Launceston Aquatic Awarded for its Access for all Approach

Launceston Aquatic was recently awarded the 2009 Leadership in Local Government Award for Universal Design and Social Inclusion by National Disability Services Tasmania. A major focus during the design period of the $26.3 million centre was providing a facility for the entire community. The result was accessible design features for greater access to those with additional needs. The facility has a ramp entry programs pool, accessible change rooms and a portable hoist with a sling that can be moved to any of the pool spaces to lower people into the water. There are also disabled car parking spaces and a wheelchair access ramp into the facility. Launceston Aquatic opened in May and was funded by Launceston City Council and the State and Federal Governments.

Heatwave Planning Guide for Local Government

The Victorian Government has released a new guide on how councils can help their communities deal with the risks associated with heatwaves. The Heatwave Planning Guide includes: identifying vulnerable population groups and the risks they face; identifying and agreeing on effective strategies, agency coordination and response planning to address those risks; implementing and activating the plan; and evaluating the plan after each summer. In January, Melbourne encountered three consecutive days of temperatures above 43°C, resulting in over 350 additional deaths in comparison to the previous five years. The HeatWave Planning Guide can be found at www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/downloads/planning-guide.pdf.

Partnership Enables Improved Access for People with Disabilities

A partnership project between the Australian Human Rights Commission and Marrickville Council in NSW has been announced to improve access to buildings in the council area for people with a disability. The project involves the provision of a free CD entitled The good, the bad and the ugly to applicants seeking council approval to construct or renovate a commercial building. Developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission for designers, builders and owners, the CD explains why it is so important to accurately comply with the technical specifications for access. Copies of the CD have also been sent to all schools and active developers in the area. Councils throughout Australia are encouraged to follow this example. For further information, email Michael Small at michael.small@humanrights.gov.au.
Company Established to Attract Business Investment

Logan City Council has developed a ‘for profit’ company - Invest Logan - to attract investment in the city and generate employment. The company has a seven-member board comprising four council members and three external members with business expertise. Invest Logan is already working to attract business to a 40 hectare site which Council has developed at a cost of $30 million, and is expected to generate $60 million from the sale of the land. The 40 hectares is part of a 120 hectare parcel of land that Council purchased for $2 million. The remaining land has been developed into a wetlands and recreational area. The money that Invest Logan generates will help to fund the provision of services for the community. For more information, visit www.loganbiz.com.au/about-us/board-of-directors.

IT Initiative Expected to Lead to Significant Savings

National IT and telecommunications company, PKBA, has signed a contract with CouncilBiz to provide thirty remote locations throughout the Northern Territory with leading edge, integrated voice and data conferencing solutions. CouncilBiz, formed in 2008, is a fully-owned subsidiary of the eight major Northern Territory councils with the primary focus of providing ICT, administrative, financial and support services to members. The initiative will provide advanced video conferencing and data sharing facilities to the regional centres, which will lead to significant reductions in travel and associated costs. PKBA was recently awarded the 2009 National iAward Merit for Innovation.

Household Battery Recycling Program Launched

The City of Stirling and five metropolitan regional councils in Perth have initiated a battery recycling program, believed to be the first of its type in the country. Through the Metropolitan Household Battery Recycling program, householders now have the opportunity to safely dispose of and recycle old dry cell batteries. The batteries can be left at 150 recycling bins installed in council administration offices, public libraries and leisure centres across the city. The old batteries will be recycled into a range of new products such as street lights, car parts, building materials and fertilisers. In WA, an estimated 18 million household batteries are thrown away each year. When sent to landfill, battery casings break down leaching chemicals into the ground. To find out more, visit www.zerowastewa.com.au/recovery/community/batteries/.

City of Adelaide Launches Unique Urban Design Model

In an Australian first, the City of Adelaide has launched a fully interactive 3D model of the city for public access. The model will be particularly useful for architects and designers who can use it to improve their development proposals in a simulated environment. Developers seeking approval for projects of more than three storeys, or valued at more than $4.5 million, will be required to submit 3D models to Council so they can be placed within the existing plan. The model extends beyond the CBD to include imagery and contour details of the outer metropolitan area, allowing the city to be visualised in the context of surrounding suburbs. The model will be further developed over time to increase its realism and detail, and can be found at www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/development/3d-city-model.html.