- ❖ Trace/Town Planning/Traffic & Bylaws Officer
- ❖ Water Cart Driver
- ❖ Youth Worker

CITY OF RINGWOOD ORGANISATION CHART - FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES



LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN VICTORIA

WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Local government is essentially government of a local area by the people in it, hence the claim that it is the level of government closest to the people.

The local council is made up of a number of councillors elected by their fellow ratepayers for a period of three years, after which they must be re-elected if they wish to continue as a councillor. Municipalities are usually divided into sections called Wards or Ridings with several councillors representing each of these sections.

BACKGROUND

Local Government in Victoria operates within the legislative framework laid down by successive state governments. It derives its powers and responsibilities primarily from the Local Government Act. A number of other Acts, such as the Health Act and the Planning Act, also confer functions and powers on local councils.

The system of local government in Victoria was first established in the 1840's. It was the first comprehensive system of local government in Australia. Initially, urban and rural local government developed under separate legislation. It was not until 1874 with the passage of the Local Government Act that the two streams were brought together under a single statute.

The Local Government Act of 1874 established the base for the future expansion and development of local government administration in Victoria. Despite considerable amendment and consolidation, the Act has remained the basis of Victoria's system of local government for over 100 years.

In 1874 the municipal system consisted of 170 districts. Voting at council elections was restricted to people who owned or occupied property and were over 21 years old. People who owned more than one property had the right to vote more than once. Councils were empowered to conduct a range of activities. These were financed by rates, borrowings and money provided by the state.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT TODAY

There are now 210 municipal areas in Victoria. Voting at council elections has been expanded to include residents as well as property owners. As with other governments in Australia, the minimum voting age is 18. Residents as well as property owners now have the right to stand for elections. In 1988 there were 2,227 councillors in Victoria.

The Local Government Act sets out most of the requirements relating to the structure and organisation of councils. It details how council meetings are to be conducted, how councils are to be administered, how their finances are to be organised, what staff they must employ and the qualifications their staff must hold. It defines many council powers, including the levying and collection of rates.

The Act also empowers councils to make Local Laws. Most councils have used this power. Local Laws cover a wide range of topics, such as behaviour in public places and the use of incinerators. They are laws in just the same way as any other laws, and breach of them can lead to a court case and conviction.

Local government is recognised in the Victorian Constitution Act as being a level of government. Councils are not merely providers of services, they are a democratic institution in the same way as the state and national governments.

Councils are mainly concerned with matters of local significance. Their activities can exert a great influence over the living conditions and the daily lives of residents, workers and visitors. Traditionally, local government's primary areas of responsibility involved the provision and regulation of property related services – the major concern of pioneering local communities was to achieve an adequate system of roads and public sanitation. Although these matters continue to be important, councils are becoming increasingly involved in a wide range of community, cultural and recreational services.

Today many local councils are major organisations in their own right. 42,000 people are employed in local government in Victoria. Changing circumstances have required frequent amendments to the Local Government Act. In 1989, the Victorian Parliament passed a new Act to reflect the modern requirements of local government. Features of this new legislation are greater local autonomy as well as greater potential for local involvement in decisions which affect the local community. It will allow local government to better develop according to the needs of the local community.

FUNCTIONS OF A COUNCIL

Councils throughout Victoria have identical legal powers and duties which are prescribed in the Local Government Act and other related Acts. Some of the powers and functions are mandatory and some are discretionary. The exercise of discretionary powers and functions is a matter for each council to determine having regard to its own criteria.

Because local government is community government, councils' activities largely reflect local needs.

The new Local Government Act is structured so as to provide the Council with the necessary scope to achieve "the objectives of council". The new Act sets out the general purpose of a council as:

- (a) to provide for the peace, order and good government of its municipal district; and
- (b) to facilitate and encourage appropriate development of its municipal district in the best interests of the community; and
- (c) to provide equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively; and
- (d) to manage, improve and develop the resources of its district efficiently and effectively.

The Act also requires in relation to its objectives to seek to achieve the following:

- (a) to facilitate the involvement of members of the community, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government;

-
- (b) to co-ordinate with other public bodies to ensure that services and facilities are provided and resources are used effectively and efficiently;
 - (c) to ensure adequate planning for the future of its municipal district;
 - (d) to represent and promote the interests of the community and to be responsive to the needs of the community;
 - (e) to formulate comprehensive policies and set performance targets;
 - (f) to develop, implement and monitor its strategic plans and budgets;
 - (g) to develop, implement and monitor its corporate and financial management control techniques;
 - (h) to raise funds for local purposes by the equitable imposition of rates and charges and by obtaining borrowings and grants;
 - (i) to delegate decision making to appropriate levels within the organisation;
 - (j) to develop and implement co-ordinated personnel and industrial relations policies;
 - (k) to facilitate accountability at all levels within the organisation by maintaining suitable information and reporting systems;
 - (l) to promote and undertake research into any matter relating to the Council's objectives, functions or powers.

However, the major functions of a council can basically be categorised along the following lines:

- . health, education, welfare and other community services;
- . planning and land use control and regulation;
- . provision of various property services;
- . recreational and cultural services;
- . roads and related works.

Roadworks are the major item of expenditure for many rural councils. In already developed urban areas such as the older suburbs of Melbourne, they may, on the other hand, form only a relatively small proportion of the total council budget. As well as mending local roads, many councils maintain main roads using money paid to them by the state and national road authorities.

Other very important major public works carried out by councils in some areas include electricity distribution. In country areas water and sewerage boards sometimes have very close links to councils, with the same people running both the council and the water board.

The degree of council involvement in services to people also varies enormously between areas. However some services are very common and it is well worth looking at councils as 'providers of human services' rather than simply as 'roads, rates and rubbish'.

Councils provide a range of services to children and older people. These were the first human services developed. Councils can be direct providers of housing for the aged. They are also usually responsible for meals on wheels services and libraries and they may be involved in the running of senior citizens centres.

Some councils have become major providers of children's services such as child care centres.

Most councils provide sporting facilities like playing fields, indoor gymnasiums, swimming pools and even fitness centres.

Quite a large number of councils now run or support art galleries or theatres to encourage the production of visual and dramatic art in areas other than just the big city centres.

In the last ten years an increasing number of councils have begun to provide specific youth services. These range from emergency accommodation to rock concerts.

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

Most municipalities are divided into wards with a number of councillors elected to represent the residents in that ward. The councillors elect one of their number to be the chairperson (the Mayor or President) at the first meeting of the council after the annual election.

The council is like a Board of Directors of the municipality and it can only act by resolution of the council. Councillors cannot and should not act in their own right but only by voting on resolutions at meetings of the council.

How council business is administered

The council appoints an administrative staff to carry out its responsibilities, functions and powers under the Act, although the Act specifically limits the sorts of things that can be delegated to council staff or committees appointed under the Act.

The structure and organisation of a council's staff differs only by virtue of a council's particular management style, but the Act specifically requires the council to appoint a municipal clerk, an engineer and building surveyor "and other officers to assist in the execution of the Act as necessary".

With the increasing role and responsibilities of councils under the Local Government Act and other related legislation, most councils have also appointed health surveyors, town planners, valuers etc.

Many councils have opted for a corporate management style of administration and have appointed a Chief Executive Officer or City Manager to oversee the day to day activities of the council. Although the position of Chief Executive Officer is recognised in the Act, this does not negate the specific requirement that councils appoint a municipal clerk.

HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES ARE FINANCED

Obviously the services provided must be paid for and money is raised in a variety of ways. Every council must provide estimates of expenditure for the next year and advertise that these estimates are open for inspection by the public.

Rates

Much of a council's money comes from taxes on land. These taxes are called rates.

The rates charged by a council may differ for different land uses and in different parts of an area. The council may rate higher for commercial and industrial premises than it does for residential properties, and higher for these than for rural properties. Some councils calculate rates from the value of the land only, while others work from the value of the land plus buildings.

Charges

Charging for some of the services that councils provide, most typically for garbage collection, ensures that, to some extent, the user pays. The growing use of charges reflects increasing budgetary pressures faced by many councils.

Grants

Councils have always received a proportion of their income from grants, especially in rural areas where the cost of providing services is much higher on a per capita basis. Historically the most important grants have been for roadworks and this is still true in rural areas. An important form of grant to all councils is the general-purpose grant provided by the commonwealth. Instead of having to spend general-purpose grants in a specific way, councils may spend them as they wish.

Loans

Loans may pay for major capital works like buildings, water supply and sewerage and bridgeworks. They are not supposed to be used for recurrent expenditure, such as administration.

