

15 March 2012

The Secretary
Select Committee on the Cost of Living
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Sir

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE COST OF LIVING -SUBMISSION BY WARATAH-WYNYARD COUNCIL

Waratah-Wynyard Council appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Tasmanian House of Assembly, Select Committee on the Cost of Living.

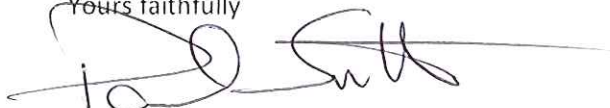
Council is acutely aware of the impact on some members within its community of recent economic trends in growth, employment, income levels of retirees and increasing costs of essential services and is pleased a review of the effectiveness of concessions to these groups is being undertaken at this time.

Council would like to state its support for the following;

1. Eligibility criteria for benefits and support should be clear, simple and consistent across all state government agencies;
2. Administrative efficiency of the payment of concessions should be a priority, and could be enhanced by better coordination or consolidation into a single entity;
3. Awareness of eligibility for concessions and effectiveness of the concession system could be enhanced through a case management approach which aims to package benefits to individuals and make single payments;
4. While competition policy is designed to drive economic efficiencies, significant price increases for essential services have impacted more significantly on low income groups. To help offset this Government owned entities could make more use of Community Service Obligations or greater use of hardship provisions, rebates and concessions or low cost, minimal essential service provision tariffs through economic regulation;
5. The introduction of retail contestability for electricity for residential customers;
6. Increased incentives for low income earners for the installation of environmentally desirable options such as solar power, water tanks etc. where the residual capital outlay is still a significant barrier;
7. Better integration between State and Federal social support systems; and
8. Maintenance of the existing levels of State support, so that any efficiency gains achieved through reform of the concession system pass through as increased benefits to recipients.

Waratah-Wynyard Council looks forward to the outcomes of the Select Committees review and hopes that it will result in changes that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the concessions system and relieves some of the pressure felt by disadvantaged groups in the community.

Yours faithfully



Paul Smith
EXECUTIVE MANAGER CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

