



# AGENDA

## SPECIAL MEETING OF COUNCIL

Tuesday, 14 June 2016

To be held Swan Hill Town Hall  
Council Chambers  
McCallum Street, Swan Hill  
Commencing at 2:00 PM

**COUNCIL:**

Cr LT McPhee – Mayor

Cr JN Katis

Cr GW Norton

Cr GI Cruickshank

Cr JA Kiley

Cr JB Crowe

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B.16.51 RECEIVE AND HEAR SUBMISSIONS TO THE DRAFT  
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**SECTION A – PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

- **Open**
  
- **Acknowledgement to Country**
  
- **Prayer**
  
- **Apologies**
  
- **Declarations of Conflict of Interest**

## **SECTION B – REPORTS**

### **B.16.51 RECEIVE AND HEAR SUBMISSIONS TO THE DRAFT 2016/17 ANNUAL BUDGET**

**Responsible Officer:** Director Corporate Services  
**File Number:** S15-06-07  
**Attachments:** 1 Submission 1  
2 Submission 1a  
3 Submission 2

**Declarations of Interest:** Officer

David Lenton - as the responsible officer, I declare that I have no disclosable interests in this matter.

#### **Summary**

The purpose of this item is to enable Council to formally receive and hear submissions to the Draft 2016/17 Budget.

At the close of the submission period two submissions were received. One submitter has requested to speak to their submission.

#### **Discussion**

Council advertised for submissions to its Draft 2016/17 Budget in the Swan Hill Guardian on Friday 6 May 2016 and the Robinvale Sentinel on Thursday 12 May 2016.

The Statutory period for making submissions has now passed. As required under the Local Government Act, Council is now in a position to formally receive any submissions and allow submitters to speak to any issues they have raised.

At the close of the submission period, two submissions were received. Mr Jeffery has requested to speak in support of his submission. The issues raised in the submissions are summarized below.

#### **Submission 1 – Mr Jeffery**

Mr Jeffery makes a number of suggestions in relation to Council's proposed Fees and Charges. Mr Jeffery suggests that fees at the Livestock Exchange, Leisure Centre's and for Animal Registrations should remain unchanged from 2015/16 levels and that all Fees and Charges should be rounded down to the nearest 5 cents. He also points out a few formatting issues in the Fees and Charges Schedule.

Mr Jeffery suggests that due to the General Revaluation that will be applied to calculate the 2016/17 Rates, users of the Livestock Exchange will be charged more in Rates.

Mr Jefferies argues that additional support should be provided to the Swan Hill Indoor Sports and Recreation Centre (The Stadium) and that the proposed upgrade to lighting to make it more energy efficient should be funded in the 2016/17 Budget.

### **Officers Response to Submission 1**

The proposed Fees and Charges increases at the Livestock Exchange relate only to ancillary services such as the feeding of livestock, dead stock removal and the use of the water standpipe. The cost to provide the ancillary services increase annually and, as the fees are minor in nature, the administration component of the fee is quite large. To maintain the Fees for ancillary services at 2015/16 levels would have only a minor impact of the 2016/17 budget (estimated at less than \$1,000) however it would mean the estimated cost of providing the services would exceed the applicable Fee.

The 2016 General Revaluation is not expected to result in significantly higher Rates for the users of the Livestock Exchange nor will it lead to any additional Rates revenue for Council. The Revaluation will redistribute the total Rates proposed to be raised based on the new valuations and therefore some Ratepayers will pay less Rates, while other will pay more. Council's Rate Modelling indicates that the highest increases in Rates will be within the horticultural sector. Most other sectors, including cattle and sheep producers who use the Livestock Exchange, should generally pay the same or slightly less in Rates compared to 2015/16.

Council funded Leisure Centres are heavily subsidised from Rates. The proposed Fee increases help to cover cost increases incurred each year and prevent further subsidisation. There are many Council facilities, that are free to use, that encourage active and healthy lifestyles such as parks, playgrounds, recreation reserves and walking and cycling paths.

The cost of Council Regulatory Services program, which includes the Animal Control activities, is also subsidised from Rates and the costs of providing the service increase each year. To maintain the Animal Registration Fees at the 2015/16 level would cost the Budget approximately \$10,000.

The Fees can be rounded to the nearest 5 cents without a significant impact on the Budget, however, most payments to Council are made electronically rather than in cash. Any cash transactions are rounded at the time of receipt as required by law. The minor formatting changes will be made in the final version of the Fees and Charges schedule.

Council provides direct financial support to the Swan Hill Indoor Sports and Recreation Centre (The Stadium) of \$40,000 p.a. Council also pays the insurance for the building (estimated at \$18,000) and undertakes any major building maintenance. As stated in the submission, Council is currently finalising a Business Plan for The Stadium. It is expected that the Business Plan will be finalised within the next two months. Once the Business Plan is finalised Council will be in a better position to prioritise the actions required to improve the operations and finances of

The Stadium. The installation of energy efficient lighting will be considered as one of these actions.

**Submission 2 – Mr and Mrs Kennedy**

The submission opposes the proposed 2.5% average Rate Increase on the grounds that it is unaffordable. The submission also argues that the system of basing Rates solely on property valuations is unfair.

**Officers Response to Submission 2**

Over the last several years Swan Hill Rural City Council's rate increases have usually been below the State average. Rates comprise approximately 40% of Council's revenue, the majority of Council's funding comes from other sources.

When preparing the Budget each year, Council has to balance the amount of Rates required against the need to provide services, maintain facilities, improve infrastructure and to meet the requirements of numerous Statutory functions. The cost of providing these services increases annually and the increase in other sources of revenue, such as government grants, continue to be constrained. To reduce the proposed 2016/17 Rate rise would require a reduction in services, projects or both.

The Local Government Act determines how Council's can raise rates and requires that rates are raised against real estate, primarily based on valuations. Council has little discretion in how rates are set. Council is currently undertaking an independent review of its Differential Rating structure and the results will be used to inform the 2017/18 Budget. The review is comparing the rates raised by Council against broad ability to pay criteria, however, it will not be possible to develop a system of rating that adjusts for individual circumstances, and Differential Rates can only be based on broad property characteristics.

**Consultation**

The submission process is part of the consultation process for the Budget.

**Financial Implications**

Nil

**Social Implications**

Nil

**Economic Implications**

Nil

### **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### **Risk Management Implications**

Nil

### **Council Plan Strategy Addressed**

***Economic Growth*** - A prosperous, growing and diverse local and regional economy.

### **Options**

Nil

### **Recommendations**

#### **That Council:**

- 1. Receive the two submissions to the Draft 2016/17 Budget.**
- 2. Enable any submitters to speak to their submission.**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Mr John McLinden  
Chief Executive Officer  
Swan Hill Rural City Council

Chris Jeffery

Dear Mr McLinden,

Please find below and attached my submission for Swan Hill Rural City Councils Draft 2016/17 Annual Budget.

The attached Excel spreadsheet contains:

- Minor technical corrections
- Recommendations to leave fees same as last year
- Recommendations to round down to nearest cash amount – these fees, if being paid in cash would require a rounding down or up, let us have it correct in our budget.

#### **Farmers**

As we know our farming ratepayers are currently at the beginning of a drought, despite the recent rainfall another bad year on the land will place many pressures upon our farmers. I request that fees associated with sheep and cattle remain the same as last year to help with the financial burden for the year. Given this year is a land valuation year, Council will be receiving extra rate money from our asset rich, cash poor farmers.

#### **Animal Registrations**

I request that our animal registration fees remain the same as last year. I believe it is expensive enough to have animals registered. Any further increases in pet registrations will lead to more people not registering their pets due to the yearly costs of having it registered for no gain.

#### **Leisure Centre Activities**

In order to keep families and individuals active and able to afford healthy lifestyles, low prices and round easy figures makes budgets more affordable to manage.

#### **Addition to budget**

Swan Hill Stadium is well used and neglected facility in our town. Currently it runs at a loss of \$39,266.93, of which Utilities (Gas, Power, Water) make up \$18,028.08, a component of the Repairs and Maintenance (\$5,982.01 in 2014/15 and \$14,841.09 in 2013/14) is required for replacing broken lights. Positive reduction due to the new Stadium Manager utilising his qualification as builder.

One of the key elements of the high operating costs at the Swan Hill Stadium is its lighting. *"The overhead court lighting system is outdated technology and requires regular maintenance and replacement. It is also inefficient in power usage."* Review of Operations released in February 2016



The following clubs/groups use The Stadium:

- AFL Central Murray
- Badminton
- Basketball
- Casual Hirers
- Futsal
- Netball
- Schools
- Squash
- Tennis

There is no obvious funding within the budget to upgrade or improve the Swan Hill Stadium. We can see considerable money available for the following Swan Hill community centres available to the public:

- Swan Hill Leisure Centre
  - 24 hour gym access \$26,000
  - Change room floors \$40,000
  - Electrical controller \$15,000
  - Gym carpet \$14,000
- Swan Hill Swimming Pool
  - All abilities change room \$30,000
- Swan Hill Art Gallery
  - Extensions design - \$165,000
- Swan Hill Showground
  - Seating - \$26,000

I ask Council to continue its move towards greener, energy efficient lighting by considering the two quotes between \$30,000 and \$47,000 received to upgrade the lighting to LED lights, and make funds available in the new financial year to undertake a full upgrade.

I'm aware that Council is currently undertaking a business plan to potentially upgrade The Stadium, I believe the new LED lighting is an important upgrade that can be achieved now and benefit the users and Council financially.

#### **Overall Budget**

I'm impressed with the budget overall and look forward to more positives projects being completed in our Shire. I would like the opportunity to speak towards my submission provided I can make it on the 14<sup>th</sup> June.

Regards,

Chris Jeffery

Section	Page	Sub Type	Service/Fee Type	Proposed 2016/17 Fee	Recommendation
Information Management	82	Historic Information Request			Remove '#VALUE!'
Library Service	83	Headphones			Remove 'New item for sale' reference. Not new this year
Library Service	83	Membership Cards	Replacement	\$5.25	Leave at \$5.00. New cards are bulk ordered and in supply. Any reason for increase?
Livestock Exchange	84	Sheep holding paddocks		\$0.75	Leave at \$0.70
Livestock Exchange	84	Cattle weight fee		\$2.65	Leave at \$2.50
Livestock Exchange	84	Sheep yard		\$0.65	Leave at \$0.60
Livestock Exchange	84	Cattle yard		\$3.40	Leave at \$3.20
Livestock Exchange	84	Private weigh	Cattle	\$5.50	1. Leave at \$5.20 2. No seperate weight charge for sheep - every other area has sheep and cattle separate
Livestock Exchange	84	Yard stock sold	Cattle	1.20%	Reduce to 1.10%
Livestock Exchange	84	Stock Feeding	Cattle & Sheep	\$40.00	Leave at \$37.00
Livestock Exchange	84	Stock Feeding	Cattle & Sheep	\$20.00	Leave at \$15.00
Marketing & Tourism	85	Banner		\$164.43	Round down to \$164.40
Nyah Swimming Pool	86	Carnival	1/2 Day		1. Remove '#Div/0!' reference 2. No fee listed.
Nyah Swimming Pool	86	Carnival	Full Day		1. Remove '#Div/0!' reference 2. No fee listed.
Regulatory Services	94	Local Laws	50% discount of set fee for charitable organisations		Should read '50% discounting off...'
Regulatory Services	94	Local Laws	Exces animal permit fee		Remove 'New fee' reference
Regulatory Services	94	Use of Council Land (Footpath Trading)	Permit fee fo r outdoor eating facility	\$163.00	Leave at \$155
Regulatory Services	94	Use of Council Land (Footpath Trading)	Permit for advertising sign on footpath	\$64.00	1. Comments section reads "\$50 per sign..." needs updating 2. Reduce to \$60.00
Regulatory Services	94	Use of Council Land (Footpath Trading)	Permit to consume liquor on Council Land	\$165.00	Reduce to \$160
Regulatory Services	94	Use of Council Land (Footpath Trading)	Market Day permit fee	\$61.00	Reduce to \$60
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Dangerous or Menacing dog. Restricted Breed Dog		Remove 'New fee' reference
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Entire dog or cat	\$132.00	Leave at \$126
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Pensioner - Maximum fee (50%) discount	\$66.00	Leave at \$63
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Desexed and microchip implant	\$44.00	Leave at \$42
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Pensioner - Maximum fee (50%) discount	\$22.00	Leave at \$21
Regulatory Services	94	Dog/Cat Registrations	Working dog	\$22.00	Leave at \$21
Reserve User Fees & Casual Hire	95	All Venues			Reduce all to CPI 2.5%
Reserve User Fees & Casual Hire	96	Circus Fee	Swan Hill Reserve		Remove 'First time formally set' reference
Reserve User Fees & Casual Hire	96	Circus Bond	Swan Hill Reserve		Remove 'First time formally set' reference
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Aquatics	Child	\$2.31	Round down to \$2.30
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Aquatics	Spectator	\$2.31	Round down to \$2.30
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Season Ticket	Family	\$143.33	Reduce to \$143.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Season Ticket	Single	\$92.61	Reduce to \$90.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Swimming multi passes - 10 visits	Adult	\$31.08	Reduce to \$31.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Gymnasium	Casual	\$13.76	Round down to \$13.75
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Gymnasium	1 Month Membership	\$185.22	Reduce to \$185.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Gymnasium	6 Month Membership	\$295.47	Reduce to \$295.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Gymnasium	12 Month Membership	\$463.05	Reduce to \$460.00
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Badminton		\$13.34	Round down to \$13.30
Robinvale Leisure Centre	97	Stadium - Casual Use		\$12.34	Round down to 12.30
Robinvale Tip	98	Clean Green Fees	New Fees		1. Make it free for tips - understand that Council mulch then reuse within the community. Start charging and people won't recycle, they'll burn. 2. Otherwise in Comments column needs to read 'New Fee'
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Adult	\$5.36	Round down to \$5.35
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Child	\$3.89	Round down to \$3.85
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Concession	\$3.89	Round down to \$3.85

Section	Page	Sub Type	Service/Fee Type	Proposed 2016/17 Fee	Recommendation
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Schools	\$2.42	Round down to \$2.42
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Swim Club	\$2.52	Round down to \$2.50
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Swim Club - Nyah Two Bays	\$6.41	Round down to \$6.40
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Birthday Party - Catering	\$13.23	Round down to \$13.20
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aquatics	Non commerical lane hire	\$6.93	Round down to \$6.90
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aqua Aerobics	Adult	\$9.56	Round down to \$9.55
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Aqua Aerobics	Concession	\$7.14	Round down to \$7.10
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swim Lessons	Pre-school - 1 child	\$11.76	Reduce to \$11.50
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swim Lessons	Pre-school - 2 child	\$10.61	Reduce to \$10.40
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swim Lessons	Adult	\$12.18	Reduce to \$12.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swim Lessons	Adult Member	\$11.08	Reduce to \$11.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swim Lessons	Private Lessons	\$30.45	Reduce to \$30.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Swimming multi passes - 10 visits	Adult	\$48.09	Reduce to \$48.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack - 12 months	\$870.98	Reduce to \$870.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack - 12 months - Concession	\$672.53	Reduce to \$672.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack - 6 months	\$496.13	Reduce to \$496.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack - 6 months - Concession	\$374.85	Reduce to \$374.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	99	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack - per week	\$16.28	Round down to \$16.25
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Joining Fee	\$55.13	Reduce to \$55.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Platinum Pack Direct Debit (per week) -conession	\$12.81	Round down to \$12.80
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Premium Pack - 12 months	\$716.63	Reduce to \$716.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Premium Pack - 12 months - concessions	\$551.25	Reduce to \$551.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Premium Pack - 6 months	\$407.93	Reduce to \$407.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Premium Pack - 6 months - concesssions	\$319.73	Reduce to \$319.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Health & Fitness Membership	Premium Pack Direct Debit (per week)	\$14.49	Round down to \$14.45
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Casual Health Club	Adult	\$13.44	Round down to \$13.40
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Casual Health Club	Concession	\$10.19	Round down to \$10.15
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Casual Health Club	Multi pass - 10 visits	\$114.14	Reduce to \$110.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Group Fitness	Adult	\$9.14	Reduce to \$9.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Group Fitness	Concession	\$6.93	Round down to \$6.90
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Member 1 hour	\$5.25	Leave at \$5.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Member 2 hours	\$10.50	Leave at \$10.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Member 3 hours	\$15.54	Reduce to \$15.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Non member 1 hour	\$6.51	1. Round down to \$6.50 2. New Fees column should read 'Non Member 1 hour'
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Non member 2 hours	\$12.71	Round down to \$12.70
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Creche	Non member 3 hours	\$19.01	Round down to \$19.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Badminton		\$13.34	Reduce to \$13.00
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Stadium - Casual Use		\$4.94	Round down to \$4.90
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Court Hire		\$44.52	Round down to \$44.50
Swan Hill Leisure Centre	100	Locker Hire		\$3.15	1. Reduce to \$2.00 per 90 minutes
Swan Hill Swimming Pool	101	Lane Hire	Per Hour	\$15.50	Reconsider excessive 134.8% increase. Consider \$8.00
Swan Hill Tip	101	Tyres	Car & Motorcycle	\$9.24	Round down to \$9.20
Swan Hill Tip	101	Tyres	Truck - wide brand super single	\$39.48	Round down to \$39.45
Swan Hill Tip	102	Clean Green Fees	New Fees		1. Make it free for tips - understand that Council mulch then reuse within the community. Start charging and people won't recycle, they'll burn. 2. Otherwise insert into Comments column needs to read 'New Fee' 3. Reconsider fee amounts - fees are double that of Robinvale Tip.
Swan Hill Town Hall	102	Hire of total complex	Wedding	\$1,100.00	Scrap this fee - make same as Community - money grab just because it's a wedding.
Swan Hill Town Hall	103	Microphone hire	per microphone	Price on Applicatio	Price already determined? Should be listed to be consistent with budget
Swan Hill Town Hall	103	Video & Projection equipment		Price on Applicatio	Price already determined? Should be listed to be consistent with budget

**From:** Mary and Dan Kennedy  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 June 2016 5:38 AM  
**To:** council@swanhill.vic.gov.au  
**Subject:** feedback on draft budget

Disappointed to again see rates increased, and by the maximum amount allowed too, is that right? 2.5% is significant when existing rates are already comparably so high.

Last year upon enquiry, a council employee informed me rates had increased every year of the 25 years he had been employed except once when it was not allowed by the state government. That is not reflective of the reality of most local residents salaries I would suspect, definitely not for us. We are not alone in feeling very disappointed (to put it mildly) about this. Everyone I have spoken to has been unanimously **not** happy about rate-rises, with the typical response 'Well, you can't do anything about it.' Add to this that every two years properties are revalued and subsequently rates are again increased, it's a little hard to take.

Every year we have to pay more & more out of our family budget to cover our rates – for the privilege of continuing to live in our own home - a home we sacrificed for and saved and worked hard for and continue to sacrifice and save for and work hard to improve.

My wage hasn't increased at all in the last 12 month period, but my rates will, especially after the revaluation, as we have worked hard to improve our home (time, money, physical labour) and our area has become very sought-after, property prices have soared.

We are a single-income family of five on a wage that qualifies for a Health Care card. We are ineligible for the card however because of 'deemed' interest on our savings. We are saving (and sacrificing) to make further improvements to extend and develop our house to accommodate our growing family – these improvements will also result in rate increases in the future. This just doesn't seem to be a fair system.

This doesn't appear to be a system that rewards hard-working and hard-saving people who sacrifice and invest to improve their homes and by extension their street, community and the Swan Hill region - which is also a purpose of our rate money is it not? If improving and beautifying our region is a common goal, shouldn't council be supportive and encouraging of people's efforts in this regard instead of penalising them financially for it?

Our property has been in the family for 23 years. It wasn't a popular area back then but was an affordable option for our family at the time. We have poured lots of love and blood, sweat and tears into it and have, over the years, made many wonderful memories. It has well and truly become home – but perhaps in the future if things continue the way they are with rate increases it may be a home we will find increasingly difficult to afford to continue to live in, particularly when we retire and aren't earning an income at all. Valuations shouldn't be the only consideration in setting the rates.

Thank you for considering these thoughts.

Dan Kennedy