



5 July 2024

Queenscliffe Community Association
David Connolley
President
Via email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Connolley

PUBLIC QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

I am writing in response to the QCA's public question taken on notice at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Wednesday 26 June 2024.

The public question reads as follows:

The Officer response in the appendix to the Draft Budget submissions to concerns with regard to the high staff and consultation costs and how Council quantifies productivity savings states-

The Council operates on tight budgets and limited resources, making it impractical to manage all aspects of its operations internally in cost effective manner. Therefore, the Council uses consultants as a cost-effective means to access expertise that it lacks in-house but needs on an ad-hoc basis.

In a tight operational budget setting, the QCA would be interested in a further explanation of the actual cost efficiencies - as distinct from cost effectiveness-measures and assessments that Council uses to ensure it is getting better value for money from these consultancies given that many tenders are commercial in confidence and appear to constitute high levels of expenditure.

In response to the question, I provide the following advice:

As previously mentioned, the Council uses consultants as a cost-effective way to access expertise that is not available in-house but needed on an ad-hoc basis. By engaging consultants instead of hiring permanent staff, the Council avoids ongoing financial commitments and gains the flexibility to scale operations according to demand.

The Council always follows a robust process when selecting consultants. A key consideration is whether they have proven experience in providing similar services, particularly within the context of local government.

Typically, Council hires consultants for specific projects with a clearly defined scope of work. The performance of these consultants can be monitored and measured against the agreed scope to ensure the Council receives value for money. Following an internal restructure, Council now has a dedicated contract and procurement expert in-house. This role will oversee significant contracts to further ensure the Council achieves value for money when engaging consultants and contractors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M Gill', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Martin Gill
Chief Executive Officer