



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

**Inquiry into the  
Joint Use and Co-location of Public  
Buildings**

**Submission by Southern Councils Group**

**13<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

*prepared with the assistance of staff from member Councils*

## INTRODUCTION

The Southern Councils Group (SCG), formerly the Illawarra Region of Councils, is the peak organisation representing Local Government in the Illawarra and South Coast regions. Member Councils include Bega Valley Shire, Eurobodalla Shire, Kiama Municipal, Shellharbour City, Shoalhaven City, Wingecarribee Shire and Wollongong City Councils.

At its General Managers meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004 it was resolved to prepare a submission to the above Inquiry which is investigating the design, regulatory arrangements, and the cost of the joint use and co-location of State and local government buildings.

## EXAMPLES OF JOINT USE AND THE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER WHICH THEY OPERATE

Attached is a list of identified facilities in some of the SCG council areas (state/local and local/private). The list details

- *The scale and type of each development*
- *the nature of the arrangement (joint venture, council managed etc)*
- *the success or otherwise of the venture*

## IDENTIFIED OPTIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

- **Wingecarribee Council** does not have any immediate plans for additional Joint Ventures, but would do so if the opportunity arises. Generally, Council encourages the joint use of facilities and has the appropriate management and leasing structures in place to facilitate this.
- **Bega Community, Cultural and Governance Centre.** Planning has commenced on the re-development of Council's Bega Centre with the possibility of incorporating regional and local offices of State agencies and Commonwealth agencies such as Centrelink. Other potential tenants are local members of Parliament and non-Government organisations. Early stage discussions have commenced on this project. The centre will comprise Library, Cultural Centre, Council Offices and Service Centre, and potentially a Government Centre.
- **Eurobodalla Council** has identified a number of additions to its existing shared facilities as their needs expand and grow.
- **Wollongong Council** has suggested that the fact that school facilities sit unused for much of the time presents an excellent opportunity for joint use in the future. There is a largely untapped opportunity for DET sporting fields to be used by local sporting groups on weekends, while they are not in use by schools. This would minimise duplication of facilities on community land. The new Director General of the Department of Sporting, Racing and Tourism indicated he would be supportive of working to remove the barriers to schools opening up their sporting fields and amenities for wider community use

## ANALYSIS

Some inferences can be drawn from member Councils' collective experience. These are:

### Issues with management of existing arrangements

Examples from member Councils suggest that

- The most significant ongoing issue is the maintenance responsibilities for each facility. There needs to be clearly defined management and maintenance responsibilities set out in the joint venture or lease agreements, and each party needs to ensure that appropriate budgets are set aside to support the maintenance obligations. Ill-defined management and maintenance agreements can result in long-term liabilities for all parties.
- Joint policy development may be required to address issues such as hazard and risk management and it may be necessary to reconcile existing standard policies from different organizations in this regard.
- Shoalhaven Council has identified that conflicting uses of a multi-purpose hall, which was constructed as part of the Vincentia High School Project has led to it reverting to primarily school uses. This project pre-dates formal agreements and joint planning arrangements that are now common practice.
- Wollongong Council has encountered 2 issues with existing proposals. The first major issue that has previously been encountered relates to sharing resources (buildings, sites, etc). Two definite examples encountered by Wollongong City Council (WCC) will be cited.
  - The first example relates to a WCC proposal to locate a local SES headquarters building and its training and support facilities with the divisional level of HQ building on the same piece of land. This proposal would have avoided the need to allocate another large piece of prime real estate in a coastal region very short of land. It would also have allowed the joint use of all the supporting facilities that go with a HQ building. This includes training rooms, training aids, toilets, showers, kitchens, dining facilities, break out areas, store rooms, vehicle cleaning and servicing areas, equipment cleaning areas, etc. The Minister for Emergency Services has been asked to intervene in this issue.
  - The second example of State Government unwillingness to consider joint use of facilities relates to the Horsley Child Care Centre. Attempts were made to secure a Department of Education site for the construction of a child care centre within the grounds of the new Horsley School. Prior to construction, discussions were held with the School and Department of Education and Training (DET) regarding sharing the school hall for before and after school care. DET were totally unwilling to accommodate before and after school care in the hall despite Wollongong Council's offer to more than cover their share

of capital contribution. Despite political representation to the Minister, DET department officials were not prepared to consider the proposal in any form.

- The second major issue with management of existing arrangements revolves around budgeting considerations. An example is the NSW Department of Ageing and Disability who has expressed interest in joint funding and a city centre home and community care facility. The Department has indicated capital funds may be available up to \$500,000. This is well short of the funding required to purchase or refurbish a building within the city centre given the Wollongong property market.

The previously discussed Corrimal Community Centre example is also relevant, where IAHS initially wanted to participate in the project but had to withdraw as a partner due to its inability to be able to contribute its share to the capital funding.

### **Issues identified as impediments or hindrances to future development**

- The conflicting needs and budgetary constraints of each party can be an impediment to the joint use of a facility. This aspect of the Wingecarribee Library/ Area Health Joint Venture required extensive negotiations over several years prior to the eventual Joint Venture Agreement. As with any agreement between two or parties, the terms of the agreement need to be clearly defined so that the parties are aware of their rights, obligations, costs and risks associated with the joint venture. It can be a protracted but most necessary process
- The main issue identified to date for the Bega proposal relates to various human service agencies requiring separate access for clients to ensure a safe and comfortable access environment. Council believes that this can be accommodated.
- One Council has raised an issue with State Government imposing demands on local government to purchase the land and infrastructure once the potential for joint use has been identified and community consultation commenced. This is obviously contrary to the spirit of the negotiations and may impose unrealistic costs on the Council. This reflects the problems encountered by Wollongong Council detailed in the previous section.

### **Community benefits of projects –**

The Standing Committee has identified a number of potential benefits already and these are all relevant within the SCG area. They have been substantiated in the cases of:

- Co-location in **Wingecarribee Shire of the Bowral Library/ Area Health Centre Joint Venture**. The facilities on the site have been maximised for the benefit of both parties and for the community as a whole. Accessible and

modern library and health services are available on the one site close to shopping facilities and public transport, with carparking underneath.

- **Bega Community, Cultural and Governance Centre.** Community/public facilities that reflect the communities needs and delivers services with timeliness, dignity, equity and accessibility.
  - One stop shop for people when they have a number of agencies to visit.
  - Better integrated “whole of government” decision making with improved access to all involved agencies whilst we now have regular meetings with key State agencies, and have strong links with the RCMG, this would allow for ongoing implementation to be of a higher quality with better local outcomes.
  - An opportunity to establish and reflect a strong sense of place in the design and integration of any such developments into local communities.
  - Community education opportunities through a number of broad approaches and also linking with local TAFE and university campuses.
  - Financial and organisational outcomes – security, IT links, car parking, ability to provide childcare and staff facilities etc
  
- **Eurobodalla Council** has identified that, in addition to the above, users of its Centres gain exposure to other services they may not have known about, that reduced running costs are evident for such things as security monitoring and that greater 24 hour use is made of ancillary rooms such as meeting rooms by co-location.
  
- **Shoalhaven Council’s** Integrated Emergency Management Centre is very new but its performance during the December 2004 bushfire event suggests that it has been a successful and responsive development meeting numerous community needs.

### **Environmental benefits of projects**

*Potential environmental benefits of shared or collocated facilities have not been identified in the Committee’s notes. The cost/benefits of environmental impacts has been poorly documented in the past and consistent indicators or performance measures are only recently being introduced. They should include*

- the potential for **air quality** improvements associated with critical mass for public transport usage, shared trips, reduced short trip movements, increased use of cycleway and walking route infrastructure, potential for improved associated infrastructure such as cycle and locker storage to encourage non-vehicular journeys etc
- the potential for **biodiversity and ecological gains** from increased massing of outdoor areas to allow greater useable public amenity landscaping , noise control barriers, retained or replaced native vegetation cover, reduced parking and hard surfacing, etc.
- **noise control gains** possible as per above
- **urban water and stormwater** improvements ....reduced building “footprints”, greater potential for water reuse, stored water supplies etc from increased critical mass of buildings.
- **waste management and resource recovery** economies of scale

- **sustainable energy use design** – opportunity to model good environmental design and reuse etc
- **energy efficiency** as above.
- **Joint action plans for natural disaster events** to ensure the safety of the users and staff can be better resourced.

*And in fact the benefits of all the above have been noted by the member councils' examples attached.*

## **Conclusions**

SCG member Councils are generally supportive of the co-location and joint public use of public buildings. Benefits, both social and environmental, appear to far outweigh dis-benefits. The examples provided suggest that local government is well-placed to initiate, design and project manage such facilities, being “on-the-spot” and having a track record for asset management. Essentially, a spirit of co-operation, good planning and good agreements ensure that identified problems can be avoided, reduced, or managed; and that unidentified problems can be satisfactorily dealt with as they arise.

**Attachment 1****Shoalhaven City Council**

- In October 2003 Council successfully completed an Integrated Emergency Management Centre, which effectively provided accommodation for the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Services and also an Emergency Operations Centre. In developing this project, Council recognised that it had three stakeholders to satisfy and they included the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Services, and Shoalhaven City Council (which has an obligation to provide the Emergency Operations Centre ). The total project cost \$3.2 million and was made up of a number of funding streams, which included a special rate levy on all ratepayers within the City of Shoalhaven, a 5 year staged contribution program from the Rural Fire Service and a one off grant from the State Emergency Services. Shoalhaven City Council developed the funding package and delivered the project to the satisfaction of all parties. The Centre has been operational during the December 2003 Section 44 Bushfire Event which was on the boundary of the City of Shoalhaven and Jervis Bay Territory.
- Quite some time ago Council made a financial contribution to the construction of a multi-purpose hall, which was constructed as part of the Vincentia High School Project. Council contributed over \$100,000 to the project and had an expectation that it would be used for both community and school purposes. Regrettably, this outcome has not been achieved and it is apparent that very little, if any, community use is now being achieved from that building (apart from the delivery of Education services). Council's contribution to the initial project included funding the building expansion so that it was capable of accommodating a full sized basketball court, as well as satisfying school needs. In the early days, it was used as part of a community based basketball program. However, the occasional requirement for the school to use the hall on the same night as the scheduled basketball competition and the increasing number of cancellations at the last minute from the hall not being available quickly led to the closure of the basketball circuit and therefore little use is now made by the general public.
- Council has participated in the construction of sports field amenities buildings at both the Nowra High School, circa 1970s, and at the Shoalhaven High School (2002) where there has been a joint community use of sporting fields by both the School community and by the general public. To date, this sharing arrangement has proved to be most satisfactory, with Council accepting full maintenance of the Nowra High School fields and an annual maintenance contribution to the Shoalhaven High School. The Shoalhaven High School project includes a high quality grassed athletic field, jointly funded by the School, Council and the Nowra Athletics Club.



## **Wingecarribee Shire Council**

- The most significant example of Co-location in Wingecarribee Shire is the Bowral Library/ Area Health Centre Joint Venture. This is a \$5.2 million Joint Venture between Wingecarribee Shire Council and South Western Sydney Area Health Services. In this Joint Venture, Council owns the land and buildings but has a long term lease agreement at a peppercorn rental with the Health Services. Whilst there are separate buildings for both the library and Area Health, the meeting room, carparking, and all building support infrastructure are shared. A high standard facility for the community has been provided that would not have been possible if each party were to undertake the project separately. There was excellent co-operation between State and Local government



- Other examples in the Wingecarribee

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Joint Use</b>	<b>Nature of Arrangement</b>
Bowral Library/ Area Health Centre, Bendooley Street, Bowral	Library (Council) and South Western Sydney Area Health (State Government)	Joint Venture – Value of project \$5.2 million
Stafford Cottage, Bendooley Street, Bowral	Highlands Community Services	Council Managed
East Bowral Community Centre, Boardman Rd, East Bowral	Family Day Care	Council Managed
Bowral Memorial Hall, Bendooley Street, Bowral	YWCA and Southern Highlands Performing Arts	Lease Arrangement
Moss Vale Community Centre, Queen Street, Moss Vale	Moss Vale Senior Citizens and Wingecarribee Food Service	Lease Arrangement
Mittagong Community Centre, Queen Street, Mittagong	Mittagong Senior Citizens and Wingecarribee Food Service	Lease Arrangement
Bowral Senior Citizens	Bowral Senior Citizens and Tulip Time Office	Lease Arrangement
Mittagong Memorial Hall, Bowral Rd Mittagong	Mittagong Playhouse, Local Family History, Adult Education	Lease Arrangement
Robertson Community Centre, Caalong Street Robertson	Community Centre and Pre-School	Lease Arrangement

### **Bega Valley Shire Council**

- There are no current joint facilities however the Eden Gateway Centre was funded by the State Government as a State Gateway and some of the services offered there by Council operate within a broader environment eg State Tourism focus.

### **Eurobodalla Shire Council**

- **BATEMANS BAY LIBRARY & EDUCATION ACCESS CENTRE**



- Partners – Eurobodalla Shire Council (Reserve Trust Manager), University of Wollongong, NSW TAFE Illawarra Institute
- Built 1999 Cost \$1.8 Million Funding ESC 50%, UOW 25%, TAFE 25% based on percentage of floor space for each partner.
- Design accommodates common foyer, kitchen/toilet facilities, shared disabled facilities and separate areas for each partner. In addition some areas can be used by other partners such as audio visual rooms, meeting room and computer lab. This provides higher utilisation rates for rooms and less duplication of amenities than a stand alone facility.

- Management Committee represented by three parties set up to manage with all contributing 1/3 costs of building maintenance costs.
- Leases and Operational Agreements being finalised.
- Collaborative approach, all decisions re building management must have unanimous support. Requires team approach to be successful
- Centre Manager funded by UOW TAFE. Primarily undertakes work on their behalf and site maintenance coordination.
- ESC pay all maintenance costs and invoices other parties twice yearly
- New shelter funded by UOW 2004– cost \$15,000
- Carpet replacement funded by all parties and builder 2002 - \$80,000

### **Future Development**

#### **New common area for students**

Possible UOW additions to accommodate campus expansion

Stronger street visual profile for UOW and TAFE with better and bigger signage

### **Community / Partner Benefits**

Sharing of resources (library and computer lab/audio visual).

Students utilise library services for reference and reader education within one facility.

Centre which has operations during both business and after hours (TAFE/UOW run courses at night; building accessible by UOW students 24 hours per day)

Reduced running costs for security patrol and monitoring as one building more economical than three.

Patrons from each area (library users/students) are brought into contact with the services/resources of each partner. Facility encourages cross usage.

### **Environmental Benefit**

Less duplication of services (eg toilets/kitchen) therefore less building structure.

Common areas shared (internal and external spaces).

Garbage facilities more economic as combined bin one central pickup rather than three individual. Bin numbers can be trimmed to minimum based on three users

## Summary

To date the project has been successful with a positive approach by all partners. The number of users and students is growing. Combined like services within one Centre has proven to be successful and rewarding for the community.

### ▪ **NAROOMA LIBRARY & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE**



- Partners Eurobodalla Shire Council (Reserve Trust Manager), Southern Area Health Service
- Cost approx. \$2 million. This included a \$100,000 Library Development grant, a \$68,000 Home and Community Care grant.
- Lease and operational agreement being finalised
- Shared maintenance costs for external areas (lawns, carpark, lighting building)
- Shared costs for common areas managed by ESC

- Respective internal areas costs covered individually

#### *Site Coordination*

Each partner manages own area. ESC manages the Library and HACC rooms and common areas. SAHS manage their office areas.

#### **Future Developments**

Proposed Youth Café addition 2004 Cost \$265,000 by ESC

Additional storage facilities for SAHS

#### **Community/ Partnership benefits**

**Design of facility, with excellent disability parking and accessibility is beneficial to both client groups.**

Meeting rooms beneficial to all community and well utilised.

Opportunities for shared information and promotion. Eg. Health promotion programs, library resources and displays

Cost savings inherent in shared amenities, gardens and parking

Opportunity to focus a number of services into one area, creating a community precinct

#### *Environmental benefits*

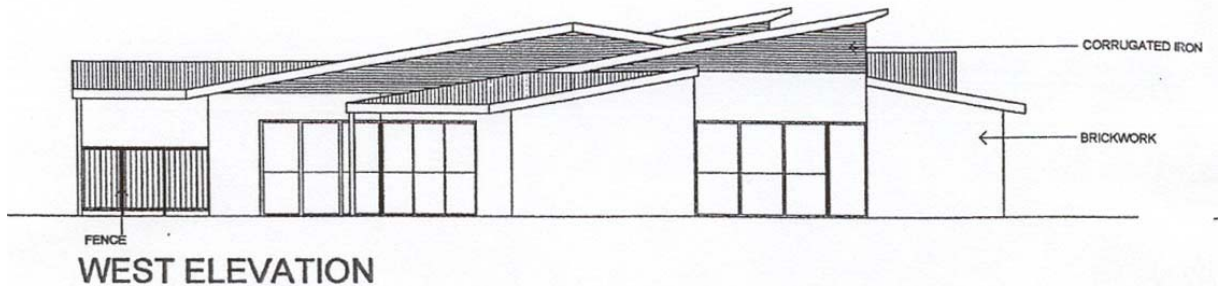
**Use of environmentally conscious design, with opening windows, drought conscious garden design, water reuse incorporated into the Youth café project.**

Similar philosophy in building management will be adopted based on Batemans Bay model.

#### *Summary*

A different partner to Batemans Bay with different needs and services requiring specific site attention. Centre is primarily business hour operated.

## ▪ BATEMANS BAY FAMILY AND CHILDREN CENTRE



- Project is for the construction of a community based multiuse facility catering for the following user groups:
- Sdn Children Services(Batemans Bay Preschool)
- ESC Family Day Care
- Batemans Bay Playgroup
- Toylibrary
- General community use
- Family support services
- Special Needs Playgroup
- Training services for those involved in childrens services industry

Significant role of the Centre will be provision of educational facilities for preschool age children for Batemans Bay.

- All groups are non-profit organisations.
- Preschool area will be leased to organisation – head office based in Sydney
- Building will be situated on Council controlled community public land at Melaleuca Cres, Catalina.
- Council has established a Council Management Committee (under Section 377 of the Local Government Act 1993) to oversee the design and construction phase of the project. The committee has also the role to seek funding for the project. Ultimately it will manage the facility when operational.
- Size of building will be 450 sqm
- Project cost estimate: \$800,000

- Funding secured to date:
 

Dept of Transport and Regional Services (Regional Solutions Programme)	\$285,150
Dept of Community Services	\$200,000
ESC site preparation	\$ 56,000
ESC funding	\$108,000
Batemans Bay Preschool (Sdn Children Services)	\$95,000
ESC Family Day Care	\$10,000
ESC loan	\$50,000
TOTAL	\$904,000

### **Future Developments**

#### **Future training room – cost \$250000**

No short term requirement.

#### **Community/ Partnership benefits**

Strong partnership between Council and preschool to seek funding for project over the last four years.

Building currently in early construction phase and will be ready for occupation in February 2005.

Funding from DOCS and Regional Solutions is testament to fundamental principal of the Centre to provide a range of community based children services within the one facility.

Shared day to day Centre Management options available.

#### *Environmental benefits*

The Multiuse Children and Family Centre will have a number of shared amenities, external play areas, carparking, etc which if separated into stand alone facilities impact on the environment both in terms of physical building envelop and the duplication of services required to run individual centres.

**Real savings will be made in garbage services, electricity, phone, heating and cooling costs both capital and maintenance.**

**Site issues are important to note on this property. Although flat and close to residential and high school precinct the site is affected both by bushfire and flooding constraints. This required extensive structural works such as site filling, clearing for asset protection zones, fire protection measures to the building such fire safe glazing, wall and roof construction measures, and other fire protection measures.**

**In addition future management measures are required to develop and implement action plans for either natural events to ensure the safety of the users and staff of the Centre.**



**The building will incorporate stormwater reuse for a fire fighting back up tank, toilet cistern water, laundry tub and outdoor irrigation and taps. This will reduce the demand on town water mains.**

*Summary*

**As with the other facilities the benefits to the community will be many with reduced capital costs and ongoing running expenditure. As far as provision of services the users of the Centre will gain exposure to other services under the one roof which will not have been possible if accommodated in stand alone facilities.**

**Wollongong City Council**

**Cringila Community Centre, Cringila**

This centre is a Council owned facility occupied and used by community organisations and Community Health. The arrangement works well. Community Health under the auspices of the Illawarra Area Health Service (IAHS) has an office in the Centre and pays no rent.

**Corrimal Community Centre, Corrimal**

This centre also has a variety of community organisations using it for a wide variety of purposes. IAHS uses one office area to deliver its Early Childhood Program and pays rent. The following programs/services are provided at Corrimal Community Centre funded under the State Government's auspices –

- Homecare Illawarra
- IAHS Immunisation
- Illawarra Children's Services
- Aunties and Uncles
- Middle Eastern Daycare
- Northern Illawarra Family Support, and
- WEA Free English Classes

In the planning stages for the construction of Corrimal Community Centre, Council was approached by IAHS for permanent space in the Centre but, after many meetings, IAHS decided they did not have the necessary funds to proceed with the proposal.