



*Working to conserve and  
restore water quality and  
wildlife habitat in the  
Perth inner city catchments*

Mr John Giorgi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Town of Vincent  
PO Box 82  
Leederville, WA, 6902

29 June 2007

Dear Mr Giorgi/John

I am writing in regards to the Report to Council on 12 June 2007 regarding the funding proposals submitted by the Claise Brook Catchment group (Item 10.4.6). The report stated *"An assessment of these projects was carried out by the Town's Administration and this revealed that the majority of the funding was for the Co-ordinator's wages. (The current Co-ordinator is Ms Sally Lake, who is also a Councillor at the Town of Vincent)."* No further details regarding our seven funding applications were included in the report to Council.

Our catchment group sought to be completely open in the seven funding applications submitted to the Town of Vincent by our group and included the complete costs of each project including the cost of employing someone to deliver the project. All of the projects included a substantial volunteer contribution which would be facilitated by the project Coordinator. We noted that the application form stated *"the Town of Vincent generally does not provide funding for wages and salary"*, however the Budget Sheet on page 4 included "Salaries, wages and fees" in the Costs column. It would not be possible to deliver the projects proposed on volunteer contribution alone, and therefore our group submitted the projects in good faith. We also noted that the Town's policy for Community and Welfare Grants Policy 1.1.6 allows for *"Payment for the coordination of the funded program"*. The wages component was purely for the delivery of the proposed project and was not for the payment of general wages or salary or any recurrent costs.

We consider that because no details of our applications were included in the report it was not possible for elected members to check the veracity of the statement that *"the majority of the funding was for the Co-ordinator's wages"*. It was also not possible for elected members to know the significant external funding the catchment group had obtained for some of the projects.

For example:

The project "Stormwater – Raising Awareness in the Hyde Park Catchment" has a total value of \$20,122.00 of which the contribution requested from the Town of Vincent was \$2,233.00 only 11% of the total. This project was to be delivered primarily by the North Metro Conservation Group as clearly shown in the application with supporting funding from the Water Corporation.

The project "Facilitating Community Involvement through Group Support" has a total value of \$10,978 of which the contribution requested from the Town of Vincent was \$3,225, 29% of the total.

The project "Community Fauna Monitoring" with a total value of \$13,400 was to be delivered entirely by the North Metro Conservation Group as clearly shown in the application.

A full list of the seven applications submitted by our group are listed in Table 1 together with the amounts requested from the Town of Vincent and the amounts of co-funding from the catchment group and other agencies. All projects, in addition, have a substantial volunteer contribution which has not been included in the dollar values in Table 1.

The report to council implies that the majority of the funding would be paid to Cr Sally Lake, the group's Coordinator. When preparing the proposals our current Catchment Co-ordinator Sally Lake indicated that she would be unable to increase the hours that she works to undertake the number of projects proposed. As the group did not know which, if any, projects would be approved, it was decided that once it was known which, if any, projects would be approved, the group would look at

employing another person or organisation to deliver the project if required. In addition the two largest projects submitted were to be delivered entirely or primarily by the North Metro Conservation Group as shown clearly in the applications. (“Community Fauna Monitoring” and “Stormwater - Raising Awareness in the Hyde Park Catchment”).

*Table 1 Details on seven funding applications to Town of Vincent showing amounts requested from the Town of Vincent, amounts of co-funding from the catchment group and other agencies, and indication of volunteer contribution for all projects*

| <b>Project</b>                        | <b>Total</b> | <b>Request from ToV</b> | <b>Cofunding</b>   | <b>Coordinator's wage</b> | <b>% Tov request/Total</b>                     |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Stormwater Awareness                  | \$20,122     | \$2,233                 | \$17,889<br>Water Corporation;<br>Swan River Trust; North Metro Conservation Group | \$2,233                   | 11%  |
| Group support                         | \$10,978     | \$3,225                 | \$7,754<br>City of Perth, DEP and others   | \$10,718                  | 29%  |
| Robertson Park Wetland                | \$3,981      | \$3,388                 | \$593<br>Deacons, DEP  | \$3,981                   | 85%  |
| Grow Local Plants                     | \$2,824      | \$2,724                 | \$100<br>DEP   | \$2,424                   | 96%  |
| Catchment Friendly Garden Competition | \$1,772      | \$1,722                 | \$50 DEP<br>\$1,250 Water Corporation (not shown in application)                   | \$1,722                   | 57% (incl WC grant)<br>97% (not incl WC grant) |
| Regional Issues                       | \$1,503      | \$1,403                 | \$100 DEP plus NMCG officer support  | \$1,403                   | 93%  |
| Community Fauna Monitoring            | \$13,400     | \$13,200                | \$200 DEP  | NIL                       | 98.5%  |

Notwithstanding the above, Cr Sally Lake has been employed as a part-time Coordinator by the group since 2001, prior to her being on Council. We have been advised by the Department of Local Government that there is nothing inappropriate in our group employing Ms Lake while receiving contributory funding from the Town of Vincent. We understand that Cr Helen Doran-Wu was previously employed as the Coordinator of the Loftus Community Centre while the Centre received annual funding from the Town of Vincent.

Please note also that our group holds open meetings eleven times a year to which a Town of Vincent representative is invited. Further details, in addition to what was requested in the application form, would have been provided if requested. We consider that the report was inaccurate in summing up our seven funding applications as *“the majority of the funding was for the Coordinator's wages”*.

Finally I would like to mention that the application form required that the group submit audited financial statements with the application. None of our other funding bodies require audited financial statements and this is an onerous financial burden for a non-profit organisation. Auditors are no longer prepared to do auditing on a pro bono basis because of liability and insurance issues and the minimum charge is generally \$500 per annum. I would suggest that in future, audited financial statements should be required only after a funding application is successful rather than requiring this with the application. I would also point out, for comparison, the Lotteries Commission, while usually requiring audited financial statements, are prepared to negotiate this if a group has difficulty in complying with this requirement.

Considering our long history with delivering projects in the Town of Vincent, our group is disappointed with how we have been considered during this process. We commenced discussions in regard to this funding in good faith over two years ago and we are disappointed we were not given any opportunity to provide a detailed presentation to Council or opportunity to discuss the issues Council had with the applications before they made public statements against them. The details of our funding applications have not been accurately reported on and our members, who work hard in their own time for the benefit of the community, have had to see their groups name and staff sullied at Council and in the press. In addition, the development of the group's submission cost in the order of \$1,600 which is a significant amount for the group.

I ask that you publish this letter in the Town's Information Bulletin to clarify the Council report. I make this request on the advice of the Department of Local Government.

Yours faithfully,

Warren McGrath  
Chairperson