



# Best Value Report ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

June 2005





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## Executive Summary

The Organisational Support group of services consists of eighteen Council programs that focus on providing the 'back room' support to the programs that deliver direct services to the community. These programs include the unseen aspects of Council services, often referred to by the community as 'Council Administration'.

These programs discharge the Council's overall legislative requirements and enable the efficient and effective utilisation of resources and facilitate monitoring of set standards. The users of these services in many cases are not the general community, but rather internal users including staff and service delivery arms of Council (such as Home and Community Care, Parks and Gardens, Road Maintenance, etc). In undertaking the Best Value review, the needs and requirements of not only the wider community, but also internal users, were considered.

Whilst these services are 'invisible', the community is not only aware of their existence, and has very high expectations of them, with any lapse in standards commented on.

The Best Value report identifies these programs, the service levels and standards, and impact on the service delivery arms of Council. This report documents that the Organisational Support group of programs achieves the requirements of Best Value as specified in the Local Government Act (1989). Specifically the programs have:

- Assessed, in various ways with the community and internal service users, the level of services to be provided.
- Determined that the services are responsive to community and internal user needs.
- Ensured accessibility by the intended target groups.
- Continuously improve the services provided.
- Regularly consult with the community and internal users in the development and delivery of the services.

This report demonstrates that the Organisational Support group of programs achieves best value for the community.

## Introduction

The Organisational Support Best Value Report has been developed in response to the Best Value requirements in the Local Government Act (1989). The Organisational Support services, itemised below, are grouped together because they share a common service objective, that is, providing the 'back room' support to the programs that deliver direct services to the community so that issues, such as financial management, human resource management etc, are undertaken to the standards expected by the community.

It is the view of Council that Best Value relates to good management practice. Accordingly, grouping these services together is an appropriate way to review how they meet the greater objectives of Council, as set out in the Council Plan. Completing individual service reviews may not necessarily achieve this greater goal.

The programs that make up Organisational Support services for Swan Hill Rural City Council are:

<b>Program No</b>	<b>Service Name</b>
2110	Maintenance of Council Owned Buildings
2380	Engineering Services (design and management of projects)
2751	Special Charge Schemes (works undertaken at cost to adjoining property owners)
3120	Municipal Offices (management and maintenance of)
3125	Robinvale Resource Centre
3130	Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties (as determined by Council)
3340	} Financial Services (incorporating Financing Activities)
3840	
3345	Information Technology Services (computers and systems)
3350	Information Management (Records)
3360	Customer Services & Revenue Control
3371	Commercial Services & Risk Management
3385	Asset Management (infrastructure assets)
3618	Depots
3910	} Human Resource Management
3920	
3940	} Plant & Fleet Management
3945	

## Council Plan Direction

The Council Plan is developed by Council to set the direction of the organisation, and guide the development of services provided to the community. The Council Plan is underpinned by the Local Government Act (1989), which details the powers and functions of a municipality.

The Council Plan contains four Key Result Areas (KRAs) that together seek to achieve Council's vision for the community. The KRAs have been developed in the expectation that Council's service delivery to the community would continue whilst the priority areas were being addressed.

The following aspects of the Governance & Leadership KRAs address this group of services:

***“Council will seek to achieve the following to govern and lead our community:***

- ***Display openness, transparency and fairness in decision-making.***
- ***Undertake effective communication with the community.***
- ***Deliver services that are responsive and represent effective and efficient utilisation of resources.***
- ***Efficient development and utilisation of organisational resources.***

The Council Plan KRAs are supported by strategies to achieve the desired outcomes:

- ***Developing open community relationships.*** Council seeks to achieve greater community inclusiveness and understanding of Council's operations and decisions.
- ***Responsible management of resources.*** Council will continually improve the management of its finances, assets, systems and technology to achieve and maintain Best Value in its operations.
- ***Valuing our staff.*** Council is committed to invest in its staff to ensure the organisation is, and remains, able to deliver high level services to our community.

The Organisational Support group of programs also specifically addresses the following two strategies from the key result area of Economic Growth:

- ***Strategic planning.*** Council will continue to maintain a strategic forward plan to guide future economic development of the municipality in accordance with its economic objectives.
- ***Ensure supporting infrastructure.*** Development cannot occur without supporting infrastructure. Council seeks to ensure appropriate infrastructure (natural gas, roads, water, etc) to continue our economic growth.

## Legislative Requirements

Swan Hill Rural City Council is constituted (created) under the Local Government Act 1989. As an 'arm' of government, the Council responds to and enforces a number of Acts and Regulations, of which the following six Acts have greatest impact on Council and the services it delivers:

- Local Government Act 1989
- Building Act 1993
- Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994
- Food Act 1984
- Health Act 1958
- Planning & Environment Act 1987

A further 82 other Victorian Acts either prescribe powers or responsibilities upon Council or its officers, or affect the way council operates or provides its services (see attachment 2). Additionally, there are numerous Commonwealth Acts, which affect the 'back room' operations of council.

## Broad Service Objective

Within this context, the broad service objective for the Organisational Support group of services is:

*"To assist Council at all levels to efficiently and effectively utilise resources in the delivery of services to the community, and to ensure compliance with relevant Legislation, Policies and Standards."*

## Customer Focus

Organisational Support services are often 'invisible' services to the external community, but are critical to the efficient and effective operation of Council. Due to the nature of the services provided, this section has been separated into two areas of focus:

### *Internal Customers:*

Internal customers (for example, staff) expect that this group of services will be responsive to their requests and needs, that sound advice and support will be provided, and that there will be a timely and accurate processing and completion of tasks. Because many of the services in this group are heavily regulated, requiring specific information by set deadlines, requests for information are often viewed (even by internal customers) as 'red tape'.

### *External Customers:*

The community (users of Council services) expects Council to be responsive to requests for information, which often extends well beyond 'normal' Council roles and responsibilities. There is an expectation of responsible control of resources e.g. prudent management of the budget, and that services are provided at minimum cost. Council is

sometimes also perceived by the community as overly bureaucratic. This is often due to legislative and other requirements, and the standards expected of Council.

## Services Provided

A brief description of the services currently provided under the heading of Organisational Support is as follows:

### (2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings

Council has a responsibility to ensure that all of its buildings are kept in a structurally sound and serviceable condition in order to ensure the safety, health and amenity of building occupants and general users. Ongoing maintenance of buildings is also seen as crucial in ensuring that the life expectancy of its building stock is optimised.

Council currently has 278 buildings on its inventory including offices, pre-school centres, community centres, and public toilets. At a minimum, building maintenance inspections are conducted on all buildings twice a year. The inspections focus on issues such as structural defects, roofing, paint finish, carpentry items, fire services maintenance, air-conditioning systems, floor coverings, building access, plumbing fittings and fixtures etc.

Building maintenance issues are divided into three distinct categories being:

- **Programmed Building Maintenance** – items that are readily identified during the annual inspection regime for inclusion in the budget process e.g. painting, floor coverings, air-conditioning upgrades etc.
- **Building Repairs** - items that are more day-to-day emergency repairs e.g. burst water pipes, light fittings, door locks, broken windows etc.
- **Building Vandalism** – items that are caused as a direct result of vandalism attacks on buildings e.g. graffiti, smashed windows, smashed toilet pans etc.

The Development Group is responsible for administering Council's building maintenance program in accordance with the Building Maintenance Policy and Operations Manual. Staff resources for the administration of the program equate to approximately 0.7 E.F.T. (effective full time) staff.

### (2380) Engineering Services

Engineering Services provides professional engineering knowledge and experience to the Council and the community in:

- The investigation and design of civil engineering works.
- The provision of technical input to the development of the Capital Works program.
- The management of the municipal infrastructure maintenance program, and the implementation of the Works program.
- Development of policies and management plans in support of Council's Infrastructure and Environment programs.

- Provision of policy and technical advice in the maintenance of municipal infrastructure assets; including rural roads, urban streets, footpaths, urban drainage systems, public open space, recreation facilities, aerodromes, etc.
- External customer services in engineering related matters.

Engineering Services also provides an internal service to other departments of Council, and is an internal referral agency in Statutory Town Planning and Subdivisional Works.

Engineering Services comprises the Manager Engineering Services, Design and Investigations Unit, and Works management. Current staffing level of the unit is 16 E.F.T. personnel.

### **(2751) Special Charge Schemes**

Under Section 163 of the Local Government Act 1989, Council may declare a special charge to fund certain works, where it can identify that a specific person or persons will gain a special benefit from the works (above the benefit derived by all members of the community). The works in question may be identified from within Council or requested by an external source, and on average number one Special Charge Scheme per year.

Engineering Services undertakes:

- The investigation of the project, public consultation and preliminary design.
- The presentation of a report to Council initiating the scheme, and subsequent statutory reports to Council.
- Consultation with the scheme beneficiaries.
- Detail design of the project works.
- Preparation of drawings and specifications.
- Preparation and despatch of statutory notices to intended contributors.
- Preparation of report to VCAT and attendance at hearing if required.
- Calling for tenders and selection of successful contractor (in conjunction with Commercial Services).
- Contract supervision.
- Finalisation of works and calculation of final costs.
- Charging of project beneficiaries in accordance with Council's Special Rates and Charges Policy (in conjunction with Customer Service and Revenue Control).

In the event that Council is partially funding the works, Engineering Services is responsible for the placement and prioritising of the project in the Capital Works Program.

## **(3120) Municipal Offices**

### **Swan Hill**

This is the main Municipal Office from which the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Staff operate. The office is a central point to service external customers such as ratepayers, the general public and other users of Council services. Meeting and reception rooms are available to accommodate Councillors, staff and community organisations that have direct interests in Council operations and services.

#### *External Customers*

The Swan Hill Municipal Offices provides a central point for the provision of the following services:

- Centre for advice and payment of rates and charges.
- Building & Planning resource.
- Engineering requirements such as road maintenance, drainage and other civil works.
- Community services contact and resource.
- Bookings of Council facilities and reserves.
- General inquiries.

The Offices provide accommodation for approximately 70 staff that are trained to provide information and support to external customers, with the focus on prompt and sound advice.

#### *Internal Customers*

The facility provides accommodation for effective provision of delivery of service. An area that provides a safe work place and promotes safe work practices. The latest technology, furniture and equipment are available to enable each staff member to achieve their objectives.

## **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

#### *External Customers*

The Robinvale Resource Centre provides a similar service to external customers for the Swan Hill Office, albeit for some services on a weekly visiting basis. The Centre facilitates the provision of seven (7) Federal and State government departmental services to the community of Robinvale and surrounding district.

#### *Internal Customers*

Staff have a safe working environment and appropriate technology provision. For private clients (government staff) who rent office space at the Resource Centre, reception, telephone and liaison services are provided as required.

### **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre (3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

The Swan Hill Rural City Council has two service centres, one in Robinvale and one in Swan Hill. From the two service centres the following is provided:

- Reception of visitors, answering of telephone calls, serving of customers, issuing receipts, and hiring administration of Council owned facilities.
- Customer service provided at Council policy standards.
- Administration of all property valuations.
- Model, raise and issue annual and instalment rate notices.
- Collection of all monies due to Council.

The Swan Hill Customer Services and Revenue Control function is provided by 5.6 EFT (equivalent full time) personnel.

The Robinvale service centre provides the following additional services:

- Centralised location for all levels of government service provision, which enables staff to fulfil an advisory/referral role for all services.
- Full agency service provider for Centrelink and VicRoads.
- Partial agency service provider for Northern Mallee Migrant Services.
- Hiring of offices to private clients.

The Robinvale Resource Centre is staffed by 3.8 EFT personnel.

### **(3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties**

The program aims to acquire and dispose of Council properties in accordance with Council decisions..

Routine functions undertaken as part of the acquisition or disposal of a property include:

- Preparation and placement of Public Notices
- Obtaining current property valuations
- Title Searches
- Contract negotiations
- Preparation of Contract of Sale Documents
- Execution of Transfer of land

### **(3340) Financial Services**

The Financial Services program comprises 6.1 EFT (equivalent full time) staff and provides efficient and reliable financial support to its internal and external customers,

with particular reference to statutory and management reporting, and the payment of staff and suppliers.

The major focus areas are:

- Achievement of all statutory and internal reporting and criteria deadlines including:
  - Preparation of Annual Financial Statements.
  - Annual Business Plan (Budget) and 4 Year Major Projects plan.
  - Local Government Performance Indicators.
  - Grant acquittals, such as Victoria Grants Commission, Roads to Recovery.
  - Taxation requirements – GST (Goods and Services Tax), FBT (Fringe Benefits Tax) and PAYG (Pay As You Go) tax.
  - Monthly cash balance reporting.
  - Quarterly Reporting (Budget vs. Actual).
- Timely and accurate payment to staff, suppliers, banks, Australian Taxation Office (ATO), superannuation funds, and contractors.
- Maintaining computerised accounting records – general ledger, payroll, accounts payable, and accounts receivable.
- Appropriate recording of Council's assets and liabilities.
- Provision of accurate, relevant and timely financial reports and advice. Answering queries from suppliers and staff.
- Financial system(s) training and education.
- Administration of Council's Loan and Investment portfolios.

Financial Services also administer the Financing Activities Program (3840). This program recognises and records Council's 'General Purposes Funds', which includes Rate revenue, Interest income, Debt Redemption and Interest expense on Borrowings, Victorian Grants Commission income, and movement in Investment Reserves.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

More than half of the Council staff access a computer every day. Computers have become an essential tool to assist staff in their delivery of everyday services to the community. The Information Technology section supports the efficient and effective use of these computers through:

- Computer Helpdesk Support: enquiries and faults for programs, hardware and accessories, are handled in person, over the phone, with e-mail and via computer remote control.
- Computer equipment upgrades occur mainly once a year, with the occasional replacement on an as needs basis.
- Repairs and Maintenance of all computer equipment where warranties are no longer valid.
- System administration to enable staff to access shared system resources such as data storage areas, printers and shared programs, and ensure appropriate backups are in place.

- Provide Software and upgrades to ensure validity of licensing and appropriate allocation.
- Training of new employees in the use of the computer system and giving assistance to all employees on the use of software as required.
- Telephone communications training, relaying of faults, and liaison with providing companies.

Information Technology Services comprises 1.8 EFT staff, 9 data servers, 160 computers and laptops, and a wide Area Network over 9 Council sites.

### **(3350) Information Management**

The Information Management program provides management of Council's records in compliance with section 13 of the Public Records Act (1973), and maintains Council's records in accordance with standards established under section 12 of the Act. Specifically:

#### *Internal Customer Focus*

- Open and distribute daily mail (on average, 200 items per day)
- Record relevant correspondence in the corporate records management system
- Maintain 9,800 files
- Provide timely access to accurate and contextual information in electronic format
- Provide storage for short and long-term records
- Dispose of records in accordance with established standards, taking into account organisational and/or community expectations
- Provide advice on the protection of information
- Protect vital records and various public registers & Council minutes

#### *External Customer Focus*

- Provide access to information resulting from requests under the Freedom of Information Act
- Provide access to information prior to 1989 for historical or genealogical research
- Receive and investigate complaints about any perceived breach of an individual's privacy

This service is provided by 3.5 EFT staff and utilises assets including 1 Primary storage area with 151 metres of shelf space, and two Secondary storage areas with 1.4 km of shelf space.

Note: Whilst the Public Records Act (1973) requires the council to make and keep records and to carry out a programme of records management, council's primary legislative instruments also prescribe the making and keeping of specific records either implicitly or explicitly. The bulk of these records are maintained by direct service provision sections of the Council, and do not fall within the responsibility of the

Information Management program until the records are no longer required for day-to-day operations.

### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

Commercial Services oversees the Tendering requirements of Council and supports Council's decentralised purchasing operations by providing commercial services, contracts management, procurement advice, and risk management.

The department consists of 5 E.F.T (effective full time) staff providing professional advice and guidance, in an orderly responsible and cost effective manner between Council and its Contractors, suppliers, service providers and community groups.

#### *Internal Customer Focus*

Services provided, include but are not limited to the following areas:

- Contract management and procurement advise.
- Facilitation of the Tendering Process.
- Preparation and Execution of contract documentation.
- Development and Maintenance of contract documentation.
- Disposal and Acquisition of Land.
- Identify risk throughout Councils operations.
- Occupational Health & Safety advice.
- Risk Management & Insurance advice.

#### *External Customer Focus*

Services provided, include but are not limited to the following areas:

- Risk Management assessment.
- Insurance advice to community groups.
- Support to Local Traders through the purchase of Goods & Services.
- Notification of forthcoming Tenders.
- Contractual reviews to ensure compliance.
- Support to Government Departments.
- Facilitation of Land Grabs (Ultima).

The service aims to protect Council from being placed in a lesser position contractually, in terms of legality, probity, prudence, and commercial outcomes with respect to any of its external relationships.

In turn, this provides Council with the means of defending litigation and minimising the effects of incidents in order to reduce losses and improve Councils practices and public image in relation to these events.

### **(3385) Asset Management**

Asset Management provides advice and systems to assist other services of Council to manage the assets under their control. It also provides information about Council owned assets to external agencies.

*Internal focus*

- Maintain a database of all Council infrastructure assets.
- Value and depreciate assets in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.
- Undertake regular condition surveys of assets.
- Develop asset management plans that include levels of service, operation and maintenance plans, risk management, acquisition, disposal and renewal plans.

*External focus*

- Provide information about Council assets to Government agencies, service authorities and the general public.

Staff resources allocated to Asset Management equate to approximately 1.5 E.F.T.

### **(3618) Depots**

The Depots program comprises property, sheds and buildings for the safe and secure storage of Council machinery and equipment, and provide the necessary amenities for those staff (generally outdoor staff) who commence their daily work schedules from those facilities. Secure Depot facilities are provided at Swan Hill, Robinvale, Nyah and Manangatang.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

With over one hundred different career opportunities in local government, Swan Hill Rural City Council's staff body is a diverse mix of skills, experience and qualifications ranging from Maternal and Child Health Nurses, to Pre-School teachers, Librarians, Civil Engineers, Grader Operators, Theatre Technicians, Dog Rangers, Mechanics and Accountants.

The Human Resources Program provides effective administration and application of modern human resource and occupational health and safety practices across Council, which currently comprises 267 staff (195 EFT). This is achieved through:

- Staff recruitment
- Arrangement of staff training
- Annual staff performance reviews
- Industrial relations including liaison with relevant Unions and involvement in Council's Consultative Committee
- Policy and procedure development, implementation and monitoring to ensure effectiveness
- Facilitation of Council's occupational health and safety systems
- WorkCover administration
- Management of Council's Employee Assistance Program which provides counselling and other forms of support to staff in need

For budget costing purposes, the Human Resource Program also recognises and allocates Council's oncost requirements including Long Service Leave, WorkCover Employer Contribution and Superannuation.

### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

Plant consists of machinery used in industrial, construction/earth moving, agricultural or horticultural/turf management tasks. Council currently operates approximately 60 major Plant items including machinery and equipment to support road maintenance and construction, parks and gardens, street cleaning, road signs and line marking, drainage and irrigation. Council also operates approximately 120 items of small plant such as chain saws, brush cutters, pumps, leaf blowers, mowers, etc.

In addition, council has a motor vehicle fleet of approximately 70 motor vehicles including passenger and light commercial vehicles to support all Council programs.

The written down value (WDV) of the total Plant and Fleet assets as at 30 June 2004 is approximately \$3.9m.

Plant and Fleet management aims to provide, maintain and operate Council's plant and fleet effectively and efficiently, providing a commercially competitive option for the provision of equipment in support of Council programs. The programs provide all technical specifications, procurement, contractual and disposal services for Council's Plant and Fleet. The programs also engage in the negotiation for short-term, task specific vehicles and Plant.

A competitive maintenance facility is provided for the purpose of maintaining Council Plant and Fleet, and ensuring maximum service with minimum equipment downtime. An effective 'field and breakdown service' is also provided.

The programs provide competitive, efficient and convenient refueling through underground, above ground and mobile facilities as well as contracted fuel services through commercial providers.

In addition, the program maintains and manages the pumping systems that support the municipal drainage and irrigation systems.

Plant and Fleet Management programs utilise the services of 5.7 EFT staff.

## Community Need For These Services

Community need for services is approached from three different perspectives:

- The need perceived and/or recognised by other levels of government (Federal and State).
- The need perceived by the community (which sometimes includes a level of expectation).
- The need perceived and addressed by Council.

### **(2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

It is incumbent upon Council to maintain its buildings in order to satisfy the following government legislation and other agency requirements:

- Building Act and Regulations
- Insurance Policy requirements/conditions
- Risk Management Principles
- Occupational Health and Safety legislation

*Need recognised by the local community*

The community has an expectation that all Council owned buildings will be kept in a structurally sound and serviceable condition in order to ensure their safety, health and amenity.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council has recognised its responsibility to ensure that all of its buildings are kept in a structurally sound and serviceable condition in order to ensure the safety, health and amenity of the building occupants and general users.

The building maintenance program is identified in Council's budget, with average annual expenditure in the order of \$250,000 for programmed maintenance, \$80,000 for building repairs and \$20,000 for building vandalism.

Ongoing maintenance is seen as crucial to ensure the optimum life expectancy of Council's building stock.

## **(2380) Engineering Services**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

Whilst there is no specific requirement in the Local Government Act (1989) for a Council to provide an Engineering Services Unit as part of its corporate structure, a range of other legislation relating to the environment, building, occupational health and safety, subdivision, water and planning assumes the presence of an engineering group within a Council.

*Need recognised by the local community*

“The Engineering Department” is traditionally the community’s point of contact for anything to do with the physical infrastructure of the municipality. In spite of all of the changes to Local Government over the last decade, this is still very much the community view.

*Need recognised by Council*

The Council recognises the need for an Engineering Services Unit as the most appropriate means to provide for the management of the infrastructure maintenance and development programs, the development and implementation of policy in these areas, and the technical experience and knowledge to assist other functions of the organisation.

## **(2751) Special Charge Schemes**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The Local Government Act (1989) empowers Council to use Special Charge Schemes to fund specified activities. The Act defines the principles and constraints that a Council must consider in the introduction of a Special Charge Scheme.

*Need recognised by the local community*

In general, individual members of the community do not see a need for a Special Charge Scheme. However, Special Charge Schemes exist to fund the construction of assets that were not in existence at the time that the adjoining property owner purchased the property (and therefore were not reflected in the purchase price). The Special Charge Scheme ensures that only those who receive a “Special Benefit” from the scheme pay for that benefit, rather than the whole community through its Rates. In these instances the community as a whole would perceive the application of a special charge as an equitable function.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council has established this program to ensure that any Special Charge Scheme is administered in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act (1989). The program also provides a resource to manage the implementation of the works funded by the Special Charge.

**(3120) Municipal Offices**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The Local Government Act (1989) specifically requires Council to have an office from which it conducts its affairs and is a central point of contact for the community. In addition, other legislation developed by Federal/State government sets standards for such a facility so that it is a safe and healthy environment for staff and visitors.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The need for municipal offices is inherently accepted by the community, who use it for a central point of contact.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council recognises the need for a central office from which all business, including Council meetings, are conducted.

**(3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The Government expects Council to be efficient in its infrastructure holding and management. The Program also supports other Government Departments in relation to the availability of Council owned land that may be provided or purchased for the development of new infrastructure such as Hospitals, Aged Care accommodation, Police Stations etc.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The community expects that when Council purchases land, it does not waste 'ratepayer funds' and that when it sells land that it achieves the maximum sale price in the interests of the community. In addition, because these are 'community' assets held on behalf of the community by Council, there is an expectation that all such transactions are undertaken in a transparent and accountable manner.

*Need recognised by Council*

The program is recognised by Council for its role in ensuring appropriate legal procedures are undertaken to ensure compliance with legislation and ensuring negotiations are beneficial to Council requirements.

**(3340) Financial Services**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

Government expectations of the Finance and associated services are expressed in the Local Government Act (1989), associated regulations, and Applicable Accounting Standards. Funding and Service Agreements also exert written and implied needs for accountability, through performance of sound financial systems, internal controls and timely reporting.

These combined Acts, Regulations, Standards and Agreements determine the requirements for adequate and transparent statutory reporting such as the Annual Report, Annual Business Plan (Budget), and Council Plan; along with taxation returns and grant acquittals.

Local Government is a recipient of significant funding from Government agencies. The requirement to make and keep specific and accurate financial records is a major condition of funding and significant focus is placed on the acquittal process. Timely and accurate acquittals also underpin the success in gaining future funding.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The community relies on the finance function, to ensure:

- Prompt payment to suppliers, contractors and other service providers.
- Response to requests for financial information within a reasonable timeframe.
- Timely issue of debtors' invoices and statements.
- Council finances are managed appropriately.
- Regular financial reporting to the Community.
- Accurate recording of Council's Assets and Liabilities.
- Council complies with relevant laws, including taxation obligations.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council relies on the Financial Services program for timely and accurate reporting, financial control and security of Council's financial assets. Council has appointed an Audit Committee to oversee Council processes and financial operations to ensure that appropriate controls are in place. Council staff and management team need the Finance program to correctly process accounting transactions in a timely manner, and to assist with informed advice and support on financial matters relevant to the operation of their programs.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

Government recognises that Communications and Information Technology (IT) is an important avenue to facilitate services provided to our communities today. The ability to offer information in a quick and secure format through technology allows the exchange of personal information, where required for legitimate use, in areas such as Aged Care.

Governments support and encourage development of IT solutions in local government, and there is an expectation that Council will be able to deal with government electronically, e.g. via the State government extranet (a secure website). Governments also expect that information will be delivered to the community in more timely and accessible ways, such as web casting Council meetings.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The community would like to see additional ways of contacting and doing business with Council, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The introduction of information available via the Internet has seen the ability to download information regarding Council facilities, Community links, forms for completion, rates payments, and the ability to lodge service requests.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council has acknowledged the need to provide technology to Council staff to assist the effective and efficient provision of services to the community, by providing funds to purchase and update equipment. Council operations and staff rely are heavily reliant on computer access to perform their duties in an efficient and effective manner. Council supports this by budgeting approximately \$450,000 per annum for Information Technology.

### **(3350) Information Management**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The need for records management by the Government is recognised in legislation, regulation, standards and service agreements. Primarily, the need for records management is recognised in the Public Records Act (1973).

Whilst the Government requires sound records management practices, it also encourages transparency and accountability through the right to access records via the Freedom of Information Act (1982). At the same time, the Government recognises the need to protect essential public interests and the private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom information is collected and held by agencies.

Local Government is also a recipient of funding from various other bodies, and the requirement to make and keep specific records is a major condition of the funding and service agreements that underpin the conditions for receiving that funding.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The primary need recognised by the local community is not focussed on records management, but in the timely response to correspondence with Council. This itself is reliant on sound records management practices in getting the right information to the right person at the right time.

The local community also require transparency and accountability in local government, and expect access to information in a timely fashion. This access may be to public document such as council minutes, planning applications, various public registers, etc; or it may be to information only available through the Freedom of Information process. The community are also reliant on council to preserve records of historical or community significance. Members of the community are reliant on council records to conduct historical or genealogical research, which may not be available from any other source.

In dealing with local government, the community have an expectation that their information will remain private and/or confidential where appropriate. The right to privacy or confidentiality may be overridden by the requirement of other legislation or common law.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council recognises the need for sound records management practices in providing evidence of its rights and obligations within legal, financial, administrative and community expectations. Records are relied upon to support decision-making and in managing risk in undertaking its core functions and providing its various services.

**(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre  
(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The Victorian Government, under the Local Government Act requires an open and transparent administration at Council offices. Customer Service Staff, at Council's Swan Hill and Robinvale Service Centres, fulfil this personal first point of contact role. It is expected that this role promote positive customer contact.

Council is also required, under the Valuation of Land Act, to value all rateable land. Victoria's Valuer General has overarching control of all valuations assigned. The valuations are provided, under statute, to the State Revenue Office for Land Tax purposes.

The need to provide 'other' government services to isolated communities is evidenced by the existence of service agreements with Centrelink, VicRoads, Australian Immigration Services and the Department of Health and Community Services.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The vast majority of the community utilise the customer service centres at some point, either by a personal visit or by telephone.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council recognises the need to have a single point of contact in the community so that queries can be relayed to appropriate area of Council.

### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

To ensure the efficiency of Council operations, the Government expects Council to carry out a competitive tendering process for all significant transactions. The process must ensure probity and transparency and compliance with relevant legislation.

Council is also required, under the Local Government Act (1989), to have appropriate and adequate insurance to indemnify Council, its employees and assets.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The local community expects that all commercial relationships that Council enters into, have gone through a competitive process and provide best value to the community.

It is expected that Council is contractually protected and that sufficient securities and penalties can be imposed on any Contractor who may breach their contractual obligations.

There is also a strong expectation that Council supports local traders whenever possible and will keep them informed of new and upcoming works.

Local community groups seek advice and information on insurance matters from Council. Community groups are becoming increasingly reliant on Council participation in the management of their risks, as small groups are unable to obtain affordable insurance cover in their own right.

*Need recognised by Council*

Council is committed to a tendering system that will promote fair and open competition to achieve quality; responsive services at best value for the community. As all tenders and the associated contracts embody a degree of risk that can never be completely

eliminated, Council expects that appropriate strategies and contingency planning to respond to risks are supported by the services provided.

Council recognises the need to have all risks identified and appropriately mitigated by insurance policies and appropriate processes and procedures.

### **(3385) Asset Management**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

Since the release of the 'Facing the Renewal Challenge Report' (December 1998), the Victorian Government has become increasingly concerned about the 'gap' between the predicted cost of asset renewal and replacement by Victorian municipalities and the funds available to Council for this purpose. Improving asset management practices is seen as an effective way of assisting Councils to manage the gap. Some measures introduced by the Victorian Government and other agencies to encourage Councils to adopt sound asset management practices are:

- Maintenance of an asset register and valuation of all assets is required by the Australian Accounting Standards.
- An Annual Report on Council's Asset management activities.
- The STEP program to assist Councils to develop sound Asset Management practices.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The community expects that rate revenue and other Council resources are utilised in the most effective and efficient manner to deliver Council services. Asset Management software and systems enable Council to achieve this goal.

*Need recognised by Council*

Recognising the need for improved asset management Council has taken the following initiatives:

- Asset Management was introduced as a separate program in 1995.
- Adoption of the Asset Management policy in February 2003.
- 2004/08 Council Plan – Key Result Area: Governance and Leadership  
Strategy: *Responsible management of resources* - "Council will continually improve the management of its finances, assets..."
- Strategic Resource Plan/Infrastructure:  
"Council's infrastructure strategy includes the development of management plans...." (P14 Council Plan)
- Council Budget for Asset Management is approximately \$130,000 pa.

### **(3618) Depots**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

It is a requirement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (1985) that an employer will provide and maintain as far as is practicable for employees a working environment that is safe and without risk to health.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The Depot facilities provide the community with an alternative point for enquiries and liaison with various council programs, which work directly from these premises. Areas such as the Engineering Services – Works, Regulatory Services, and Plant & Fleet Management are all located at Council depots. Various contractors, engaged by Council to assist in the provision of services also have an avenue to relay information on works progress, receive instructions and generally liaise with the managers responsible for the various physical works projects.

*Need recognised by Council*

The goals of the program are addressed in the Council Plan 2004-2008, under the Key Result Area of Governance & Leadership:

*“Council will be open and accountable, striving to effectively utilise resources to deliver responsive services.”*

The Council Depots consist of property, sheds and buildings for the safe and secure storage of Council machinery and equipment, and provide the necessary office accommodation and amenities for those staff – generally outdoor staff, who commence their daily work schedules from those facilities.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

The Government does not have an expressed requirement for a formal Human Resource Officer or Program of Council, but does imply a human resource function within Council in the administration of the requirements of various Acts of Parliament. In particular, the Local Government Act (1989) regulates recruitment of Council senior staff and institutes principles of employment for all Council staff.

Further requirements for Human Resource management is implied by the Occupational Health & Safety Act (1985), Equal Opportunity Act (1995), Accident Compensation Act (1985), Workplace Relations Act (Commonwealth) (1996), Victorian Local Authorities Award (2001), Swan Hill Rural City Council Enterprise Agreement (2002) and determinations of the Industrial Relations Commission, all of which affect employee related programs within the organisation.

The Government also encourages various employment and training programs through targeted funding and grants.

*Need recognised by the local community*

As a leading employer within the region, there is an expectation that Council's recruitment processes are fair and open. It is also expected that Council complies with the standards of accountability and equity, with ongoing development of staff, and provide work environs that are safe and free of discrimination and harassment.

*Need recognised by Council (Internal Customers)*

Council expects that staff resources are effectively managed to ensure sustainable service delivery. This is achieved through staff development, including multi-skilling, provision of worksite flexibilities through Council's Enterprise Agreement and career progression, all of which are administered through the Human Resource Program.

### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

*Need recognised by other government departments and agencies*

There are implied and specific requirements within various Act and Regulations to ensure plant and vehicles are provided in a safe condition, e.g. Plant Regulations, Occupational Health and Safety Act (1985), various Noise Regulations, Road Safety Regulations, etc.

*Need recognised by the local community*

The provision of reliable vehicles, machinery and equipment is an integral part of the services provided by almost every Council service.

Road construction and maintenance, parks, gardens and recreational facilities, footpaths, drainage, community and family services, library, aged services, environmental and public health are a few of the areas which require direct interaction with the Plant and Fleet Management program to operate efficiently and effectively for the broader benefit of the community.

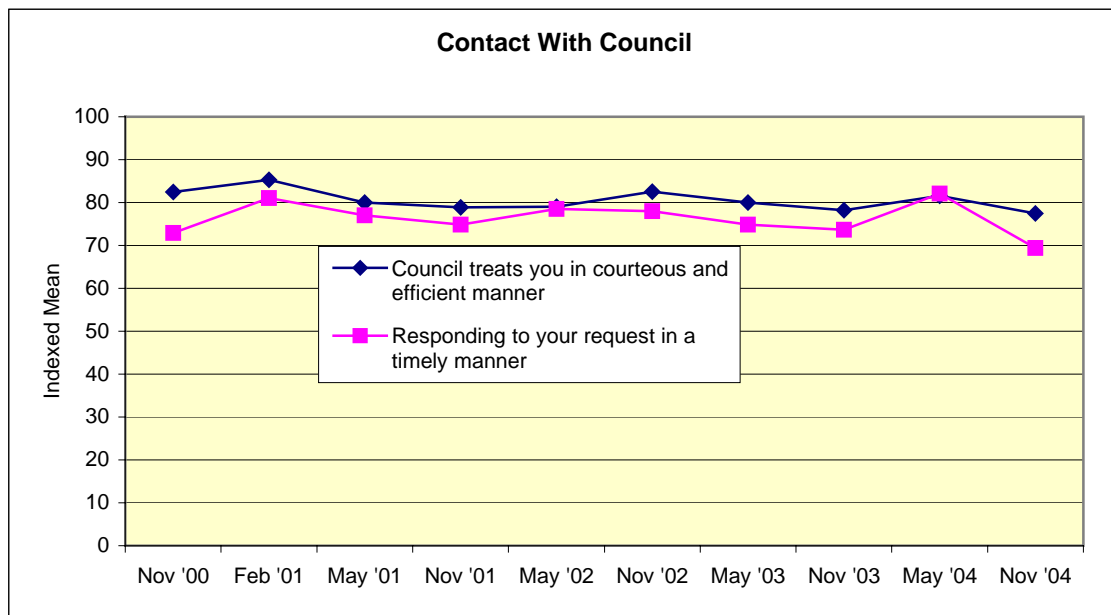
*Need recognised by Council*

Council expects that its plant and vehicle assets are managed effectively and efficiently, to facilitate the delivery of all services.

## Summary Of Need Recognised By The Local Community

In order to identify community perception, the Swan Hill Rural City Council commenced regular surveys of the community in May 2000, covering a range of services that Council provides. Of the programs being reviewed in the Organisational Support group, the questions in relation to 'Contact with Council' are relevant.

The results of the surveys conducted to date reveal that the community considers the services to be of high importance, as can be seen from the following graph:



## Summary Of Council Financial Commitment

The following table documents the annual resources expended on the Organisational Support group of programs. Whilst the size of the financial investment may appear significant, these programs directly enable and support the efficient and effective delivery of services and infrastructure to the community.

Organisational Support Financial Operations (Actual) 2003/2004

	Maint of Council Owned Buildings 2110	Engineering Services 2380	Special Charge Schemes 2751	Municipal Offices 3120	Robinvale Resource Centre 3125	Customer Services & Revenue Control 3360	Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties 3130	Financial Services 3340 & 3840	Information Technology Services 3345	Information Management 3350	Commercial Services 3371	Asset Management 3385	Depots 3618	Human Resources 3910 3920	Plant Management 3940	Fleet Management 3945	Total
Interest Received			4,020					347,238									351,258
Operating Subsidies/Grants					560			2,621,207			320	100,000					2,722,087
Other Income		5,777	980			8,807		7,000		307	3,798				688		27,357
Proceeds of Disposal of Assets							127,003		1,906						201,004	316,109	646,022
Rates & Charges								10,516,935									10,516,935
Statutory Fees & Fines		4,354				21,913											26,267
User Fees & Charges, Sale of Goods & Services				1,652	57,573						100,324	2,700					162,249
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,131</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>1,652</b>	<b>58,133</b>	<b>30,720</b>	<b>127,003</b>	<b>13,492,380</b>	<b>1,906</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>104,442</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>201,692</b>	<b>316,109</b>	<b>14,452,175</b>
Borrowing Costs								362,624									362,624
Bad Debts			(23,831)	(29,315)		(1,305)		(11,726)			1,467						(64,710)
Capital Expenses			77,040					877	100,261			11,982	6,359		632,158	447,787	1,276,464
Contractors / Consultants	(2,018)	42,759		30,758	12,669	97,335	85,448			10,000	1,668	6,766	12,827	19,329	142,280		459,821
Consumables/Utilities	5,764	72,915		82,018	79,686	98,107	6,486	28,975	43,477	12,963	55,740	1,966	17,174	6,121	14,538	332	526,262
Wages & Related	48,251	208,169	1,520	26,790	137,425	297,401		316,458	62,499	183,378	216,754	91,930	7,760	341,586	202,462	89,000	2,231,383
Insurance & Registration											442,390				68,932	42,084	553,406
Legal Fees / FBT Tax	2,468	12,364				13,111	5,353	2,868		2,098	(646)	3,170			4,669		45,455
Major Projects Non Cap						(23,686)			3,183			12,242	800				(7,461)
Other Expenses	266	3,406			2,671	39,100		38,949			(1,033)				869		84,228
Repairs & Maintenance	938	15,820		35,513	24,741	373			217,891	8,125	450		4,321	299,895	26,388		634,455
Travel/Vehicle	7,071	120,258			321	10,389		13,413	709	14,442	19,186	10,479		673	(1,392,783)	(348,942)	(1,544,784)
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>62,739</b>	<b>475,691</b>	<b>54,729</b>	<b>145,764</b>	<b>257,513</b>	<b>530,825</b>	<b>97,287</b>	<b>752,438</b>	<b>428,020</b>	<b>231,006</b>	<b>735,976</b>	<b>138,535</b>	<b>49,241</b>	<b>367,709</b>	<b>(26,980)</b>	<b>256,649</b>	<b>4,557,142</b>
<b>Total Council Contribution</b>	<b>62,739</b>	<b>465,560</b>	<b>49,729</b>	<b>144,112</b>	<b>199,380</b>	<b>500,105</b>	<b>(29,716)</b>	<b>(12,739,942)</b>	<b>426,114</b>	<b>230,699</b>	<b>631,534</b>	<b>38,535</b>	<b>46,541</b>	<b>367,709</b>	<b>(228,672)</b>	<b>(59,460)</b>	<b>(9,895,033)</b>

## Consultation

Council has a wide range of consultative processes in place to consult with the community on the services included in the Organisational Support group. These range from formal community wide consultation to more locally based consultation on specific local issues. Council also surveys the wider community in May and November each year on its satisfaction with Council services, which include the Organisational Support group of services.

As noted in the section 'Services Provided', the Organisational Support group of services provide a wide range of services to internal customers. Consultation with internal customers is generally informal, but frequent, via daily personal and telephone contact, meetings and memorandums.

The following consultative processes are used by all Organisational Support services, depending on the situation or the issue being addressed:

Consultation with the community:

- Customer Request System.
- On site meetings on specific issues.
- Meetings/consultation with developers.
- Meetings with Local community groups such as community action groups, Lead On, Schools, Scouts, Field Naturalists etc.
- Public meetings on specific issues (such as the Drainage Strategy).
- Focus groups on specific issues (public conveniences, Water Initiatives etc).
- Regular meetings with other stakeholders such as the business community, Catchment Management Authorities, VicRoads, Landcare, Victorian Farmers Federation, Country Fire Authority etc.
- Direct mail to identified affected members of the community on specific issues.
- Personal contact with the public by staff.
- Local media is used to provide information to, and receive feedback from, the community.
- Many of the Organisational Support programs are reviewed externally by Council's Auditors or Audit Committee.
- Organisational support provides substantial input into the publication of the Council Plan, Business Plan, Budget and Annual Report. These are key documents providing feedback to the community about Council policy and performance.

Consultation with internal service users (Council staff):

- Individual project briefings (to identify what is required from the Organisational Support service before the task is commenced, or during the project life).
- Regular meetings/ discussions on progress of tasks/projects
- Informal/ad hoc discussions on an as needs basis.
- Memorandums.
- Emails.
- Council and projects briefings.

## Service Responsiveness To Community Needs

Generally, service responsiveness may be gauged by trends in the results from Council's regular community satisfaction survey and trends from the Customer Service Request system. Specific examples of the service being responsive to community needs are as follows:

### **(2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings**

Council's building maintenance program dictates that all inspections, reports, budget estimates and maintenance program are completed in accordance with Council's adopted budget program. Further, all requests for emergency maintenance are responded to immediately and all other requests are responded to within 3 working days of receiving the request.

All written requests from committees, user groups and the general public are considered on their merits. Appropriate investigation of the request is conducted and prioritised in order of want versus need, cosmetics/aesthetics versus safety etc. If considered appropriate and in keeping with the Council Plan objectives and budget program, the item will be included in the annual budget.

### **(2380) Engineering Services**

The Responsiveness of Engineering Services is measured by the number of people awaiting an outcome on their request for service delivery. A request for service delivery may come in either written or verbal form, and is logged in the "Reflect" customer service record system. The capacity to satisfy the needs of the community as a whole, and particular individuals, is constrained by the resources available to put to the task. Each request in the system, and the response, is prioritised with regard to its urgency, the degree of risk to the public, and the scope of works required to deal with the issue described.

### **(2751) Special Charge Schemes**

The process to investigate and implement a Special Charge Scheme is defined by the Local Government Act (1989). Recent amendments have "democratised" the decision making process by introducing a test of popular support for a scheme. This change was driven by the perceived community need to have a stronger say in the process.

Council has received requests for a number of schemes from local groups, but these have not been investigated or implemented, as Council's capacity to initiate the processes is hampered by the limited resources it can put to the task.

### **(3120) Municipal Offices**

Council's service responsiveness for this facility may be found during the Customer Service Request system or during community satisfaction surveys. The ability to meet any needs are governed by affordability and provided through budgetary systems.

### **(3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties**

Service responsiveness is dependent on the current and future requirements of Council and community at any given time. The ability to meet any needs are governed by affordability and provided through budgetary systems.

### **(3340) Financial Services**

Finance staff are extremely conscious, responsive and responsible for the provision of services, information and advice required by and provided to all target groups.

Internal contact is predominately face-to-face, informal but frequent. It can often entail relatively simple requests for information that are attended to instantly, through to more rigorous and time consuming reports. Support provided to council officers places enormous work pressure to return information at times during the year when statutory deadlines dominate core outputs.

Based on general word-of-mouth feedback, the Finance program meets the general needs of its target group. Considerable requests for financial information comes from within the organisation, these can range from staff queries regarding payments made to suppliers, to program managers seeking assistance in compiling their forward plans or budgets for the forthcoming year. While it is not always possible to provide everything wanted or needed by our internal customer group, the finance team is able to satisfy most inquiries or provide appropriate access to its financial database for generic querying of data.

The general community expects Council finances to be managed appropriately, that relevant laws are complied with, and payment to suppliers, staff and service providers are correct and appropriate. They also expect that transacting their business and requests for financial information from Council will occur in a timely and professional manner.

These assumptions are realised through prescribed Legislation, namely the Local Government Act (1989) and the influence that associated peak bodies such as the Department for Victorian Communities have on local government entities. Transparency in adequate reporting of operations back to the Minister for Local Government and the Victorian Auditor-General is an end result of a community's unconscious expectation. It is unfortunate, that Council's stakeholders rarely wish to source these financial documents.

The measurement of success in meeting our statutory and service agreement requirements is ultimately gauged by its timeliness and accuracy.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

The responsiveness of the Information Technology section to identified needs is dependent on the availability and affordability of resources at any one time.

### **(3350) Information Management**

The major service of correspondence registration serves both our internal and external customers. The service ensures that the bulk of correspondence received by the organisation is available to internal customers on the day it is received so as to ensure as little time as possible is lost in providing a response.

The service encompassing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Privacy requests/complaints are regulated under their respective Acts, which both allow for a 45-day period to resolve. However, Council endeavours to action these items as soon as possible. Demand for use of the FOI service is low due to the requirement of payment of a \$20.50 application fee to make a request.

Historical requests are generally actioned within one week of receipt of the request, but this may vary dependent on the availability of staff to undertake the appropriate research. Demand for this service has generally been low but our customers are appreciative of the service.

### **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

### **(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

As the initial point of contact with the community, the Customer Services Group meets the needs of the community, as is demonstrated by the outcomes of the community survey.

With specific regard to rates and valuations, responsiveness has been significantly impacted by the ability of contract valuers to meet the valuation needs of the community. However, this has been addressed by changing contract valuers and processes.

Another specific community requirement is an increase in the amount of electronic/computer access to Council, such as payment of animal registrations and rate accounts. In the near future this will be expanded to include payment of non-Rates invoices and electronic bill presentation.

For three additional services provided by the Robinvale Resource Centre, namely Centrelink, VicRoads and Immigration Services, informal and formal feedback from

clients of these three services suggest they are meeting the needs of the community as far as the "Service Agreements" for these three services allow.

### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

Service responsiveness is achieved through the deadlines included in the tendering and contracting processes.

In relation to insurances, service responsiveness to the community is met through prompt attention to claims and advice on insurance issues.

### **(3385) Asset Management**

Asset Management has achieved all goals set by the Municipal Association of Victoria STEP program, and has responded to all opportunities for further improvement noted in reports from the Department for Victorian Communities.

### **(3618) Depots**

The community expects to have access to Council staff who can offer advice, direction and information regarding the provision of services. In addition the security of Council, and therefore community assets in the form of vehicles, plant and equipment, is also expected. The Depots provide this function.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

Service responsiveness is generally reactive based on either requests, such as work requirements generated by the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, or through specific management direction.

Whilst there is no formal complaints handling system, the Human Resource Program has a personal relationship with the users of the program (staff), and generally informal verbal feedback is provided on service delivery.

The Program is also required to meet a number of deadlines in regards to service delivery, such as processing of WorkCover claims, completion of staff reviews in accordance with established timeframes and standards, coordination of recruitment requirements as per Council policy and attendance and provision of minutes from Committees the Program is involved with.

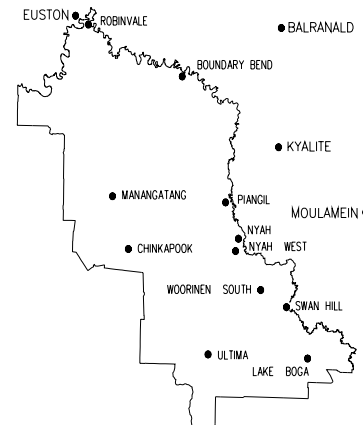
### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

As discussed under 'Needs recognised by the local Community', the general community do not use the specific services offered by the Fleet and Plant programs. However, it is clearly expected that services to the community will be delivered on time, within budget and in a cost efficient manner. Inadequate or unsuitable plant and equipment, down time of equipment through unnecessary or extensive repairs, and delays in the availability of new items, can impact heavily on the deadlines for progress on community projects and services. The provision of reliable, fit for purpose and cost efficient vehicles, plant and equipment is a key element in the provision of Council services.

## Accessibility Of Services To Target Groups

The Swan Hill municipality covers an area of 6,132 square kilometres. Approximately 70% of the municipal population resides in Swan Hill, or within 30 km of it, with a further 20% residing in Robinvale. The remaining 10% of the population resides throughout the rural sections of the municipality.

Predominantly, the Organisational Support services are accessible from Council's Splatt Street, Swan Hill office, with the exception of the Customer Services Program, which is also accessible from the Robinvale office (Robinvale Resource Centre).



Site visits are undertaken by the other programs within Organisational Support to the Robinvale office, and other areas within the municipality as required.

The daily operations of this group of services are generally accessed within normal operating hours of Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. The primary users of these services are Council staff, however some community groups access these services as the need arises.

Service accessibility outside of normal office hours includes the internet service (website), which runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as access to after hours contact numbers when services need to be reinstated before the next business day.

Services are provided via front counter customer enquiries, emails, phone calls, appointments, or internal meetings. General open door policy exist for internal customers and 'corridor' discussions occur as appropriate.

The Organisational Support programs are further accessible via site inspections, after hours call outs or pre arranged public meetings. The group are also available to attend Council and Audit committee meetings as the need arises.

This information applies to all of the Organisational Support services, with the following exceptions:

- (3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**
- (3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

For payment of Rates and animal registration accounts, payment may be made at any Post Office in Australia, by mail, in person at either service centre, by phone, through the Internet, by Direct Debit or BPay. Telephone, Internet and BPay services operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week. No fees are passed on to any customer who uses

any of the payment options. Sundry Debtors are currently being considered for the same payment options.

The Robinvale Resource Centre provides similar access to Centrelink, VicRoads and Immigration Services customers.

## Best On Offer (Benchmarking)

Best Value legislation suggests that Council may wish to compare a service to the best on offer both in the public and private sectors. Such a comparison is usually undertaken in the form of benchmarking.

As part of monitoring “best on offer”, Swan Hill Rural City Council is a member of the “Super 11” group of Councils, which undertake benchmarking projects to compare their performance in specific areas. The member Councils have common characteristics (large rural municipalities with a number of urban centres and diverse industries). Currently there are some 10 services being benchmarked by the group. Existing and continuing benchmarking projects involving the Organisational Support group of services include:

- Risk Management
- Fleet Management
- Finance
- Customer Services

In addition, a significant level of informal comparison of costs and practices also occurs on a regular basis.

Internal and External Audit bodies also provide “arms length” review and recommendations on efficiency and effectiveness of policy, procedures and administrative practices across Council.

Membership and active participation in professional organisations allow networking, industry best practice pursuits and collective participation. This is further enhanced through staff attendance at industry conferences, seminars and training.

The offices are situated in a most convenient location to provide best on offer for the public and staff to access and undertake their business. Cleaning is undertaken each day to ensure that the facility is presented in the best possible manner so that efficient service is maintained.

Information management is centralised at the Swan Hill office and efficiency of the service is impacted by distance. Electronic records management services are not currently offered to the Robinvale Resource Centre due to distance and cost inhibitors.

Organisational Support services that participate in additional benchmarking/determining best on offer processes are as follows:

### **(2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings**

Council directly administers the building maintenance service from the Municipal Offices in Splatt Street. This is considered the most efficient mode and locale for service delivery due to its central location and support networks.

In delivering the service the most efficient maintenance methods are implemented in order to ensure optimum return for Council expenditure. Negotiation of bulk service agreements with maintenance providers and sub-contractors, e.g. pest control, fire services, air-conditioning, plumbers, electricians, painters etc. enables Council to take advantage of competitive rates.

Whilst this service is not actively involved in the official benchmarking process, investigation into “industry best practice” methods of service delivery are conducted on a regular basis. Software packages, discussions with other Councils, and Insurance company recommendations are just some of the avenues whereby improvements and efficiencies are gained and/or implemented.

## Regular Reporting To Community On Service Standards And Levels Achieved

The Best Value legislation requires that Council regularly report to the community on the achievement of best value principles.

Currently the Organisational Support programs do not report to the community on the achievements of service standards and levels as this can only occur after the Best Value review is completed.

Existing reporting to the community is generally through:

- The normal monthly meetings of Council.
- The Annual Report to the community.
- Media releases, and interviews on television and radio for specific projects and issues of note.
- The attendance by Senior Officers at Public meetings and Community Group Meetings to report to, and answer, questions from the public.
- Meetings with community groups on matters of particular interest to those groups.
- Specific statutory consultation requirements as set out in legislation.

The Organisational Support programs in general do not report to the community about the programs themselves. The reporting normally covers the various other projects and programs which are overseen by these services.

The completion of this Best Value review will see the publication of a leaflet providing the outcomes of the review on this group of services. Achievement against nominated quality and cost standards will be a regular feature in the annual reporting of the Council.

### **(2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings**

Committees, user groups and building occupants are advised annually in writing as to the extent of building maintenance works to be conducted on their respective buildings.

Further, maintenance officers are able to convey maintenance issues to building occupants during the course of the routine annual building inspection regime.

On occasions major building refurbishment and maintenance works are reported via local media (eg) newspaper, radio etc.

Internal reporting consists of quarterly, half yearly and annual expenditure and works progress updates to the Council to ensure maintenance expenditure and works program is consistent with annual budget estimates.

### **(3340) Financial Services**

In addition to statutory reporting, the finance function reporting consists of fortnightly payslips to staff, grant acquittals to service providers, taxation and superannuation payment summaries and remittances to government agencies, and ad-hoc reports to Council, the Audit Committee and other special committees such as the Robinvale Leisure Centre project team.

A monthly cash balances report is prepared for each Council meeting agenda, and the various reports and responses to the Auditor-General's Management letter are prepared to promote Audit Committee discussion and resolution of issues raised.

Best Value will see the development of a number of quality and cost standards that will require periodic reporting to the community in the future.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

The Information Technology (IT) section uses email 'pop up' messages to users during the login process to report any system faults or maintenance requirements of the IT network. The IT section is also responsible for the technical side of Council's web site, which enables all of Council's operational areas to report to the general public.

### **(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control (3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

Reporting takes place through print media releases, radio interviews, formal reports to Council, and responding to service requests. The annual rate notice provides a major reporting/provision of information mechanism for Council. Statutory requirements on, and accompanying, the annual notice enables high quality information to be presented on valuation of properties, rates raised, and the annual budget.

### **(3910 (3920) Human Resources**

The Human Resource Program reports to its main community, internal staff at all levels of Council, through a variety of Committees including the Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Consultative Committee, Audit Committee, Risk Management Committee, and the Senior Management Group as required.

## How Continuous Improvement Is Being Achieved

Examples of how continuous improvement is being achieved for the Organisational Support group of services is demonstrated by the following changes made in service delivery in the last four years:

### **(2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings**

- Adoption of Building Maintenance Program Operations Manual.
- Implementation of Building Maintenance Services Supply Contract.
- Four year Building Maintenance program/forward projection planning.
- Improved building inspection sheets.
- Quarterly maintenance expenditure reporting.
- Formal service agreements for bulk purchase of maintenance services, such as pest control and air-conditioning.

### **(2380) Engineering Services**

- Implementation of the 'Reflect' customer service system to coordinate record community requests for services.
- Development of new policy and procedures to deal with the 'Road Use Consent' requirements of the Road Management Act (2004).
- Upgrades to equipment and software to enhance efficient delivery of services.

### **(2751) Special Charge Schemes**

The terms under which a Special Charge Scheme functions is determined largely by the requirements of the Local Government Act (1989). The scope for continuous improvement is therefore somewhat limited.

### **(3120) Municipal Offices**

Annual maintenance programs to improve the air conditioning systems and general maintenance of the facility to provide a more suitable environment for staff to work in and the public to access.

### **(3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties**

- Introduction of standardised templates.
- Introduction of electronic invoicing for disposal of properties.
- Introduction of specific contractual clauses in the sale contract to ensure development occurs (where specified by Council as a condition of sale).
- Regular reviews of contract status and settlement dates.
- Annual review of the schedule of Council properties available for disposal.

- Review of procedures to ensure compliance with legal requirements.

### **(3340) Financial Services**

- Additional software (MES - BIS) that enables staff to access financial data more easily. This software operates on the General Ledger and has better drill down capabilities than just relying on the Oracle based Fujitsu 2000Plus accounting package.
- Monthly Year To Date (YTD) Actual vs YTD Budget reports (in Budget Document format) are prepared and saved into Council's common directory G:\drive.
- Superannuation Salary Sacrifice now arranged for approximately 120 staff. Finance staff travel to Robinvale to discuss/negotiate annually with staff who operate from localities other than Swan Hill.
- Creditor payment moving away from cheque to Electronic Funds Transfer. Electronic Funds Transfer payment summaries are forwarded by post (not able to produce at all a couple of years ago).
- Staff payslips available electronically (email) rather than just hard copy.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

- Internet services have been expanded to include basic form download, complaints registration and payment of rates.
- Backup of files have been enhanced to reduce time taken to backup, and now include an on line backup, which allows backups to run without interfering with services provided. Restoration of any 'lost' files is quicker and more efficient.
- 'Log in' messaging has been introduced as a means to notify staff of any information they need to know before they start work on the computer facilities.
- Virus protection and updates have gone from being manually updated once or twice a month, to being automatically updated in the background every three days to ensure maximum protection from viruses.
- Temperature gauge with SMS notification ability has been installed in the computer room to identify problems with air-conditioning, helping to protect valuable equipment from overheating issues and downtime from power outages.

### **(3350) Information Management**

- Replacement of correspondence register and manual filing system with 'Electronic Records Management System', which allows the majority of staff to locate and track files and correspondence.
- Adoption of electronic capture of correspondence, which allows concurrent access to files and documents.
- Development of an archives catalogue/disposal schedule providing greater access to archival holdings and identification of records that have reached the end of their lifespan.

- Changes in method of collection of mail, which allows staff to process the daily mail an hour earlier.
- Commenced a review of records management systems of the organisation in line with the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy, which will ultimately result in solutions for the preservation of long-term electronic records. It will also identify other opportunities for improvement of records management processes throughout the organisation.

#### **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

#### **(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

- Payment options for accounts improved. Now able to pay on the Internet, over the Telephone, at any Post Office or by Direct Debit, rather than just at Council offices.
- Collection, importing, exporting and analysis of valuation data is now completed primarily in an electronic format.
- Property sales Vendor Certificate Statements will soon be processed electronically on-line, rather than the present paper based system.

#### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

- Introduction of Standard Templates.
- New Tendering Policy.
- Regular meetings with stakeholders for Major Projects contracts.
- Improved communication between Council departments.
- Introduction of occupational health and safety requirements for Tender evaluation guidelines.
- Changes to the process and steps to advertised Tenders.

#### **(3385) Asset Management**

- Implemented pavement management software for sealed roads called 'Performance Prediction Technology'.
- Increased the frequency of asset condition inspections in line with asset accounting requirements.
- Progressively locating all Council assets using a Global Positioning System, with road network having been completed, and drainage asset network currently in progress.
- Developed an asset management plan for roads.

### **(3618) Depots**

- Developed emergency evacuation plans, including regular evacuation exercises.
- Designated and signposted pedestrian and machinery works areas.
- Introduced speed limits for improved operator and pedestrian safety.
- Upgraded lighting and security, including alarms and patrols.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

- Revised the Hazard Identification, Injury Register and Public Liability reporting forms and processes.
- Introduced monthly Human Resource Newsletter to all staff.
- Formalised the staff induction process.
- Completed Manual Handling and Hazard Assessments of all Council work areas.
- Implemented structured organisational training schedule including formal needs analysis of staff training requirements.

### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

- Developed 'whole of life' costing analysis for performance monitoring and vehicle/plant selection.
- Introduced performance monitoring processes across maintenance facilities.
- Refined plant specifications for improved task sharing to minimise plant duplication and increase utilisation.
- Introduced regular plant risk assessments and noise level testing.
- Introduced computerised fleet, plant and workshop management systems.
- Restructured the internal layout of the Workshop to improve workflow, occupational health and safety, and staff efficiency.
- Introduced upgraded radio communications for plant operators across municipality.
- Improved management and reporting of underground fuel storage facilities to meet EPA legislation.
- Revised the Vehicle Use Policy.

## Local Employment Growth/Retention

The Organisational Support group of services have not been outsourced as part of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering undertaken by Victorian Councils 1995 – 1999. Staff of the Swan Hill Rural City Council, with the exception of some contractors who perform specified activities, perform the activities included in these programs. All staff live within the region, and contractors for ongoing services are local businesses.

Funding is currently sourced for provision of trainees, providing local employment opportunities for indigenous school leavers. The provision of Organisational Support services therefore promotes employment within the region, as can be seen in the table below.

Service	EFT Staff	EFT Contractors	Total Impact on Local Employment
Maintenance of Council Owned Buildings	0.65	Not known	0.65
Engineering Services	16	1	16
Special Charge Schemes	+	+	+
Municipal Offices	0.5	0.1	0.1
Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties	*	*	*
Financial Services	6.1	0	6.1
Information Technology	1.0	0.8	1.8
Information Management	4.5	0	4.5
Robinvale Resource Centre	3.8	0	3.8
Customer Services & Revenue Control	5.6	0	5.6
Commercial Services & Risk Management	4.8	0	4.8
Asset Management	1.0	0.3	1.3
Depots	**	**	**
Human Resources	2.0	0.1	2.1
Fleet & Plant	5.0	0	5.0

+ Not separately identified, part of Engineering Services.

\* Not separately identified, part of Commercial Services and Risk Management.

\*\* Not separately identified, part of Plant & Fleet.

## Partnerships With Third Parties To Achieve Service Objectives

The Organisational Support group of services have a large number of arrangements and partnerships with third parties to achieve program objectives. The following represent the main partnerships and relationships:

### (2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings

- Local Builders, Plumbers, Painters, Electricians etc who provide the labour and expertise to maintain and repair Council buildings and facilities.
- Non-local suppliers of specialised services, such as air-conditioning servicing, fire services, pest control etc.

### (2380) Engineering Services

- External consultants engaged to undertake specialised design tasks on particular projects.
- Contractors engaged to carry deliver various works and services.
- Suppliers.
- Government Departments.
- Utility service providers.
- Other departments of Council.

### (2751) Special Charge Schemes

- Construction contractors engaged to carry out the works associated with the schemes.
- Utility service providers.
- Consultants.

### (3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties

- VicUrban (development of Tower Hill).

### (3340) Financial Services

- Local Government Finance Professionals (FINPRO).
- Northern Municipalities Finance Group – lead by Audit Firm Richmond Sinnott & Delahunty.
- Fujitsu Special Interest Groups – Finance & Payroll.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

- Branch Computing.
- Fujitsu Local Government Section.
- Municipal Association Victoria (MAV).

### **(3350) Information Management**

- Infovision Technology Pty Ltd.
- RMAA Local Government Chapter.

### **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

### **(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

- State Revenue Office.
- Department of Human Services.
- Centrelink.
- VicRoads.
- Department of Immigration.
- Forms Express.
- Australia Post.
- Commonwealth Bank.
- Victorian Electoral Commission.
- Fujitsu Australia.
- Midstate Collections.
- Valuation Contractors.
- Landata.
- Department of Sustainability & Environment.

### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

- CMP, Jardine Lloyd Thompson
- Risk Management email group.

### **(3385) Asset Management**

- Property Information Project - ongoing partnership with Land Victoria.
- STEP partnership with MAV.
- Biodiversity Asset Protection Decision Support Tool project - limited term partnership with Mildura Council, Mallee CMA, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Parks Victoria, Department of Primary Industries.

### **(3618) Depots**

- Local contractors for electrical, plumbing and service works.
- Security services from local providers.
- Agreement with SES for use of the Swan Hill Depot for secure storage of equipment.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

The Human Resource Program has developed a number of valuable relationships with third parties which benefits and improves service delivery including:

- JLT Workers Compensation Services Pty Ltd.
- Local employment and labour hire agencies.
- Several training providers including Sunraysia TAFE, Yvonne Tighe Pty Ltd, Australia-wide Business Training, Ray Bailey Consulting and VECCI.
- Provision of legal services through local solicitors and Maddocks.
- Provision of rehabilitation services to injured workers including CRS, Swan Hill Medical Group and Mallee Physiotherapy.

### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

The program has numerous relationship partners in the provision of the services. This list is too long to include, but includes all vehicle and plant suppliers/dealers, parts and service providers, welding suppliers, steel and building product suppliers, fuel and lubricant suppliers, panel repair shops, pool service providers, chemical suppliers, etc are accessed to varying degrees.

## Competitive Neutrality

National Competition Policy (NCP) was first applied to Local Government by the Victorian State Government in the financial year 1996/1997. The application of the policy was reviewed by the State Government in 2000, and further refined in 2001.

The Swan Hill Rural City Council first reviewed the application of NCP on Organisational Support services as part of the implementation of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) in 1996. With the demise of CCT, and the implementation of Best Value, as well as the amended application of NCP to Local Government, it was determined to review the National Competition Policy implications on Council's Organisational Support group of services.

This report identifies that all the services included in the Organisational Support group represent 'back room' functions of Council, and 'services' are provided only to Council services/departments, not to the wider community. Therefore, these services are not business activities as determined by the Victorian State Government in the document 'National Competition Policy and Local Government'. Consequently the National Competition Policy does not apply to these services.

## Future Improvement Options

A number of improvement options have been identified and are available for further consideration and investigation. These include:

### (2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings

- Develop a formal Building Asset Management Plan.
- Implement software program to “track” maintenance requests/complaints.

### (2380) Engineering Services

- New equipment for carrying out survey work.
- Improved software to assist in design processes.
- Review of Engineering Services policies and procedures.
- Ongoing training and professional development.
- Increase in resource commitment to match levels of demand.
- Ongoing evaluation of procedures to maximise the efficiency of the service delivery

### (2751) Special Charge Schemes

- Increase in resource commitment to match levels of demand.
- Ongoing evaluation of procedures to maximise the efficiency of the service delivery.

### (3120) Municipal Offices

- Future planning as listed in Council’s Major Projects Plan outlines that a feasibility and consultation study should be undertaken to assess whether the building needs replacing or relocated to best meet the needs of the Municipality and its ratepayers.

### (3340) Financial Services

- Formal & Informal Training sessions for staff:  
*Formal sessions:*
  - Budgets preparation.
  - YTD Actual vs. Budget analysis.
  - Finance software applications – Fujitsu & BIS.
  - Salary Packaging arrangements.

- Fringe Benefits Tax – Cars & Expense Payment Fringe Benefits (laptops).

*Informal sessions:*

Where a finance staff member make themselves available for 2-3 hours on a given day to discuss particular finance issues:

- How to use the internal budget document.
- Expectations regarding costing of invoices & timesheets.
- How to look up payment vouchers, journals & debtor invoices.
- New add-on software applications:
  - Fujitsu Corporate Plus vs. BIS or other crystal type reporting systems.
- Discussion groups with other neighbouring Municipalities:
  - Valuation methodologies for fixed assets (e.g. drainage assets).
  - International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) implementation.

### **(3345) Information Technology Services**

- Upgrade file server and software.
- Asset and helpdesk program.
- Server room improved set-up.
- Introduction of better policies and documented strategies.
- Replacement for scheduler system.

### **(3350) Information Management**

- Outsource records storage.
- Victorian Electronic Records Strategy implementation.
- Expansion of Records Management Function.

### **(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre**

### **(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

- Electronic Bill Pay Presentation – bills sent direct to debtors PC's.
- Multiple payment options for Sundry Debtors – same payment options as for rates and animal registration debtors.
- BillPrint & BillArchive Solutions – copy rate notices processed for “live” rates data (providing a professional output).
- Monthly rate payments for direct debit payers.

### **(3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management**

- Review of Purchasing Policy.
- Introduction of Contract Management Policy.
- Standardisation of leasing documents.

- Pre-qualified suppliers/trades list.

### **(3385) Asset Management**

- Asset management plans for drainage and buildings.
- Upgrade of asset management software to sequel server version.
- Review of condition data collection processes.
- Development of deterioration model for unsealed roads.

### **(3910) (3920) Human Resources**

- Coordinated approach to ensuring ongoing Hazard Assessment of all Council work areas.
- Development of return to work procedures for injured workers including 'fit for work' policy implementation.
- Online staff review and training analysis program

### **(3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management**

- A number of physical changes to the structure of the workshop in particular, have recently taken place. Further improvements and projects are to focus on lighting, heating, cooling, and Occupational Health and Safety issues.
- Another issue to be considered in the future is the appropriateness of the methods and structure of plant and vehicle hire rates, and the issue of cross subsidisation between capital and operational funding.
- Introduction of individual plant hours / per program activity log records.
- Safe Driving Policy

## Quality And Cost Standards

Quality and Cost Standards are required under Best Value for all Council operations. The Quality and Cost Standards should reflect measures by which the community may measure the performance of a service. The actual standards achieved must be reported in Council's Annual Report.

### (2110) Maintenance of Council owned buildings

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building maintenance service to be administered in accordance with the Building Maintenance Services Operations Manual.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of providing building maintenance administration services as a percentage of Total Council Operating Expenses.</li> </ul>	<0.20%	<0.20%	<0.20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building maintenance expenditure as a percentage of Total Council Building Asset Value.</li> </ul>	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%

### (2380) Engineering Services

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake design works in accordance with established technical standards and Council policies.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comply with statutory time frames in referral responses to other departments within Council.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of services as a percentage of Total Council Budget.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"> <small>Net Operating Result</small>                      Total Expenses less Depreciation and Amortisation                 </p>	1.51%	1.53%\$	1.54%

### (2751) Special Charge Schemes

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake all Special Charge Schemes in accordance with legislative requirements (this covers consultation, standard of work, allocation of costs etc).</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake and complete all Special Charge Schemes at Nil cost to Council except for the portion where Council is a participant (in which case Council portion not to exceed stated amount).</li> </ul>	Nil	Nil	Nil

### (3120) Municipal Offices

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a safe environment for work by staff and business by the public.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of service as a percentage of total budget.</li> </ul>	0.66%	0.68%	0.65%

**(3125) Robinvale Resource Centre  
(3360) Customer Services & Revenue Control**

<b>Quality Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
• Rate debtor collections as a percentage of Total Rate Income.	93%	93%	93%
• Level of courtesy and efficiency in last contact with Council as per the Community Satisfaction Survey (May).	> 80%	> 80%	> 80%
• Average number of non-Council services provided from the Robinvale Resource Centre.	12	12	12

<b>Cost Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
• Cost of providing customer service and revenue control services. <u>Net Customer Services &amp; Revenue Control Program Costs</u> Total Council Operating Expenditure	3.34%	< 3.34%	< 3.34%
• Cost of providing customer services from the Robinvale Resource Centre per head of population for Robinvale and surrounding district. <u>Net Robinvale Resource Centre Program Costs</u> Population of Robinvale and surrounding district	\$31.63	\$33.07	\$34.55

**(3130) Acquisition & Disposal of Council Properties**

<b>Quality Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
• Meet legal requirements for acquisition and disposal of Council properties.	Yes	Yes	Yes

<b>Cost Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
• Undertake acquisition and disposal of Council properties within Budget targets.	Yes	Yes	Yes

### (3340) Financial Services

<b>Quality Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet all statutory reporting obligations:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Annual Report.</li> <li>○ Business Plan and Annual Budget.</li> <li>○ Victoria Grants Commission Return.</li> <li>○ Local Government Sector Borrowings Survey.</li> <li>○ Taxation (PAYG, GST and FBT).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet Council's terms of trade:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Payment to staff by the 3<sup>rd</sup> working day following pay-end date.</li> <li>○ Payment to suppliers and service providers within agreed trading terms, or 30 days following receipt of invoice (invoice must be provided to Accounts Payable Officer).</li> <li>○ Monthly Cash Balances reports for Council Agenda.</li> <li>○ Management reports completed by 15<sup>th</sup> working day following month end.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<b>Cost Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of providing financial services as a percentage of Total Council Operating Expenses.   <div style="text-align: center;"> <math display="block">\frac{\text{Finance Program Costs (Bottom Line P3340)}}{\text{Total Operating Expenditure}}</math> </div> </li> </ul>	< 1.85%	< 1.85%	< 1.85%

### (3345) Information Technology Services

<b>Quality Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of working days of total unavailability of a primary computer system (Fujitsu, Novell, Infovision).</li> </ul>	1	1	1

<b>Cost Standard/s</b>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of providing IT services as a percentage of total operating expenses.   <div style="text-align: center;"> <math display="block">\frac{\text{IT program (bottom line 3345)}}{\text{Total operating expenditure}}</math> </div> </li> </ul>	1.88%	1.88%	1.88%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of IT services per user.   <div style="text-align: center;"> <math display="block">\frac{\text{IT program (bottom line 3345)}}{\text{Number of personal computers supported}}</math> </div> </li> </ul>	\$3,100	\$3,224	\$3,353

### (3350) Information Management

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer satisfaction with service</li> </ul>	60%	70%	75%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service meets agreed timeframes for correspondence registration:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2:00 pm Monday</li> <li>1:00 pm Tuesday - Friday</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of service as a percentage of total operating expenses.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Information Management Program</u> Total Operating Expenditure.</p>	<0.79%	<0.79%	<0.79%

### (3371) Commercial Services & Risk Management

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All tendering and acquisitions undertaken by Commercial Services is done in accordance with adopted Council policy.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Risk Management</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk mitigation assessment as assessed by Council's insurers.</li> </ul>	<60%	<65%	<70%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk mitigation for Property Hazard Management Assessments as per Council's insurers.</li> </ul>	<66.25%	<75%	<80%

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of providing commercial services as a percentage of Total Council Operating Expenses.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Total cost of Program (less Insurance Premiums)</u> % of overall operating cost of Council</p>	<1.12%	<1.12%	<1.12%
<i>Risk Management</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Management- WorkCover (EFT to Premiums)</li> </ul>	\$2,875	\$2,500	\$2,400
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Management – Liability (Discount v Penalty)</li> </ul>	\$11,677	\$5,000	\$4,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Management – Property (Value of Property v Premium)</li> </ul>	\$0.003045	\$0.0031	\$0.0032
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk Management – Registered Motor Vehicles -Unit Cost</li> </ul>	\$336	\$370	\$400

### (3385) Asset Management

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAV STEP scorecard that allocates a score depending on the policies and processes in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Policy</li> <li>▪ Strategy</li> <li>▪ Plans</li> <li>▪ Operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DVC survey sustainability index: Budget allocated to maintenance &amp; renewal / Expenditure required for maintenance &amp; renewal.</li> </ul>	C C C C  0.96	B B C C  0.97	B B B B  0.98

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost index: Cost of provision of the service / Total value of assets managed.</li> </ul>	0.00106	0.00106	0.00106

### (3618) Depots

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide secure and safe working environment of Council staff and vehicle, plant and equipment resources, as set out in OH&amp;S requirements.</li> <li>• Conduct 6 monthly emergency evacuation exercises.</li> </ul>	Yes  Yes	Yes  Yes	Yes  Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operate Depots within budget target.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

### (3910 (3920) Human Resources

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of staff issues resolved in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.</li> </ul>	0	0	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All training courses provided as per Organisational Training Schedule.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of providing Human Resource Services as a % of total operating expenses.</li> </ul>	<0.05%	<0.05%	<0.05%

### (3940) (3945) Plant & Fleet Management

<i>Quality Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Times taken to complete scheduled preventative maintenance services within % of predetermine standards.</li> </ul>	10%	10%	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve full cost recovery on all major plant items (defined as having a capital value exceeding \$5,000) at time of disposal.</li> </ul>	80%	85%	90%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve full cost recovery on all motor vehicles (defined as passenger sedans and station wagons) at time of disposal.</li> </ul>	80%	85%	90%

<i>Cost Standard/s</i>	<b>Year 05/06</b>	<b>Year 06/07</b>	<b>Year 07/08</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average cost of scheduled services for passenger and light commercial vehicles (excluding parts and lubricants).</li> </ul>	\$99.00	\$104.00	\$109.50
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve annual plant replacement acquisitions program as identified in the adopted Council budget.</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes



# Attachment 1

## Reference Documents



The following documents have been referred to in the compilation of the Best Value Report for Organisational Support:

- **Annual Budget**, (2004), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 420961.
- **Annual Report**, (2004), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 224113.
- **Community Satisfaction Survey**, (2004), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 810701.
- **Contract Between the Commonwealth of Australia Represented By Centrelink and Swan Hill Rural City Council and Robinvale Resource Centre**, (2004), Centrelink, Melbourne. Record File No: 797931.
- **Council Plan 2004-2008**, (2004), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 222305.
- **Customer Service Charter**, (1998), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 250200.
- **Service Agreement VicRoads and Swan Hill Rural City Council**, (2001), Municipal Association Victoria, Melbourne. Records File No: 797934.
- **Swan Hill Rural City Council Enterprise Agreement**, (2002), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 725301.
- **Swan Hill Rural City Council Building Maintenance Program: Operations Manual**, (2004), Swan Hill Rural City Council. Records File No: 131200.
- **Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Final Report**, (1999), Public Records Office of Victoria. Records File No: 690816.



# **Attachment 2**

## **Legislation Affecting Local Government**



## Legislation Affecting Local Government

Primary Legislation	Secondary Legislation	Tertiary Legislation
Local Government Act Building Act Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act Food Act Health Act Planning & Environment Act	Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Preservation Act Catchment and Land Protection Act Children and Young Persons Act Children's Services Act Community Services Act Conservation, Forests & Land Act Country Fire Authority Act Crown Lands (Reserves) Act Cultural and Recreational Lands Act Dangerous Goods Act Disability Services Act Education Act Emergency Management Act Environment Protection Act Extractive Industries Development Act Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act Gaming Machine Control Act Geographical Place Names Act Goods Act Health Services Act Heritage Act Housing Act Impounding of Livestock Act Intellectually Disabled Persons Services Act Land Act Land Acquisition & Compensation Act Landlord & Tenant Act Libraries Act Liquor Control Reform Act Litter Act National Parks Act Planning & Environment (Planning Schemes) Act	Accident Compensation Act Accident Compensation (Occupational Health and Safety) Act Accident Compensation (WorkCover Insurance) Act Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Victoria) Act Arts Victoria Act Audit Act Building and Construction Industry Security Act Competition Policy Reform Act Control of Weapons Act Defence Reserves Re-Employment Act Development Areas Act Discharged Servicemen's Preference Act Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act Electricity Industry Act Electrical Safety Act Equipment (Public Safety) Act Electronic Transactions Act Equal Opportunity Act Evidence Act Fair Trading Act Fences Act Financial Institutions Duty Act Firearms Act Forests Act Freedom of Information Act Health Records Act Magistrate's Court Act Occupational Health & Safety Act Ombudsman Act Public Records Act Unclaimed Monies Act

Primary Legislation	Secondary Legislation	Tertiary Legislation
	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Prostitution Control Act Residential Tenancies Act Road Management Act Road Safety Act Shop Trading Reform Act Sport & Recreation Act Subdivision Act Summary Offences Act Tobacco Act Transfer of Land Act Transport Act Valuation of Land Act Victorian Grants Commission Act Water Act	Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal Act Whistleblower Protection Act Worker's Compensation Act