



Department for Victorian Communities

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

**Minister for Local Government
Candy Broad MLC
6 July 2006**



Department for Victorian Communities

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Communities

- Neighbourhood Houses
- Local Government Improvement Incentive Program
- Public Libraries

Strengthening Democracy

- Community Involvement in Local Government
- Local Government Partnerships

Strengthening Local Governments

- Building Effective Local Government

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Communities

Neighbourhood Houses

- Neighbourhood House Coordination Program
 - Responsibility for this program from 1 July 2005
 - \$10.1 million paid to 338 Neighbourhood Houses and 16 Neighbourhood House Networks in 2005-06
- Modernising Neighbourhood Houses Program
 - Grants of \$12.4 million committed in 2005-06
 - Access to a range of grant opportunities

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Communities

Local Government Improvement Incentive Program

- 9% of competition payments provided to councils in 2005-06

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Communities

Public Libraries

- Libraries
 - record recurrent funding of \$27.8m in 2005-06
 - LibraryLink Victoria
 - SWIFT library management system
- Living Libraries Program
 - 14 new projects completed in 2005-06
- Book Bonanza Program
 - \$1.75 million in 2005-06

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Democracy

Community Involvement in Local Government

- 2005 Local Government Elections
 - 54 Councils held elections in November 2005.
 - 427 vacancies were contested of which 30.2% were filled by women. This compares favourably to the March 2003 elections for the same councils where 27% of vacancies were filled by women.
 - A total of 200 new Councillors were elected.
 - Elections marked an important milestone in the transition to all 79 councils holding elections on the same day.
 - That will occur in November 2008 when all councils will be elected for four year terms.

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Democracy

Community Involvement in Local Government

- Electoral reviews
 - Prior to the November 2005 elections electoral reviews were completed for 39 councils.
 - The remaining 39 electoral reviews of councils will commence in 2007 and be completed for the 2008 council elections.
 - The reviews are conducted independently by an electoral commission and demonstrate the Government's commitment to treat Local Government as a true tier of Government.

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Democracy

Local Government Partnerships

- Inter-governmental Agreement
 - signed 12 April 2006, at a special meeting of State, Territory and Federal Local Government Ministers together with the Australian Local Government Association.

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Local Governments

Building Effective Local Government

- Local Area Planning Support Grants
 - Grants of \$3.1 million launched in January 2006 ensure communities have a greater input into their own future development
- Community Strengthening Self-assessment tool

Achievements for 2005-06

Strengthening Local Governments

Building Effective Local Government

- **Infrastructure Management Initiatives**
 - a web based data collection and reporting tool to enable councils to measure their own asset management performance.
 - asset management training forums.
 - guidelines for measuring and reporting the condition of road assets.
 - infrastructure financing workshops were held at regional locations to show-case innovative approaches that councils are using to better manage and finance their infrastructure, particularly road assets.

Priorities for 2006-07

Strengthening Communities

- Neighbourhood Houses Grants
- Public Libraries Grants

Strengthening Democracy

- Joint State and Local Government Planning
- Resource Guide to Local Government

Strengthening Local Governments

- Building Effective Local Government

Priorities 2006-07

Strengthening Communities

Neighbourhood Houses Grants

- Increase of 62% in recurrent funding to \$18.1 million in 2006-07
- Capital projects

Priorities 2006-07

Strengthening Communities

Public Libraries Grants

- Recurrent funding
 - record funding of \$33.19 million will be provided to public libraries in 2006-07, including \$28.94 million in recurrent funding.
- Living Libraries
 - \$2.5 million in funding for projects under the Living Libraries Program.
 - Approximately 10 Living Libraries projects will be completed in 2006-07.

Priorities 2006-07

Strengthening Communities

Public Libraries Grants

- Book Bonanza
 - \$1.75 million under the Book Bonanza Program to help libraries purchase books and other materials.
- Further funding for LibraryLink Victoria
 - Further funding will be provided to VicLink (the peak body for public libraries) to support the implementation of LibraryLink Victoria, taking the Government's total investment in this major new initiative to around \$500,000.

Priorities 2006-07

Strengthening Democracy

Joint State and Local Government Planning

Resource Guide to Local Government

- The guide will cover a range of topics including
 - Governance and Elections
 - Legislation
 - Rates and Valuations
 - Services

Priorities 2006-07

Strengthening Local Governments

Building Effective Local Government

- Infrastructure Management
 - ongoing collection and analysis of asset management data to assist councils to measure their own asset management performance
 - training support for councils on key asset management issues where skills deficiencies have been identified
 - strategies to assist councils with infrastructure financing alternatives will continue to be investigated and promoted.
- Best Value Principles, a continuing driver for improvement