



IMPORTANT



Proposed Sale of WAMTA Office

WAMTA purchased its present office in “The Business Building” in Victoria Park back in the 1990s, with a dual purpose of providing the Secretary with a dedicated space to work from and a suitable venue for all WAMTA events, including being used as a performance space. The office houses numerous cabinets of archives, several bookcases full of second hand books, the original office furniture which came with the unit (2 desks and chairs), an upright piano for performances, and various items that we take to events, including a projector and screen for workshops, and glasses / urns etc for refreshments.

The office space has grown increasingly cramped, as defunct office equipment sits unused, records have built up without being sorted, and we have become known as the place to dump old music from deceased estates, much of which is not saleable and needs to be disposed of.

Prior to covid, we had long ceased using our office for events other than the monthly council meetings, instead using the Zenith Music Auditorium as our primary workshop space. The occasional person or two did wander into the office, to browse books, pay fees or enquire what it was that we do.

Since covid, it has been extremely rare for anyone to visit the office, except to dump more books. We have endeavoured to hold a handful of social events and book sales, and a couple of workshops in the office since lockdowns eased to try to encourage people back into the office (and to buy books!), but they have been very poorly attended.

The office itself is not accessible; the offices on the lower level are only accessible via stairs, which prevent many of our members from being able to visit our office – and up until recently also prevented our Secretary from being able to work from the office while her ankle was broken.

While we own the office and do not need to outlay rent, the running costs of the rates, levies and utilities are over **\$10,000 per annum**. This is a similar amount to that which we are losing every year, with our member subscriptions not covering our running costs.

The costs directly associated with running the office this year were:

- Building levy: **\$5,000 per year** – this will be going up substantially in 2024
- Council rates: **\$2,000 per year**
- Internet connection: **\$900 per year**
- Water service: **\$2,000 per year**
- Plus business insurance which includes the office and its contents



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The Business Building is aging, and in the year ahead, levies are going to rise substantially to start addressing the increasing maintenance needs of the building.

- This year the building Admin fund was set at **\$210,628.00 pa**; in 2024 it will be **\$224,147.00 pa**.
- This year the building Reserve Fund was set at **\$1,100.00 pa**; next year it has been set at **\$10,000 pa**.
- That means an additional **\$22,519 pa** will be raised from the businesses that own offices in the Business Building in the year ahead.

This regular loss of \$10,000 per year is unsustainable. The Council has worked hard to try to increase our income and cut costs to mitigate the loss, however the regular increase in all our expenses with the cost of living crisis is seeing the Association fight a losing battle in this regard. Our reserves are being run down, and while we can continue for a few years with the reserves we do have, we would eventually have to wind up our operations if we cannot address our financial situation.

Operationally, we no longer need an office. Council meetings have been held via Zoom since covid. The Secretary has been successfully working from home over the past few years during covid and while recovering from surgery; we have moved from a landline and desktop computer to a mobile phone and laptop.

The Council believes that the sale of the office is the best solution. We have considered leasing the office as another option, however we would still incur the costs above of running the office, in addition to the cost of hiring a property manager to liaise with a tenant, plus we run the risk of the office sitting vacant if a suitable tenant cannot be found, which all risks us running at an even greater loss.

- The office has been valued between **\$180,000** and **\$190,000**.
- Quotes for self-storage indicate a likely cost of around **\$2,400** per year
 - this is ¼ of the current cost of running the office.

The WAMTA Council will be seeking approval from members at the AGM to sell the office, with archives being moved to a small unit in a self-storage facility and the Secretary permanently working from home. This would serve to drastically reduce our running costs and replenish our rapidly-dwindling reserves, and help ensure the ability of WAMTA to continue to operate well into the future.