

How Much? \$58.3 million!

A fundamental tenet of investment counselling is to mitigate the risk of loss by having a diversified portfolio, or as we simple, ignorant ratepayers call it, **not putting all your eggs in one basket.**

If you were a responsible guardian for \$58.3 million would you put it in one basket? **Is that what our Council did?** Will the losses continue to mount? How much is left? How do we protect it?


Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of **Wingegate** was the investment decision process. **Did WSC Councillors, and Staff, satisfy their Duty of Care responsibilities?** Continued next column.

April 16 EGM

The Council Majority pushed through their agenda to reclassify public lands for sale, and the Woolf Associates Letter was tabled – see overleaf.

Poll-itics

A particularly telling moment was the vote on Clr. Whipper's amendment "**THAT Council takes no action on the reclassification of any land except for Lot 20, DP862590 Oxley Drive pending the results of the poll** at the next Local Government Election." Clr N Campbell-Jones, Clr P A George, Clr M L King, Clr M J Murray, Clr P B Tuddenham, Clr P Yeo, Clr G. Lewis voted against the amendment, yet only moments beforehand Clr. Murray insisted Clr. Whipper publicly declare his support for the Poll's outcome. Continued next column.

How Much? \$58.3 million! **Highlands Eye** 

What happened to our money?
Who managed the decision
process?


- Were some members of the finance committee **unaware the investments had been made until six months after the event?**
- Why did the Chairman of the finance committee not know the investment term? **Is it 30 years?**
- Did the council's legal advisors thoroughly vet the investment contract? **If not, why not?**
- Why were accepted business practices ignored and **minutes, or notes, of critically important meetings not circulated** to each councillor?
- **To what extent did WSC GM advise councillors:** were the investment's nature and term clearly enunciated?
- Reported losses were approx. \$11,000,000. What are present, and projected, **losses and legal costs?**
- **Where any commissions paid** by the investment house, and to whom?
- It was said the **relevant documents were to be released in early March.** Why the delay?

Poll-itics

Seem contradictory to you? Us too. How can you insist someone else will honour the outcome of a Poll and in the next breath refuse to honour it yourself, by pre-empting its outcome and proceeding with a Leisure Centre funding model which is the subject of that Poll?

Does the council intend to sell land before the Poll?

We urge those responsible for the Poll Question wording to avoid the politics of confusion, and ensure people are fully informed of pertinent facts, and given **a clearly defined and easily understood choice.**

Woolf Associates Letter **Highlands Eye** 

On April 16th 2008, WSC was presented with a Letter from the solicitors Woolf Associates, which quoted several legal precedents, and suggested that WSC plans to reclassify and sell land to fund infrastructure may be illegal.

The Letter cited Council's March 2008 document **Frequently Asked Questions** that states explicitly the community has a say in the sale of community land.

"Council poses the question "Does the community have any say about selling this land?" Answer "Yes". Council is representing in this document that it will take notice of community consultation i.e. not merely pay lip service to the consultation. **On the evidence available, the community is overwhelmingly against Council's proposal to reclassify the community land in connection with funding purposes of the leisure centre.** For Council to proceed in the face of such result renders the consultation process meaningless such that there would have been no real consultation. **There can be no clearer result of consultation than the written submissions and public hearings."**

The Letter quotes several legal precedents and in reference to the September Poll Woolf states: "In addition, **a resolution in terms of the Notice of Motion would render meaningless the Council resolution referred to in the FAQ documents** for the Council to hold a poll at the next election to determine public support for the construction and funding model for a leisure centre. The LEP process in relation to the reclassification of land has been expressly stated by Council to be for the purpose of funding the leisure centre. Moreover Council advises in the FAQ document that the tender process for the construction of the leisure centre will continue with construction commencing July 2008.

On the basis of the above, for Council to give any real meaning to the poll and for Council's process to be rational the LEP process in relation to reclassification of land must await the poll. Further, **it is irrational to proceed with the tender process** for construction of the leisure centre as this renders meaningless the public poll."

Read the Woolf Letter at www.SaveTheHighlands.net

P. R. Brewster Letter



Excerpts from P. R. Brewster letter in response to a letter published in the Highlands News concerning the Leisure Centre Parsons Brinckerhoff report.

“The first thing I think we need to understand, (Melanie Mc Grane, Southern Highland News, 18/4/08) is that if you are a Council wanting to sell many millions of dollars of marvellous appreciating community land, to buy a loss making “leisure” business, (\$25 million may be near the current cost, if Clr Gair’s figure, 16/4/08, is close) no one will begin to take you seriously, until you get an expert opinion to say it may be OK. You will always be able to get one.

If you do read what the Parsons Brinckerhoff Report (September 2004), to which you refer says, you will see that even in 2004, when most people had almost zero idea about how much a “leisure centre” (a ridiculous name some say) might finish up costing, only 10 people (Table 4.1) in the whole shire, so it would appear, responded to the swimming pools/ leisure centre part of the survey conducted. Very few seem to have responded to many other aspects also.

That doesn’t sound to me like community clamour for a “leisure centre”. Does it to you?

... we all know about problems of misinformation you mention. I’m just concerned to see that the report you seem to rely on, isn’t added to that list. If you think the Parsons Brinckerhoff 2004 report gives credible support for the Campbell-Jones line in the present council, I think anyone who reads it, is likely to think the exact opposite.”

Cam Ford Letter



“ Dear Sir;
In his letter (April 16th) Councillor Campbell-Jones simply repeats comments he has made on several previous occasions, without seeming to realise their basic lack of logic. He also belittles the recent Community Consultation procedure which, by the way, Council itself organised and endorsed. The meetings were open for all residents to have their say, including any who might actually support the sale of our green spaces. According to process, every one of the 34 properties then discussed received a resounding average 94% “NO” vote – in some cases 100% - of the 2,092 votes cast by those attending. Where was Councillor Campbell-Jones’ so-called “silent majority”? Council has handled the whole matter in such a clumsy and misleading way that the community now distrusts anything it says. The only way to restore that trust is for Council to back off and observe the old convention that any government in its final months of office should not rush to sell off vast quantities of community assets or commit itself to any big ticket expenditure that might affect the ability of the following administration to govern effectively. Council should also commit itself to abide by the poll to be held in September, in which the entire community can have its say. Sincerely, Cam Ford. “

Do You Want an Inland Port?

The WSC Economic Management Officer, Carl Pemberton, was recently quoted as saying an Inland Port could be developed at zero cost to council. At what cost to our roads, safety, and life quality, and who benefits?

At the March 5th WSC meeting Clr. N Campbell-Jones stated. “ Cars don’t cause a great deal of damage to roads, large trucks do.” We applaud his public acknowledgment that large trucks will have a severe impact on our roads.

For details on the Pemberton interview, and the Intermodal & Logistics Hub Brochure please visit www.SaveTheHighlands.net

Speak Up



To quote Martin Luther King,
“ **Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.**”

We, the people of Wingecarribee, must raise our voices to protect the integrity of our Shire’s government, character and heritage.

Exercise your Democratic Rights, contact councillors and the media and ask:

- **Have any discussions already taken place with potential buyers** of any public lands?
 - Will they ensure the Poll clearly asks **if the public agree to the sale of public lands for any purpose**, including possible funding of a Leisure Centre.
 - Will they **guarantee no reclassified land will be sold** prior to the Poll?
 - **Ask the Mayor why** he supports policies, which will negatively impact our Shire’s neighbourhoods, and probably damage his reputation.
- Clr G Lewis, 68 Park Road, Bowral 2576:
Ph: 4861: Mob: 0409 127 010: Fax: 4861 2758

Save The Highlands

Save The Highlands is a non-partisan community group striving to **Protect the Integrity, Character and Heritage of the Southern Highlands.**

To achieve these aims we must each be vigilant in our efforts to **protect our Green Space, Towns, Villages and Small Businesses** from the destructive consequences of myopic development.

Save The Highlands needs community support to continue its efforts. To become a member please visit www.SaveTheHighlands.net