

Please find below our submission as this applies only to Committees of Management relating to Recreation Reserves located within the Moyne Shire.

About Moyne Shire. (refer Moyne Shire Council Annual Report 2007/08)

Moyne Shire Council was created in 1994 as a result of amalgamations conducted by the State Government. It has a population of 16,215 and covers an area of 2,478 sq m. There are 7 Councillors and 286 Council staff. Townships within the Shire range in population from 2560 (Port Fairy) to approximately 100 in smaller hamlet towns. The Moyne Shire is located on the South West Coast of Victoria, about three (3) hours drive from Melbourne.

Recreation Reserves.

Within the Moyne Shire there are four (4) Recreation Reserves that are located on Council owned land and thirteen (13) on land owned by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). These Recreation Reserves are all managed by Committee's of Management instituted by the land owner, Council or DSE, to enable the efficient and safe management of the reserves on behalf of the land owner. The Committees' members are voluntary and they operate on a 'not for profit' basis. The Moyne Shire Council is at present proposing a review of the roles of all these committees in the next financial year.

Issues relating to Committees of Management-Recreation Reserves.

GST

Funding for asset improvements at the various Recreation Reserves is generally sought by the Committees of Management (COM) from the local land owner, either Council or DSE. The funding is usually very competitive as there are limited funds to meet the various needs.

COM also look to the State and Federal Governments to provide funding for larger projects that require significant funds. This type of funding is usually provided to the local councils so as control can be kept over the grant finances and the execution of the project. Where the COM have raised their own funds to contribute to the project these funds are penalised with GST. In most instances these committees are not registered for GST meaning where funds are expended on a project the GST component is forwarded to the Federal Government. It seems a contradiction that monies that are forwarded by the State or Federal Governments to Local Councils for use on a project can have the GST component claimed whereas the funds used for the same project by the COM cannot claim such GST. This situation is especially highlighted when a donation is made to the project by a Committee member (or in fact anyone) who must then stand by and watch as 10% of that donation is used in paying GST.

Funding Timelines

Timelines relating to funding of projects are inconsistent in application. Usually the funding body (e.g. the State Government-Minor Facilities) call for applications for funding of Recreation Reserves around August of each year. COM must apply through local councils to obtain this State Government funding which closes in October each year. Results of funding applications are not received from the State Government until May of the following year. There is a short time frame within which to get the application to the State Government and then a long period in which the Government assess each application before making any public announcement concerning the success or otherwise of the applications. In the time lapse between making the application to Council and notification of success (this can be in excess of 6 months) price rises in materials can have a major impact on the total project cost. Whereas an original quotation may have been for a specified amount, instances such as the recent hike in steel prices mean that original costings are no longer valid. This impacts severely on the ability of all concerned to complete the project within budget.

Government Bureaucracy

Committees in general have a healthy suspicion of Government procedures. Completion of a major project at a reserve in Koroit can mean the committee has to deal with the local Council, CFA, Heritage Victoria, DSE, Vic Roads. This type of bureaucracy leads to frustration as each authority has its own working environment and adds time and unnecessary delays to complete what should have been a relatively straight forward project.

Thanks

Gerard Auld
Grants Officer

MOYNE SHIRE COUNCIL