

Conflict of Interest Consultation

Submission Template

Submissions must be lodged by **Wednesday, 26 February 2010**.

- By Email to local.government@dpcd.vic.gov.au
- By Post to Local Government Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development, GPO Box 2392, MELBOURNE 3001.

Submitter

Municipal Association of Victoria
--

Representative (If a Council or other Organisation)

<i>Name</i>	Alison Lyon
<i>Position</i>	General Counsel and Corporate Secretary

Contact Details

<i>Telephone No.</i>	03 9667 5522
<i>Email Address</i>	alyon@mav.asn.au
<i>Postal Address</i>	Level 12, 60 Collins St Melbourne

Confidentiality

This submission is a public document unless specified otherwise by the submitter.

Please indicate by marking the relevant boxes, if you wish any part of your submission to be kept confidential.

- Do not publicly disclose the **name** of the submitter
- Do not publicly disclose the **contact details** of the submitter
- Do not publicly disclose the **comments** of the submitter

Introduction

This template is for submissions in response to the consultation paper on “Conflict of Interest”. Copies of the consultation paper are available for download from the internet at www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au or they can be obtained from Local Government Victoria by telephoning 03 9651 7093.

1 – Information and Support

This section deals with views the information and support provided to Councillors and officers to assist them with conflict of interest requirements as discussed in Part 1 of the consultation paper.

Forms of support and training

Proposed that Local Government Victoria continue to work with local government representative bodies to identify and implement programs to assist Councillors and Council staff in relation to conflict of interest.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

It is clear that additional guidance material, training and other forms of support to assist councillors and council staff to understand conflicts of interest is required irrespective of the outcome of the current review of the legislative provisions.

The new Local Government Investigations and Compliance Inspectorate has significant resource, including fourteen staff, in order to focus on compliance with the Local Government Act 1989 'by investigating alleged breaches of the Act, implementing a rolling audit program and conducting spot audits of councils' compliance.

Current and past experience suggests that the primary area for investigative resources will be conflicts of interest. The MAV's view is that many of the complaints will not be well founded and will be based on a misunderstanding of the provisions. Where there is evidence to support the allegation, the councillor who is the subject of the complaint will often have genuinely misunderstood the requirements, or in the case of providing the necessary details in a Return, failed

to record information as a consequence of an oversight.

If additional resources were provided, on an ongoing basis, within LGV to ensure that the necessary support was provided then the outcome should result in less investigative work (or fewer prosecutions) and better outcomes from the compliance audits.

'Necessary support' includes training, legacy reference materials and direct advice provided to councillors and council staff where the reference material is not specific enough or is not understood by the individual seeking assistance.

Comments are specifically invited about:

- **the usefulness of training and support already provided for Councillors and Officers; and**
- **proposals for future training and support programs.**

The delay in training and support materials becoming available following legislative change was problematic. This left a gap in training that led to inconsistency in understanding of the new legislation as individual councils tried to interpret the provisions for themselves. It is imperative that adequate support, training and resources are in place ahead of any further legislative change and future election cycles.

Broader consultation, preferably in facilitated workshops, to discuss the options and the impacts of the options would ensure a level of understanding ahead of legislative change and may minimise the likelihood of unintended consequences resulting from change.

There is a need for ongoing training opportunities for councillors and council staff to build and maintain general understanding of managing interests in public decision making as well as targeting specific legislative aspects.

On the basis of general feedback to the MAV on the delivery of professional development for local government, we recommend a program of rolling opportunities to attend small group workshops in regional locations that accommodate the time constraints on councillors who often have work commitments outside their councillor duties.

Councillors and council staff have shown a preference for case study or scenario learning about conflicts of interest. Small groups better support the workshop model required for scenario learning while regional opportunities would minimise travel as a barrier to attendance as well as take account of the different issues that arise for metropolitan versus rural councils.

Inter-council workshops also maximise the likelihood of broader issues being raised among the attendees.

Written guides provide useful reference material between opportunities to ask direct questions and test specific scenarios but alone can never be expected to comprehensively respond to the needs of lay people operating within a complex legislative framework.

The MAV frequently responds to inquiries from councils, individual councillors and council staff seeking clarification of the legislation as it applies to particular scenarios. This advice has been sought despite attempts by the councillor to understand the legislative provisions, use the available guidance material and to discuss the matter with colleagues and council staff. Our resources are severely limited in this capacity. While well resourced councils may be in a position to provide greater resources in this area, many more councils are not.

Conflict of interest guidelines

Proposed that Local Government Victoria publish a small handbook with a brief explanation of the conflict of interest criteria that can serve as a companion booklet to the more comprehensive Conflict of Interest Guide.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

There is an agreed need among councils for a "quick reference" companion booklet to the full length guide.

Comments are specifically invited about:

- **the overall usefulness of the existing Conflict of Interest Guide; and**
- **specific matters that could benefit from clearer or more detailed explanation in the Guide.**

While the length of the Guide has been criticised it has also been recognised that it is expressed in clear language and that, unlike the legislative provisions, is able to be understood. Many councillors have found the examples a useful practical way of understanding the requirements. Additional examples are sought to illustrate the more difficult analyses that councillors are required to make eg how common does my interest in common need to be?

Written guides provide useful reference material between opportunities to ask direct questions and test specific scenarios but alone can never be expected to comprehensively respond to the needs of lay people operating within a complex

legislative framework.

The guide has been a useful resource for councils but there is an agreed need for a "quick reference" companion booklet to the full length guide. The overview of interest types is well used and should be incorporated in the booklet. Further clarification is sought on receipt of applicable gifts; interests in common; residential amenity; close association and when exemptions apply.

Misplaced community expectations

Proposal that Local Government Victoria prepare and publish a brief explanation of conflict of interest that can be published on the internet to assist in educating the broader community.

Agree

Disagree

Other

[Mark one box]

Any initiative aimed at educating the broader community is welcomed. The content of the explanation should reflect the various community concerns relating to conflicts of interest and should reference 'pre-judgement' as this is a common area of misunderstanding.

The draft explanation should be made available for comment so that there is certainty that it addresses relevant issues in an accessible way. The explanation should be in a form that allows councils to print it and make it available at Council and Special Committee meetings and/or to add to their website.

Conflict of interest and bias

Proposal that Local Government Victoria prepare and publish a brief explanation of the difference between bias and conflict of interest that can be published on the internet to assist Councillors and members of the broader community.

Agree

Disagree

Other

[Mark one box]

Refer to comments above.

The MAV is currently preparing guidance material in relation to bias and planning decisions which has been an area of much interest and confusion.

Information and support - generally

Use this space to make any additional comments about information and support.

The MAV proposes that Local Government Victoria fund the development of a software 'wizard' tool or application that could be provided to all councillors to build and maintain a personal register of interests.

This could use smart form technology or some other solution not unlike a mortgage calculator or a much less complex version of the software tool used by Australian Tax Office for submitting personal income tax returns whereby councillors would be prompted to populate fields as relevant to their personal circumstances including personal property assets, shares, employment, positions held; spouses' assets and employment; children's assets and employment; other relatives' interests etc.

The tool/application could also be extended for councillors to use in maintaining records of applicable gifts and campaign donations or any other reportable item. The tool should be easily updated and provide for the individual to print a personal 'register' at any time. The tool could prompt a review by the councillor of the 'register' on a periodic basis.

The tool would not necessarily have to interface with any online data management system. The data could instead be kept on personal computer drives to protect the privacy of those whose interests are recorded within the register.

Posing the fields as leading questions (eg Do you have property? Do you own or operate a business? Do you have shares valued \$10,000 or more in a company where the issued value of shares exceeds \$10 million? Are you a member of a decision making body? eg a director of a company, an officeholder of another body) that prompt councillors to consider all their interests including those that arise out of close association would reduce the chance of a councillor inadvertently breaching the provisions as a result of failing to consider a relevant interest.

The tool would provide for the interests of family members and relatives where known by the councillor.

2 – Conflict of interest exemptions

This section deals with the general exemptions to conflict of interest provided in the Local Government Act as discussed in Part 2 of the consultation paper.

Exemptions – Interest in common

Proposed that the exemption for interests held in common with other residents, ratepayers or voters be reviewed and amended to provide greater clarity.

Agree

Disagree

Other

[Mark one box]

While there is some desire expressed by councils for a fixed percentage and/or defined number of residents/ratepayers/voters that can be applied as a defining rule for determining interest in common, the MAV considers this would not be a workable option in many instances where the number of residents/ratepayers/voters holding an interest is unknown and cannot reasonably be determined. For example, a councillor considering works to a playground in the near vicinity of their residence that they personally use on a regular basis cannot be expected to know how many others or what percentage of the community makes use of that playground and therefore whether their interest can be deemed to be held in common.

More clarity within the exemption is supported. Any change options or specific proposed change should be the subject of further consultation prior to legislation being introduced into Parliament.

Guidance regarding the amended exemption should take the form of case studies and address varying contexts eg setting policy, making budget allocations, approving works and geographic variables eg my street, my neighbourhood, my ward, my town as well as communities of interest eg sporting clubs, community groups, schools, kindergartens.

Feedback is specifically invited about how broadly the interest in common exemption should be defined.

The current provision exempts interests where the interest is 'held in common with other residents, ratepayers or voters' and 'does not exceed the interests held by other residents, ratepayers or voters.'

In the absence of considering options or a specific proposed change it is difficult

to provide useful feedback regarding the optimum breadth of the necessary 'commonality' that triggers the interest in common exemption.

Exemptions – No knowledge

Proposed that the “no knowledge” defence to conflict of interest be replaced by a general exemption to apply where a person does not know, and could not reasonably be expected to know, the circumstances that give rise to a conflict of interest.

Agree

Disagree

Other

[Mark one box]

The current position of a councillor having to prove that he or she did not know of the relevant interest is onerous and is contrary to the presumption of innocence.

Guidance for councillors on what reasonable inquiries they should make regarding potential conflicts of interest, particularly of family members in relation to interests arising from close association, is essential. Another area of confusion relates to superannuation funds and the degree of knowledge that can reasonably be expected of the assets of those funds.

The tool/application referred to on page 6 could incorporate guidance regarding 'reasonable knowledge'.

Exemptions – generally

Use this space to make any additional comments about general exemptions.

Councillors who have service or retail businesses in rural and regional areas find it difficult to identify the parameters of the exemption relating to interests that 'are so remote or insignificant that they could not reasonably be regarded as influencing any ...decision of the person...' They recognise that voting for or against, say, a planning application of an irregular customer may influence the likelihood of that person remaining a customer. How do they then apply the exemption? Guidance as to what is reasonable in a variety of circumstances is needed.

3 – Interest definitions

This section deals with the definitions of direct and indirect interests in the Local Government Act as discussed in Part 3 of the consultation paper.

Direct Interest – Definition of “direct”

Proposed that the definition of “direct interest” be amended to provide greater clarity about the meaning of the term “direct”.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The MAV has not found this to be a significant point of contention or confusion in its dealings with councils and councillors on conflicts of interest but supports any efforts to provide greater clarity of definitions.

Direct Interest – Residential amenity

Proposed that “residential amenity” be classed as a category of indirect interest, rather than a direct interest and that the Guide be amended to better explain the limitations of residential amenity.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

While there is support for the proposal it is clear from comments to the MAV that there is some confusion about the proposed change. The options or specific change that is being considered should be the subject of consultation so that informed comments regarding the pros and cons of a particular model can be provided.

Any additional guidance regarding the limitations of any 'interest' is strongly supported.

It is noted that residential amenity issues usually have a direct impact on the value of properties. The proposed change may weaken governance outcomes, for example, a councillor would not have to declare a conflict of interest when considering a planning application that affects the amenity, and therefore the value, of a parent's residence.

Direct Interest – Controlling interest in company

Proposed that the definition of “direct interest” be amended to include situations where a person is both a majority shareholder of a company and a director of that company.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

This change is supported.

Guidance on what councillors should reasonably be expected to know about the financial, business and investment arrangements of family members and relatives would be helpful. The proposed wizard tool previously described would help prompt councillors as to these reasonable expectations.

Direct Interest - generally

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of direct interests.

Despite the fact that the ‘direct interest’ definition contains a number of parts, it has been reasonably well understood. This type of interest is usually immediately identifiable as a conflict of interest.

Close Association – Coverage

Proposed that the existing definition of “close association” be retained and more clearly explained and justified in the Guide.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The MAV acknowledges the difficulties inherent in delineating those family members about whose interests a community would expect a councillor to know and those that are too remote, despite the relationship.

The legislative provision is difficult to follow however the Guide's diagram has been found by most councillors to be helpful.

Close Association – Knowledge

Proposed that the Guide include an explanation of the proposed “no knowledge’ exemption in relation to the interests of relatives.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

Guidance on what reasonable level of enquiries councillors should be expected to make of family members and relatives would be helpful.

The proposed 'wizard' tool would also be of practical assistance.

Close Association – general

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of close association.

Insert comment

Indirect Financial Interest – Superannuation

Proposed that the Guide be amended to include information about the effect of superannuation scheme investments on conflicts of interest, including the proposed “no reasonable knowledge” exemption.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

General guidance regarding superannuation investments would be welcomed. Many councillors do not automatically turn their mind to this interest when considering conflicts.

The 'no reasonable knowledge exemption' is the appropriate mechanism to deal with lack of knowledge regarding superannuation investments as this will be unlikely to apply to conflicts of interest that arise in relation to self managed funds which the community would expect a councillor to declare. However, a councillor may have an SMSF where the professional managing the assets within the fund may make decisions regarding the purchase and sale of assets within the asset allocation determined for the Fund with periodic reporting to the trustee. Care should be taken not to impute knowledge where none exists.

Guidance should be given on what reasonable knowledge a councillor should have of the various different types of structures that superannuation funds take ie major commercial and industry funds versus self managed funds

Indirect Financial Interest - generally

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of indirect financial interests.

While the concept of a sliding scale for investments in shares has some merit the MAV is of the view that this may only complicate what is already complex legislation applying to individuals who do not often have a high degree of legal acumen and supports the current thresholds being retained.

Conflict of Duty – Members of public boards

Proposed that active consideration be given to the types of Board memberships that should be exempted under the regulations.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

Insert comment

Feedback is invited about which types of public board memberships may be considered for exemption and the justification for such exemptions.

The MAV believes there is merit in considering broadening the exemption to include all public board appointments made by the council. This is another matter where detailed proposals should be the subject of a further consultation process.

Conflict of Duty - generally

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of conflict of duty.

Insert comment

Applicable Gifts – Threshold and timing

Comments are invited about the suggested options for defining gifts for conflict of interest purposes.

The consultation paper asserts that gifts and/or campaign donations to the value of \$499 over a five year period would be considered by most people to give rise to a conflict of interest. However, this standard is not applied to any other level of government. The option to apply differential thresholds ie a threshold of \$200 in the previous two years and \$500 in the five years prior to the two year period is

the best option proposed.

However, the MAV urges Local Government Victoria to consider more objective testing of community standards and expectations in relation to applicable gift thresholds. The MAV is also mindful of not over complicating an already complex area of legislation.

Applicable Gifts – Gifts received prior to new rules

Feedback is invited about the impact of gifts received prior to December 2008, including specific details of the extent of any difficulties.

The MAV acknowledges the principle of declaring gifts received prior to the legislation coming into effect but is mindful that any retrospective law poses a variety of practical difficulties for those affected by it.

These practical difficulties will continue into the future and it will be important to flag the issue in material provided to potential candidates so that they are aware of the legislative requirements at the earliest possible opportunity. Many newly elected councillors may not even have contemplated running for council until well into the five year timeframe that precedes their election.

LGV should also publish information explaining this requirement so that it becomes understood throughout the community.

Applicable Gifts –general

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of applicable gifts.

It is often difficult to attribute a value to a 'gift' that comprises an invitation to an event or hospitality where there is no similar right to attend that could be purchased. Guidance on how to approach this should be provided.

The definition of 'gift' is not straightforward. Gift is defined as:

gift means any disposition of property otherwise than by will made by a person to another person without consideration in money or money's worth or with inadequate consideration, including—

- (a) the provision of a service (other than volunteer labour); and

- (b) the payment of an amount in respect of a guarantee; and
- (c) the making of a payment or contribution at a fundraising function

It is necessary to understand the definition of 'disposition of property' to understand the full meaning of 'gift' under the Local Government Act.

The definition of 'disposition of property' is:

disposition of property means any conveyance, transfer, assignment, settlement, delivery, payment, gift or other alienation of property including—

- (a) the allotment of shares in a company;
- (b) the creation of a trust in property;
- (c) the grant or creation of any lease, mortgage, charge, servitude, licence, power, partnership or interest in property;
- (d) the release, discharge, surrender, forfeiture or abandonment, at law or in equity, of any debt, contract or chose in action, or of any interest in property;
- (e) the exercise by a person of a general power of appointment of property in favour of any other person;
- (f) any transaction entered into by any person with intent thereby to diminish, directly or indirectly, the value of the person's own property and to increase the value of the property of any other person;

Any simplification of the definition of 'gift' would be welcomed.

Extending the wizard tool to enable councillors to keep a central record of applicable gifts would be helpful in keeping track of the value of multiple gifts. The tool could also be engineered to flag for a councillor when the value of gifts from the same donor is reaching a threshold.

Party to the matter

Use this space to make any comments about the definition of “party to the matter”.

This has been an easily understood and accepted indirect interest. The difficulty relating to this conflict is that it does not address access to information. In general, councillors receive reports on matters irrespective of any conflict of interest and the consequence of the existence of a conflict is that the councillor does not participate in the decision-making on the matter.

If a councillor is a party to a matter and receives a confidential report or other information that relates to the matter it may be prejudicial to the council. It is difficult to identify a simple mechanism that addresses this issue.

4 – Procedures

This section deals with the procedures that should be followed if a Councillor or officer has a conflict of interest as discussed in Part 4 of the consultation paper.

Assembly of Councillors – Public meetings

Comments are invited about the option of excluding public meetings from the definition of an “assembly of Councillors”.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

It is appropriate that councillors have the same rights as any other citizen to address a public meeting on a matter in which they have an interest given that the public meeting has no decision making role.

Consultation should occur on whether there is merit in requiring affected councillors to disclose an interest to the public meeting if it is possible that the matter may become the subject of a council decision.

Assembly of Councillors – Number of Councillors

Comments are invited about the option of defining an “assembly of Councillors” to exist when a majority of the Councillors and at least one officer are in attendance.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The MAV supports the notion of increasing an assembly of councillors to a majority of councillors but further consideration and consultation should occur about the requirements to declare conflicts of interest in formal advisory committee meetings which would frequently involve less than the majority of councillors.

Assembly of Councillors – general

Use this space to make any additional comments about the definition of an “assembly of Councillors”.

The right for a councillor to be heard in relation to a s223 submission does not extend to an assembly of councillors. This should be made clear in the guidance material.

Meeting Procedures – Councillors participating in debate

Proposed that the Guide be amended to provide a better explanation of the reasons why a Councillor needs to leave the meeting while an item in which he or she has a conflict of interest is being considered.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The explanation must address the frequently voiced issue regarding the 'loss of expertise' which results from the departure requirement.

Meeting Procedures – Councillors making submissions

Comments are invited on the option of removing the ability of a Councillor to speak to a meeting if they have made a section 223 submission.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

Views are mixed regarding this right.

The removal of the right of a councillor to be heard in support of their s223 submission means that a councillor who is affected by the outcome of a decision and who may not participate in the decision making relating to that matter does not have the same right enjoyed by every other submitter.

More guidance is required in relation to the s223 exemption if it is retained. Guidance should be provided on the need for the councillor to absent themselves from an assembly during discussion of the matter. Guidance is also required in order that the existing confusion as to what constitutes a s223 submission is eliminated.

Meeting Procedures – Council budget

Proposed that additional guidance be provided to assist Councils with budget processes when there are conflict of interest issues.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The existence of multiple conflicts among councillors considering a proposed budget or adopting a budget has led to a range of approaches which are administratively burdensome and difficult for the community to understand.

Guidance regarding effective means of overcoming these issues is welcomed although it is noted that the solutions may include less detail within the council

budget and multiple reports ahead of the budget consideration. The council report relating to the proposed and adopted budget has been an effective means of all material information being within, or attached, to a single report and this 'one stop shop' advantage of the budget papers should not be lost.

Meeting Procedures – Councillors not at meeting

Proposed that the requirement for a Councillor to disclose a conflict of interest when not attending the relevant meeting be repealed.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

Guidance should be provided to councillors who may be absent from a meeting & accordingly not required to disclose a conflict in relation to voting on the adoption of the minutes of that meeting.

Meeting Procedures - general

Use this space to make any additional comments about meeting procedures.

Insert comment

Staff Delegations – CEO powers

Proposed that the application of conflict of interest be extended to cover the exercise of the statutory powers of the Chief Executive Officer, either by the CEO directly or by a member of staff under delegation.

Agree Disagree Other [Mark one box]

The primary power that will be caught by this extension is the power to manage staff including the appointment of staff. Guidance about relevant issues should be provided. eg The HR Manager, who is empowered to appoint staff, has a domestic partner who manages a local business and an employee of that business applies for a position with the council. The HR Manager will be subject to internal policies that are likely to impose strict constraints regarding the disclosure of the identity of applicants other than to referees. Does a conflict arise in these circumstances?

Staff Delegations - general

Use this space to make any additional comments about conflicts of interest in relation to staff delegations.

Insert comment

5 – Other Issues

Use this space to comment on any conflict of interest issues not covered above.

Crown Land (Reserves) Act

The Guide should provide details of the Crown Land (Reserves) Act provisions relating to LGA conflicts.

Section 14(8) provides that:

Where a municipal council is appointed as a committee of management of any land under this section nothing in section 79(1) of the Local Government Act 1989 shall apply to any discussion of or vote upon any matter concerning the said land whether the council is discussing the matter or voting upon it in its capacity as council or in its capacity as committee of management.

Council Submissions

Further guidance should also be provided on submissions that may be made by a council in relation to matters that may directly affect a councillor . It is assumed that submissions made by a council on such matters may be a relevant consideration by a Minister with portfolio responsibility for that issue eg workcover.

Guidance should be provided as to how a councillor should make a decision on whether a conflict exists regarding a submission that is intended to influence the outcome of a decision that changes the benefits, obligations, opportunities or circumstances of any councillor who may suffer a council role -related injury.

Workcover

it is anticipated that councillors will be covered by workcover from 1 July 2010. The council is to be the employer of the councillors who are 'deemed workers'. Ahead of 1 July 2010 the council will need to make decisions regarding numerous matters that relate to the way it will discharge its responsibilities as the employer of councillors under the Accident Compensation Act.

Is there intended to be a legislative change that provides for these matters to be matters where a councillor is taken not to have a conflict of interest (unless a matter relates specifically to that councillor), an own motion exemption by the

Minister under s80(1AA) or will each council be required to separately seek an exemption under s 80(1AB)(1)?

Councillor Conduct - Exemption

Section 79C provides that an area where a councillor is taken not to have a conflict is where the matter relates to the conduct of a Councillor with respect to an allegation of misconduct or serious misconduct (as defined in section 81A) by the Councillor.

Guidance should be provided as to the conflict issues that may relate to any councillor involved in the application and the councillor who is the subject of the allegation. The guidance should address the various options available in relation to the application process and the requirement for the decision of the Councillor Conduct Panel to be tabled at an ordinary council.

Guide - Disclaimer

The disclaimer in the Guide appropriately reminds readers that they are responsible for making their own assessment of the matters discussed. The disclaimer goes on to state that [readers] are advised to verify all relevant representations, statements and information and obtain independent advice before acting on any information..'. Councillors and council officers expect that they should be able to rely upon the expertise of LGV and the accuracy of the Guide regarding the legislative provisions without the need to resort to independent advice verifying the accuracy of the contents of the Guide.

Submission Template

The template responses should not simply be aggregated in order to demonstrate support for a general proposition which then results in legislative change then there will be no opportunity for local government to provide input on the detail. Further consultation should occur about the outcomes prior to any legislative amendments being introduced.

Thank you for your submission.

Please lodge:

- by Email to local.government@dpcd.vic.gov.au; or

- by Post to Local Government Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development, GPO Box 2392, MELBOURNE 3001.