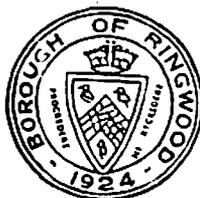


PLEASE READ THIS PAMPHLET BEFORE DISCARDING

## RINGWOOD COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE RATEPAYERS



January, 1957.

It is with pleasure that your Council presents this year's Annual Report which sets out in broad terms its functions together with an explanation of the manner in which these are being implemented.

It is fitting that such a Report should be prefaced by paying tribute to our ex-Councillors J. F. Corr, J.P., and A. D. Patterson, J.P., both of whom gave excellent honorary service for many years, each of them having occupied the Mayoral Chair with great credit to the municipality and themselves. These gentlemen materially assisted their colleagues in formulating Council policy which has enabled Ringwood to be developed on its present lines, which it is believed are sound and logical. As no Councillor is able to give his best without the unstinted assistance of his wife, more particularly when acting as the First Citizen of the municipality, your Council hastens to express its appreciation to Mesdames Corr and Patterson, who so ably supported their husbands over the years.

Generally speaking the municipality has over the past year maintained the rate of growth to which we have now become accustomed and your Council has found it difficult to finance the ever increasing services which it is called upon to provide. In considering ways and means of raising more revenue in order to provide these services your Council (members of which give their services in a purely honorary capacity) decided to have the municipality revalued in order to correct existing anomalies and to bring municipal valuations more into line with present-day conditions. Applications were invited from contract valuers, and Mr. R. J. McCasker was appointed, and other than in compliance with the Local Government Act, 1946, the Council did not instruct or direct him in any manner. The valuation was subsequently made and was received and adopted by the Council. The estimates for the year 1956/57 were framed and these were then related to the valuation, and as the result the Council in December, 1956, struck a rate of 7-5/16 pence in the pound on the unimproved capital value of all rateable land in the municipality in order to raise the amount involved in the aforementioned estimates.

The effect of this rate in the pound on the new valuation figures show varying increases with minor decreases when applied over the whole of the Borough as it relates to tenements, while commercial and industrial premises have in all cases been increased and in some cases substantially. On receipt of the valuation and rate notice which accompanies this Report, should any ratepayer feel aggrieved at the valuation which has been placed on his or her property (not the amount of the rate) he or she may during the month of February, 1957, appeal on the prescribed form, obtainable at the Town Hall, against such valuation, and these appeals will then be referred to the Valuer, who will consider them and if necessary consult the aggrieved ratepayers, and if agreement cannot be reached the appeals will be referred to the Ringwood Court of Petty Sessions (unless it be competent that the County Court deal with the matter) to be heard by a Police Magistrate who shall deal with the case and fix costs therein.

In making the abovementioned explanation your Council is not being apologetic, rather is it desirous that ratepayers should know the reasons which actuated it and to make it clear to all that Ringwood cannot be developed to its ratepayers' or the Council's satisfaction on a shoe string.

### "WHAT DO I RECEIVE FOR MY RATES?"

One sometimes hears the question, "What do I get for my rates?"

It might be as well to mention the sources of revenue available to the Council and then to detail some of the services which your Council is called upon to provide from this revenue, bearing in mind that a Municipal Corporation is not a profit-making concern.

## REVENUE—INCOME:

General Rates, Interest on General Rates, Dog Fees, Health Act, Registration Fees, Petrol Pump Licence Fees (if kerbside pumps), Supervision Fees, Private Works (including Private Street Construction), Road Opening Fees, Plant Hire, Rents from Council Properties, Baths Charges, Trespass and Detention Fees (Pound Act), Building Fees, Rate Certificates, Crossing Registration Fees, Court of Petty Sessions Fines (under Council By-Laws), as well as Government Subsidies in connection with the administration of the Health Act, Infant Welfare, Children's Playground Equipment and work performed under the Country Roads Act.

## SERVICES—EXPENDITURE:

### ROADS, FOOTPATHS, CHANNELS AND DRAINAGE:

Road and footpath maintenance, including channels and drainage on roads other than in private subdivisions. Once the roads and footpaths have been constructed in subdivisions at the cost of abutting owners, it is the Council's responsibility to maintain them at its cost. The Council is called upon to bear its share of all Country Roads Board works and pay its proportion of private street construction in respect of any land it may own which abutts on a private street. The abovementioned services absorb a high percentage of the revenue of the Council, materials being particularly expensive at the present time.

### STREET LIGHTING:

Each year the Council continues to erect further street lights as development warrants, and mercury vapor lighting has been extended along Maroondah Highway to the western boundary of the Borough. The State Electricity Commission of Victoria has been requested to design a layout and submit an estimate of cost for the extension of this type of lighting in an easterly direction to the Mount Dandenong Road turn-off.

### HEALTH:

One of the most important functions of your Council is to ensure that the health of the community is maintained at the highest level; there are many matters which come under this heading, including the inspection of food and food premises, sanitation, drainage, garbage disposal, destruction of vermin, immunisation campaigns against polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, and such like, chest X-ray, infant welfare, emergency home help service, and all related matters which affect in one form or another the health of ratepayers and their families.

The removal of night-soil and garbage is handled by the imposition of a charge, and by and large these services stand on their own feet and are paid for by those who use them or are entitled to use them.

### COUNCIL PROPERTIES:

Your Council has title to, or is a Committee of Management of, much valuable property and is continually endeavouring to obtain finance for the purchase of additional land for future generations before the development of Ringwood makes further acquisition of land virtually impossible.

It realises that the time is not far distant when the present Town Hall will become inadequate and it has as its declared policy the development of the Ringwood Recreation Reserve as a future Civic Centre and Central Parking area. The sporting organisations at present using this area will be subsequently transferred to Jubilee Park, which is now being developed as a major sporting area, and at 30th September this year the sum of £12,200 will have been spent in improving this area.

In the same way it has become apparent that the Council Baths, with its treated pool, are too small to successfully cope with the demand, but it will be impossible to alleviate this position in the immediate future. In the meantime, however, improved facilities are available in the form of lockers for patrons.

Your sporting areas are being slowly but steadily improved, while many of the pieces of land owned by the Council are being progressively equipped with children's playground equipment through the good offices of the Henley Carnival Committee in raising funds to enable the Council to obtain the Government subsidies which are available in this connection.

Council property in the form of plant and equipment constitutes a fair percentage of its assets, and comprises bulldozer, graders, front-end loaders, rollers, trucks, tractors and implements, and most of the work, including major overhauls in connection with this plant, is carried out in the Council's workshops.

Sporting and other organisations in the Borough have greatly assisted the Council in improving the surrounds of ovals, etc., owned by it with the erection of buildings. These have been financed on a "Self Help" basis, whereby the Council has provided most of the money for the purchase of materials, while the organisation has provided the labour wherever possible.

The moneys advanced for these purposes are being repaid over a number of years without interest, and this method enables the organisations to provide amenities for their members while the Council owns the buildings. Your Council is considering providing a Free Library service, and has asked the Library Service Board to conduct a survey of the municipality, while the sum of £700 has been set aside by the Council should it be decided to proceed with this project.

### BUILDING INSPECTION:

It is your Council's responsibility to see that all buildings erected in Ringwood, whether they be factories, shops, dwellings, private garages, etc., or alterations and additions to these buildings are constructed in accord with the Uniform Building Regulations of Victoria, which lay down a minimum standard regarding size of allotment and for the construction of any building. Provided that the plans and specifications are in conformity with these regulations, a building permit is issued by the Building Surveyor, who carries out inspections during the course of construction to protect the interests of the owners of the building. The same position is applicable regarding the installation of septic tanks, excepting that the requirements of the Health Act have to be fulfilled, and the Health Inspector of the Council administers this Act.

### DEBT SERVICES:

All municipalities have what is known as a Loan Liability, and it will be readily seen that no Council can possibly provide all the services necessary for the development of a municipality from the amount it receives in annual revenue. For instance, there may be drainage works which are estimated to cost £30,000, plant to be purchased involving a large sum, and many other such matters.

In order to enable the Council to finance these works, it is empowered under the Local Government Act to borrow money for these purposes by Debenture Loan, and in March of each year the State Treasurer asks each Council to state the works it proposes to carry out by Loan and the amount of money involved. In September or October, after the Premiers of all the States have discussed the matter with the Commonwealth Treasurer at Canberra, each Council is advised of the amount they are permitted to borrow, which is usually less than they have asked for. The Council then fixes priorities, having regard for the altered circumstances and proceeds to find suitable lenders at the ruling Treasury approved rate of interest. These moneys are borrowed for various terms, usually 10, 20 or 30 years, and principal and interest are wherever possible paid half-yearly. Some lenders, however, insist on the principal being paid in full at maturity with interest payable half yearly. In these cases your Council is called upon to create a Sinking Fund by paying to the State Treasury a fixed annual amount, which is interest bearing (but at a lesser rate than that at which the money was borrowed), in order to ensure that the total principal involved will be available at maturity.

As at 30th September, 1956, your Council's Loan Liability was £72,465 and principal and interest repayments for the year 1956/57 are £10,500.

### GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS:

Each year your Council is called upon to make certain statutory contributions for such purposes as helping maintain the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, superannuation of employees, provision for Long Service Leave, Weights and Measures, payroll tax insurances, etc., estimated for year 1956/57 at £8,548, while varying grants are made to organisations and remission of rates is made in necessitous cases.

### COUNCIL PROPERTY:

The annual maintenance bill on buildings and plant valued at 30th September, 1956, at £110,750, is of necessity very substantial, and your Council endeavours to keep its property in all its forms in good repair, having regard to its resources.

### TRAFFIC:

One of the problems confronting the Council is that of coping with the increased volume of traffic centering on Ringwood, and in order to deal with this matter as efficiently as possible, the Government, at your Council's request, has extended the application of "Owner Onus" to the whole of Ringwood as it relates to parking infringements, while the Council has appointed a Traffic and By-Laws Officer, who is at present carrying out the Council's policy of educating the public in the hope that they will co-operate to the full and reduce the necessity for court action to a minimum. Additional free parking areas have been provided, which are proving to be of great benefit to ratepayers, enabling street parking to be reduced substantially.

**GENERAL:**

Before proceeding with the matters on which the Council seeks your assistance, it expresses the hope that, as the result of the information given, you will have a better appreciation of Council activities, and realise the difficulties which confront all municipalities.

**FIRE HAZARDS:**

At this time of year, when everything is tinder dry, ratepayers are invited to use every endeavour to see that land which they own or are responsible for is kept clean and does not constitute a fire hazard. Permits for controlled burning may be obtained at the Town Hall provided that the time of proposed burning is not an "Acute fire danger period".

**DOG NUISANCE:**

From time to time your Council has trouble with uncontrolled dogs. Sometimes they follow the kiddies to school and subsequently become a regular nuisance, more particularly to the shopkeepers, and of necessity the Dog Inspector has to take action and seize them. As the result owners are inconvenienced and become upset when this happens; ratepayers are therefore invited to assist by instructing their children to see that they are not followed by the household pet when going to school.

**RATES AND CHARGES FOR 1956/57:**

General . . . . .	7-5/16d. in £ on U.C.V.
Sanitary . . . . .	£4/5/-, weekly service.
Garbage . . . . .	£1/5/-, weekly service.

**THE COUNCIL INVITES YOUR CO-OPERATION**

The Council is at your service within the limits of its resources. The various Departments and Officers of the Council are available, and anxious to assist you in your civic and communal problems. Make use of them at the appropriate times. If in doubt on any matter, telephone WU 6616 for friendly service.

YOU can complete the chain of co-operation in many ways—

Continue to beautify your premises.

Keep dogs out of the shopping areas—unless on leash.

Keep your premises clean and tidy.

Destroy rats and vermin.

Prevent trees and hedges from overhanging footpaths.

Display conspicuous house numbers.

Assist the Council in the prevention of damage by vandals by reporting any case which comes to your notice.

Report any breakdown of Sanitary or Garbage Service, so that the Contractors may be notified immediately.

If you have a Municipal problem regarding which you have been unable to obtain satisfaction through the normal channels, write to the Town Clerk, who will place the matter before the Council.

Make suggestions which you feel are of value, AND IN ALL WAYS, TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF YOUR COMMUNITY.

**YOUR COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ARE:**

Mayor: Cr. A. G. Lavis, J.P. (South Ward).

**North Ward—**

- Cr. D. J. Baxter.
- Cr. B. J. Hubbard, J.P.
- Cr. R. O. Spencer.

**South Ward:**

- Cr. A. G. Lavis, J.P.
- Cr. H. F. Parker, J.P.
- Cr. W. T. D. Roberts.

**East Ward—**

- Cr. R. C. Horman, J.P.
- Cr. E. T. Purser, J.P.
- Cr. Peter Vergers.

Authorised by the Council of Borough of Ringwood.

**ALFRED KELLY, F.I.M.A.,**  
Town Clerk and Treasurer.