

Question on Notice
No. 948
Asked on Tuesday 31 August 2004

MR MALONE asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (MS DESLEY BOYLE)–

QUESTION:

With reference to the \$16.6m in funding to be provided by her department over the four-year phase-in of 32 community councils to shire status, under the Community Governance Improvement Strategy–

Will she provide (a) a breakdown of how much funding will be budgeted for each of the next four years, (b) a breakdown of how the funding is to be allocated for each budget for each of the next four years and (c) how much of this funding for each budget for each of the next four years will be spent on employing public servants and will the council have a role in selecting these public servants?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for his interest in the Community Governance Improvement Strategy. The goal of the strategy as enunciated in the Government's *Meeting Challenges, Making Choices* initiative announced in April 2002 is "to improve Community Council financial and administrative performance, ensure compliance with reporting requirements and audit standards, and strongly enforce breaches of the criminal law and instances of official misconduct."

(a) To support the strategy, the 2004-2005 State Budget made available \$16.616 million over the next four years. Three million dollars has been allocated for this financial year and 2005-2006 with funding rising to \$4.5 million in 2006-2007 and \$6.116 million in 2007-2008.

(b) Funding for the strategy is to be allocated over the next four years as follows:

2004-2005

Grants and direct services to councils	\$2,246,000
Salaries (management consultants)	\$577,000
Travel and accommodation	\$104,000
Cairns office rent	\$73,000

2005-2006

Grants and direct services to councils	\$1,909,000
Salaries (management consultants)	\$894,000
Travel and accommodation	\$120,000
Cairns office rent	\$77,000

2006-2007

Grants and direct services to councils	\$3,060,000
Salaries (management consultants)	\$1,234,000
Travel and accommodation	\$126,000
Cairns office rent	\$80,000

2007-2008

Grants and direct services to councils	\$4,566,000
Salaries (management consultants)	\$1,331,000
Travel and accommodation	\$134,000
Cairns office rent	\$85,000

Grants and direct services to councils will fund a wide range of activities and projects including:

- *Skills development*
 Induction for newly elected councillors
 Corporate Governance and Leadership Training for councillors
 Corruption Prevention Training for councillors and senior staff
 Staff Skills Development
- *Business System Improvement*
 Assistance to review and implement improved business systems
 Assistance to implement new or improved policies and procedures
- *Resources Management*
 A review into the cost of providing municipal services
- *Performance and Accountability*
 Implementation of appropriate corporate structures
 Introduction of corporate planning
 Implementation of CEO performance reviews
- *Service Delivery Models*
 Developing alternative service delivery models
- *Stakeholder Engagement*
 Improving communication and community awareness

A number of these activities will also be accessible to Island councils and the Aurukun and Mornington shire councils.

(c) The design of the Community Governance Improvement Strategy has been undertaken in consultation with Aboriginal and Island councils. During these consultations, councils strongly supported the continuation of on-site support from regionally based Departmental officers.

Therefore to drive the strategy, the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation will by the third year of the strategy, employ 17 Management Consultants to be based in Cairns and Brisbane who will provide management consultancy services to Aboriginal and Island councils. The Management Consultants will replace the 12 former Community Service Officers employed by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. Community Services Officers were intended to be “hands-on” and principally focused on financial performance whereas the Management Consultants will work beside the councils to provide advice and direction as well as monitoring performance. It will also be the role of Management Consultants to negotiate an annual Performance Development Plan with each council that will establish agreed performance targets and the departmental support required. Each Performance Development Plan will be a partnership agreement between Government and the council.

The amount that will be spent on employing Management Consultants including, salaries, office rent and travel and accommodation expenses over the four-year life of the strategy will be:

2004-05	\$754,000
2005-06	\$1,091,000
2006-07	\$1,440,000
2007-08	\$1,331,000

Whilst these specialist staff are an important element of the strategy, their employment represents less than 30% of the total budget of the strategy with the majority of the Beattie Government's \$16.6 million going direct to Councils.

The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation is determined to ensure that the Community Governance Improvement Strategy benefits councils as much as possible and a significant proportion of the cost of employing and resourcing Management Consultants will be met from the Department's operational budget and not from the Community Governance Improvement Strategy. In addition a further \$600,000 per year from the Department's base funding will be used to provide other grants available to councils under the strategy.

While councils will not have a role in the recruitment and selection of the Management Consultants, care will be taken to ensure the skills and abilities of Management Consultants match the needs of the council to which they are assigned.