

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER
(To Elected Members and CEOs)

RATES DATA – 2000/2001

Due to the amount of public interest regarding rate increases this financial year and the potential for Parliamentary interest, I am seeking your assistance in compiling information on Local Government rate revenue for 2000/2001.

Information is sought on the increase in general rate revenue overall as well as various impacting factors as follows:

1. The estimated revenue from general rates for 2000/2001 (in thousands of dollars). The figure provided should exclude revenue from separate rates, service rates, charges and levies and be net of remissions, deductions and discounts. Estimated revenue from fines should be included.
2. The actual revenue from general rates in 1999/2000 (in thousands of dollars).
3. The actual increase/decrease in the rates in the dollar applied to general rates/differential general rates in 2000/2001, compared with 1999/2000.
4. Any extraordinary changes in 2000/2001 which impact on the comparison of rate revenue, such as introduction of differential rates, conversion from site value to capital value as a basis for rating, etc.

I would also appreciate you forwarding copies of the following statements from your Council's budget papers:

- (a) the budgeted operating statement;
- (b) the budgeted statement of financial position;
- (c) the budgeted statement of changes in equity; and
- (d) the budgeted statement of cash flows.

The information should be sent to Sue Forder, (telephone: 8207 0623) at the Office of Local Government – email forder.sue@saugov.sa.gov.au or Fax No. **8207 0679**.

I would appreciate your cooperation in providing this information by **Friday 6 October 2000**.

A summary of the results of the survey will be made available to all Councils.

I also take this opportunity to express concern about the impact significant increases in Council rates are having on individual ratepayers in some Council areas. These increases have affected both residential and commercial ratepayers.

I remind Councils of their obligation to operate within the parameters set down by the Local Government Act 1999, and also insist that Councils act in a manner that is cognisant of the spirit of this Act.

The principal role of a Council is to provide for the government and management of its area at the local level and it must, among other things, act as a representative, informed and responsible decision maker in the interests of its community. The need for Councils to raise rates, to collect revenue, in order to provide services, facilities and infrastructure that benefit its area, its ratepayers,

residents and others is recognised. However, it is vital that this is done through an open, responsive and accountable process that has regard to the impact Council's rates will have on the individual assessments of rates.

All Councils are required under the legislation to prepare, adopt and publish a rating policy, a summary of which must be included with the rates notice sent to all ratepayers. The policy must include, in cases where differential rates are used, the reasons and justifications for the differentiation and the expected level of revenue to be raised by each. Further, a business impact statement, resulting from a cogent analysis, which assesses the impact of the council's rates on businesses in its area is to be provided.

I am aware that public meetings have been held by some Councils to respond to their communities concerns over rate increases, and that as a result of these meetings some Councils have acknowledged and recognised the need to be more consultative and sensitive to the concerns of ratepayers in the future. I applaud this response.

HON DOROTHY KOTZ, MP
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Date: **11 September 2000**