



PUBLIC PLAYGROUND FACILITIES CONSOLIDATION STRATEGY



PREPARED BY A COUNCIL APPOINTED WORKING GROUP

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL AUGUST 2001

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PUBLIC PLAYGROUND FACILITIES CONSOLIDATION STRATEGY

1 INTRODUCTION

This Strategy has evolved from the work undertaken by the Council appointed Working Group since its formation on 17 October 2000, identifies outcomes, and presents a detailed implementation plan and cost estimates for Council's action.

2 BACKGROUND

The Rural City of Wangaratta Recreation Needs Study recommends that consideration be given to the consolidation of playground facilities located within public parklands throughout the municipality, taking into consideration the change in demographics and the need to ensure that safety and future planning requirements are considered.

Council's Corporate Plan 1999-2002 has a 3-year objective of implementing approved recommendations of the Recreation Needs Study with a Year 1 measure of presenting to Council a Public Playground Facilities Consolidation Strategy.

3 OBJECTIVE

The Working Group's objective was to develop a Public Playground Facilities Consolidation Strategy that would rationalise the existing facilities and locations and would accommodate children's developmental needs and interests, with due consideration to the following:

- equipment design
- UV radiation protection
- safety, security and supervision
- all user access
- general amenity

4 CURRENT SITUATION

The Rural City of Wangaratta owns and/or maintains a significant number of municipal parklands and recreational facilities throughout the municipality.

There are thirty one playgrounds of varying sizes, twenty five urban and six rural locations. The open space areas (no current playground equipment) number fifteen. There are also six rural townships with dedicated open space areas but no playground equipment.

During the financial year ending June 2000, as an outcome of the regular playground maintenance audit, a number of items of playground equipment were removed by Council from various parks because of safety reasons. Removal of additional items is also occurring in the current financial year for the same reasons. Limited funds are currently available to purchase and install new or replacement items of equipment.

Updated maps are currently under preparation to show public open space for each of the municipal wards. These maps identify whether the various parcels of open space have or do not have playground equipment. In addition, age and condition of each item

of equipment, particularly in regard to the findings of the recent playground inventory and maintenance audits, were pertinent and enabled an assessment on whether cost effective maintenance or replacement of each item of playground equipment is the preferred action.

5 WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

5.1 Structure

At the meeting of Council on 17 October 2000, four (4) community positions on the Public Playground Facilities Consolidation Strategy Working Group were offered to Lisa McGenninsken (nee Ablazej), Ronald Webb, Robyn Frezzini and Michael O'Sullivan. All nominees accepted the positions. Council nominated Councillors Joyce and Chambers to be Council representatives, and further nominated Council's Manager – Environmental Services, Brian Murdoch and Manager – Parks and Gardens, Ken Parker.

At the first meeting of the Working Group on 8 November 2000 the following positions were elected:

- Ronald Webb – Chairperson
- Brian Murdoch – Administration Services

5.2 Program Development

The Working Group resolved to meet regularly with a view to presenting recommendations ahead of Council's budget deliberations in May 2001.

The Working Group further resolved:

- To meet on Mondays at 5.00pm on a weekly or fortnightly basis as required.
- To inspect all playground facilities and open space sites before 18 December 2000.
- To present a Report and Recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer on Monday 26 March 2001.
- To have a Report and Recommendations available for the 10 April 2001 Councillors' Forum agenda.

5.3 Meetings

The Working Group conducted weekly meetings with a majority of members attending each meeting of 1.5 to 2.0 hours duration.

Three of the meetings on 13, 20 and 27 November 2000 were field inspections at playground facilities and open space areas owned by Council, both within the urban area and the outlying Rural townships.

5.4 Documentation

The following documents, drawings and maps were considered by the Working Group in reaching their recommendations:

- Council's Corporate Plan
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985
- Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994
- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 – Playgrounds and playground equipment – Part 1: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation
- AS 1924.2 – 1981 – Playground equipment for parks, schools and domestic use – Part 2: Design and construction – Safety aspects
- AS/NZS 4422:1996 – Playground surfacing – Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS 1924.1 – 1981 – Playground equipment for parks, school and domestic use – Part 1: General requirements
- AS/NZS 4422:1996 – Playground surfacing – Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS 2555-1982 – Supervised adventure playgrounds – Guide to establishment and administration
- Playground Maintenance Audit report on existing Playground Facilities by Ray Hutchison and Associates. June 2000 (included in Section 12.1 as Appendix 1)
- Rural City of Wangaratta drawings showing Public Park and Recreation areas therein.
- HP Barr Reserve Master Plan
- Omnitech Playground brochures and Adventure Playground drawings.
- Miracle Recreation Equipment brochures.
- Playspace Playgrounds, brochures and Adventure Playground Drawings.
- MacroPlan COX concept plans for the Faithfull Street and environs development.

5.5 Playground and Open Space Inspections

Field Inspections

All 46 sites were inspected over three evenings by the Working Group, travelling in a small bus to provide time for discussion between each location. A land description paper was developed by the Working Group to record individual comment on each site, the equipment usefulness and any future considerations. Mr Vic Paccagnan, Parks and Gardens employee joined the Working Group for all of these visits to provide comment on both facility and equipment maintenance, and perceived usefulness by the community.

Audit Report

The Ray Hutchison and Associates Playground Maintenance Audit lists thirty-one (31) playground facility locations and provides information on each item of equipment, the year of manufacture, repairs required and priority listing for repairs. This audit and its relevant data was a primary consideration during the Working Groups on site inspection of each of the sites.

5.6 Consultation and Communication

- Play Space Equipment – Angelo Kengiountzis
- Omnitech Equipment – Dave Fishstadt
- Miracle Recreation Equipment – Jamie Strathairn

- RCOW Planning Manager – Frank Darke
- North East Catchment Management Authority – Roel vont Steen
- Community citizens during site visits – Not recorded.
- Presentation of the report to Council’s CEO Graeme Emonson and General Manager Infrastructure and Environment – Malcolm Styles on Monday 26 March 2001.

The following written communications were received:

- From Jim Lewis with regard to Kensington Park and Walnut Grove estates open space areas – 3 December 2000
- Response to Jim Lewis from Chief Executive Officer – 15 December 2000
- From Mrs Courtney Kneebone regarding “shadesails” in playgrounds – 20 February 2001
- Response to Mrs Kneebone from Chief Executive Officer – March 2001

The following provided ongoing coverage in the media:

- 19 June 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 14 July 2000 – Public Notices – Rural Cityconnection
- 14 July 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 17 July 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 13 October 2000 – Chronicle Letters
- 18 October 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 13 November 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 15 November 2000 – Border Mail – Newspaper Article
- 17 November 2000 – News In Brief – Rural Cityconnection
- 01 December 2000 – News In Brief – Rural Cityconnection
- 4 December 2000 – Newspaper Article
- 31 January 2001 – Newspaper Article

6 WORKING GROUP OUTCOMES

6.1 Categories of Playground Facilities

The Working Group categorised all existing playground facilities based on the playgrounds current equipment, current apparent use, geographic location and future potential use. At the very outset, it was decided that Rural City of Wangaratta should have one “Adventure Type” theme playground centrally located within the City area and a number of “significant” theme playgrounds geographically located to best suit residential needs. A theme could be a specific style or reflect the local surroundings.

The categories are as follows and have been applied to all playground facilities (see Section 11):

- Regional Playground
- Major Playground
- Neighbourhood Playground
- Local Playground

The categories were further defined to determine the playground equipment, park surrounds and park facilities.

6.2 Playground Equipment and Public Facilities

General considerations for all categories of playground areas.

- Playground equipment and softfall to comply with the Australian Standards as set out in Section 5.4.
- Fencing with security gates where a safety assessment requires such
- Shade Cloth or Sails to protect open sites.
- Drinking fountain
- All equipment to be confined to one location in each area.
- At least two (2) bench seats with back support and facing the playground area.

Minimum standards for each category.

Regional Park (1)

- To be located either at Apex Park or at Batchelors Green.
- “Adventure” theme custom designed playground equipment to \$100k.
- Rubberised softfall in playground area.
- Fencing and gates for safety as assessed.
- ‘All Access’ built into the design.
- Shade sails or natural shade to protect the playground area.
- Four barbecue facilities located within the park area (2 existing).
- Four table/seat/shelter – combinations throughout the park area.
- Rest facility to be located within the general area (existing facility).
- Four bench seats with back support adjacent to and facing the playground.
- Shade sails to protect the playground area.

Major Parks (2)

- To be located at Dalton Reserve and Mitchell Avenue.
- Theme playground custom designed equipment to \$50K per location.
- Rubberised softfall throughout the playground area.
- Fencing and gates for safety as assessed.
- ‘All access’ built into the design.
- Shade sails or natural shade to protect the playground area.
- Two bench seats with back support adjacent to and facing the playground area.

Optional Considerations

- Two barbecue facilities located within the park area.
- Two table/seat/shelter combinations throughout the park area.
- Standard rest facility to be located within the general area.

Neighbourhood Parks (9)

- To be located at Merriwa Park, Dodsworth Reserve, H.P. Barr Reserve, King George V Gardens, Kiwanis Park, Gunhouse Park Eldorado, John McAleese Park Milawa, Terry McDonald Memorial Park Oxley, and Glenrowan Lions Park.
- Playground equipment to \$20k per location.
- Rubberised softfall for fall zones.

- Softfall mulch throughout the remaining play area.
- Fencing and gates for safety as assessed.
- 'All access' to at least two pieces of equipment.
- Shade sails or natural shade to protect the playground area.
- Two bench seats with back support immediately adjacent to and facing the playground area.

Optional Considerations

- One barbecue facility located within the park area.
- One table/seat/shelter combination within the park area.

Local Parks (17)

- To be located at (Batchelors Green or Apex Park) South Wangaratta Reserve, Brien Park, Rangeview Park, Baroona Reserve, Jaycees Park, Evalyn Reserve, Ryan Reserve, Dundas Reserve, Burke Street, Albert Court, Targoora Park, Wenhams Lane, Murdoch Road Reserve, North Wangaratta Reserve, Lions Park Moyhu, Whorouly Reserve.
- Playground equipment to \$10k per location.
- Softfall mulch throughout play area.
- Fencing and gates for safety as assessed.
- Shade sails or natural shade to protect the playground area.
- One bench seat with back support immediately adjacent to and facing the playground area.

6.3 Public Open Space categories

The Working Group categorised all existing public open space areas within the residential development areas based on current zoning, any previous playground facility use, geographic location and future potential use.

The categories are as follows and have been applied to all 31 open space areas, some of which have playground equipment on part of a large area (see Section 11.5):

- Remove equipment – sell or lease whole of park area (RE1)
- Remove equipment – sell or lease part of park area (RE2)
- Remove equipment – retain whole of park area for recreation (RE3)
- Retain and maintain existing park area for recreation use (RU)
- Does not have existing equipment but to be considered as a Future Playground Facility (FPF)

Remove equipment – Sell or lease whole of park area (RE1) – Seven (7)

- Areas for consideration include Burns Reserve, Esmond Street, Smith Crescent, Hardisty Street, Pelican Court, Thomas Wedge Drive, Kendall Reserve.

Remove equipment – Sell or lease part of park area (RE2) – Five (5)

- Areas for consideration include Dodsworth Reserve, Baroona Reserve, Rangeview Park, Kiwanis Park, Burke Street Park.

Remove equipment – Retain whole of park area for recreation use (RE3) – One (1)

- Area for consideration is Wareena Park

Retain and maintain existing park area for recreation use (RU) – Nine (9)

- Areas for consideration include, Sunset Drive, Willow Drive, Riverview Crescent, Valdor's Avenue, Talgai Drive, Walnut Grove Reserve, Airworld Complex, Oxley Recreation Reserve, Oxley Hall Park.

Does not have existing equipment but to be considered as a Future Playground Facility (FPF) – Six (6)

- Rural Townships of Peechelba, Everton, Tarrawingee, Springhurst, Whitfield and Cheshunt.

6.4 Strategic Overview of all Playground Facilities and Open Space Areas

Having inspected all playground facilities, open space areas and categorised each facility/area as set out in Sections 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, the Working Group was able to provide a strategic overview with recommendations for each facility and area.

A Strategic Overview of Facilities was completed for each playground facility and open space area. Each overview sheet includes a land description, general overview, recommendations and any further considerations for Council information.

Strategic Overviews numbered 1 to 46 are included in Section 12.2 as Appendix 2.

7 PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

7.1 Consultation Process

Council considered the draft report of the Working Group at its meeting on 17 April 2001 and resolved:

1. To receive the report of the Working Group.
2. To place the report of the Working Group on public exhibition for a four week period with a public meeting to be convened in the third week of the exhibition period and that public submissions be invited.

The public notice informing of the public exhibition period and the public meeting was placed in the local newspaper on 20 April 2001. The community briefing session was conducted at the Municipal Offices on 23 May 2001. 35 members of the public representing a total of 23 households attended.

Five Rural City Councillors (two being representatives on the Working Group), five other working group members and two senior executive officers were also in attendance. A summary of the questions asked, answers provided and the discussion arising, is provided in Section 12.3 as Appendix 3.

Closing date for the public written submissions was 30 May 2001. By the close of business on that date 29 written submissions has been received. A summary of those submissions and copies of each submission are included in Section 12.4 as Appendix 4.

The Working Group has since met on four further occasions, 18 June 2001, 25 June 2001, 16 July 2001 and 6 August 2001 to consider all submissions and the discussions that took place at the public information session.

7.2 Outcomes

Outcomes from the public consultation phase that impacted on the Strategy Recommendations of the Working Group as set out in Section 9 are:

- the need for a Regional Playground in Wangaratta was most evident
- the sale of some of the land identified as surplus is unlikely to be realised.
- the number of playground locations for each of the four playground classifications may vary.
- the location of the Regional Playground as identified by the Working Group to be in Apex Park or Batchelors Green, may default to Batchelors Green in that Apex Park may not be suitable or available.

8 SUMMARY

The vision of each individual Working Group member provided new ideas for the strategic development of the playground facilities, which is evident from the recommendations and considerations of this report. The structure of the Working Group proved to be very successful in providing an excellent cross functional involvement.

Each of the 22 meetings was very well attended, with an average of five members at each meeting. The commitment of all members to meet on varying days for extended durations in order to meet the earlier set timeframes, was excellent throughout the ensuing nine months.

The Strategy outlines and then recommends on one preferred option and provides two further options for Council's consideration. A playground development "theme" and removal of equipment due to safety also form part of the recommendations (see Section 9).

Two of the options provide for the consolidations of several playgrounds and the possible sale of several parcels of land, leading to the development of one (1) regional playground, two (2) major playgrounds, nine (9) neighbourhood playgrounds, and seventeen (17) local playgrounds. In addition there are six rural townships which do not have existing playground equipment and could be considered for future playground facilities. The third option provides for a lesser number of playground locations.

Categories for playground facilities were developed by the Working Group (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2) to identify both the playground equipment and amenities to be considered for each playground area. This stratagem proved to be the basis of the Working Group findings as outlined in the Strategic Overviews.

Consolidation of playground facilities was achieved through a variety of strategies outlined in the Strategic Overview for each facility (see Section 6.4).

- Removal of all equipment at two locations due to a combination of safety, age and geographic location.
- Consolidation of scattered items of equipment to one central location in each area to facilitate user supervision, user safety/security and maintenance considerations.
- Identified areas of open space which are excess to playground facility needs as potential residential allotments.

- Identified potential new playground facility areas for future development based on public access and current developmental trends.

The Public Playground Facilities Consolidation Strategy provides integrated public playground facilities that meet strategic and demographic needs for future planning by the Rural City of Wangaratta.

The Strategy is considered to be well planned, and if implemented, will facilitate the replacement and future development of playground facilities throughout the municipality by the year 2010. The Strategy will provide a model and benchmark for each public playground development project. It will create a working partnership between the community and Council and promote the use of public space and the well being of all.

Implementation of the recommendations will also add value to other projects within the Rural City of Wangaratta by enhancing public space development.

9 STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Preferred Option

The Working Group recommends that Option One from the 8 year implementation plan be adopted and implemented (see Section 11.1). Option One achieves all of the Working Group's key priorities as set out in the Strategy summary (see Section 8).

Option One enables the regional playground facility to be developed in Year 2 which provides sufficient lead time for the possible sale of surplus land and for any grant application to be given due process. Option One also recognises that the sale of all land deemed surplus may not be realised.

9.2 Further options

The Working Group has identified two further options for consideration.

- Option Two from the 10 year implementation plan (see Section 11.2).
- Option Three from the 8 year implementation plan (see Section 11.3).

Option Two extends the implementation plan by two years. This would reduce the yearly Council contribution, however a playground equipment replacement program would need to be commenced before the 10 year implementation plan was completed.

Option Three reverts to an eight year implementation plan but assumes no land sales are achievable. As a consequence no Major Parks are envisaged, the number of Neighbourhood Parks remains at nine but the number of Local Parks reduces from seventeen to ten. Six new rural township locations are retained as for Option One.

9.3 "Theme" Development

The Working Group recommends that the "theme" for the regional and for the two major playground facilities be developed in close consultation with playground users. Australian Standard AS/NZS 4486.1-1997 Playgrounds and Playground Equipment supports this direction.

9.4 Removal of Equipment due to Safety

The Working Group strongly endorses that any item of equipment identified in the regular Ray Hutchison Playground Maintenance Audit process as being unsafe should be removed in a timely manner.

9.5 Consultation Phase

The Strategic Overview Sheets (included in Section 12.2 as Appendix 2) have identified key groups who should be included in any further consultation process.

10 SIGNATURES OF WORKING GROUP

All eight Working Group members are signatories to the Public Playground Facilities Consolidation Strategy.

.....
Ronald Webb
Community representative

.....
Lisa McGenninsken
Community representative

.....
Robyn Frezzini
Community representative

.....
Michael O'Sullivan
Community representative

.....
Cr Don Joyce

.....
Cr Kerrin Chambers

.....
Ken Parker
Manager – Parks & Gardens

.....
Brian Murdoch
Manager – Environmental Services

Date: 6 August 2001

11 SUPPORTING TABLES

11.1 Option One - 8 Year Implementation Plan

EXPENDITURE			YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8
			\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
CLASSIFICATION	No	01/07/01 – 30/6/02	01/07/02 – 30/06/03	01/07/03 – 30/06/04	01/07/04 – 30/06/05	01/07/05 – 30/06/06	01/07/06 – 30/06/07	01/07/07 – 30/06/08	01/07/08 – 30/06/09	
Regional	1		287k							
Major	2							129k	129k	
Neighbourhood	9	53k		106k	106k	106k	106k			
Local	17	64k	32k	160k	96k	96k	96k			
Local – new rural locations	6		20k	10k	10k	10k	10k			
TOTAL	35	117k	339k	276k	212k	212k	212k	129k	129k	
INCOME			YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8
Source	Amount		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
RCOW	800k		50k	125k	125k	100k	100k	100k	100k	100k
Sale of land	425k			100k	40k	100k	100k	85k		
Grants	250k		50k	100k	100k					
In kind	151k		17k	14k	11k	12k	12k	27k	29k	29k
TOTAL	1,626k		117k	339k	276k	212k	212k	212k	129k	129k

11.2 Option Two - 10 Year Implementation Plan

EXPENDITURE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
CLASSIFICATION	No	01/07/01 – 30/6/02	01/07/02 –30/06/03	01/07/03– 30/06/04	01/07/04– 30/0/6/05	01/07/05– 30/06/06	01/07/06– 30/06/07	01/07/07– 30/06/08	01/07/08– 30/06/09	01/07/09– 30/06/10	01/07/10– 30/06/11
Regional	1		287k								
Major	2									129k	129k
Neighbourhood	9	53k		106k	106k	53k	53k	53k	53k		
Local	17	64k		128k	128k	64k	64k	64k	32k		
Local – new rural locations	6		10k	10k	10k	10k	10k	10k	10k		
TOTAL	35	117k	297k	244k	244k	127k	127k	127k	95k	129k	129k
INCOME		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10
Source	Amount	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
RCOW	800k	50k	95k	80k	95k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k	80k
Sale of land	425k		100k	80k	125k	40k	40k	40k			
Grants	210k	50k	80k	80k							
In kind	201k	17k	22k	4k	24k	7k	7k	7k	15k	49k	49k
TOTAL	1,636k	117k	297k	244k	244k	127k	127k	127k	95k	129k	129k

11.3 Option Three - 8 Year Implementation Plan

EXPENDITURE		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
CLASSIFICATION	No	01/07/01 – 30/6/02	01/07/02 – 30/06/03	01/07/03– 30/06/04	01/07/04– 30/0/6/05	01/07/05– 30/06/06	01/07/06– 30/06/07	01/07/07– 30/06/08	01/07/08– 30/06/09
Regional	1		287k						
Major	0								
Neighbourhood	9	53k		106k	106k	53k	53k	53k	53k
Local	10	64k		32k	32k	32k	32k	32kk	64k
Local – new rural locations	6			10k	10k	10k	10k	10k	10k
TOTAL		117k	287k	148k	148k	95k	95k	127k	127k
INCOME		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	YEAR 8
Source	Amount	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
RCOW	850k	50k	150k	125k	125k	100k	100k	100k	100k
Sale of land	-								
Grants	175k	50k	125k						
In kind	119k	17k	12k	23k	23k	(5k)	(5k)	27k	27k
TOTAL		1,144k	117k	287k	148k	148k	95k	95k	127k

11.4 Playground Facilities Expenditure/Income Reconciliation

EXPENDITURE

Category	Number	\$	\$
Regional	1	287k	287,000
Major	2	129k	258,000
Neighbourhood	9	53k	477,000
Local	17	32k	544,000
Local – new rural locations	6	10k	60,000
	35		1,626,000

RE1	7
RE2	5
RE3	1
RU	9
	22

Total = 35 + 22 = 57 sites

TOTAL	\$1,626,000
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POTENTIAL INCOME FROM LAND SALES

RE1 (7 locations)

Location	Lots	\$	\$
Burns *	4	40k	160,000
Esmond	2	40k	80,000
Smith	1	25k	25,000
Hardisty *	1	25k	25,000
Pelican	1	30k	30,000
Thomas Wedge	1	30k	30,000
Kendall	4	25k	100,000

pre public outcomes 450,000
post public outcomes 265,000

RE2 (5 locations)

Location	Lots	\$	\$
Rangeview	Portions		20,000
Dodsworth *	2	40k	80,000
Baroona	1	40k	40,000
Kiwanis	2	25k	50,000
Burke	2	25k	50,000

pre public outcomes 240,000
post public outcomes 160,000

Net total following public outcomes = \$425,000

* Locations no longer considered as potential income sources following the public consultation process.

11.5 Open Space Classifications

12 APPENDICES

12.1 Playground Maintenance Audit Report

APPENDIX 1

12.2 Strategic Overview Of Each Playground/Open Space Facility

APPENDIX 2

12.3 Public Meeting Minutes

APPENDIX 3

12.4 Summary Of Submissions

APPENDIX 4