Spreading the Message: ‘Local Government is a great place to work!’

DR CHRISTINE STANDISH, POLICY OFFICER
Local Government Association of Tasmania

In these times of increasing competition for skilled workers, it is important that Local Government is out there promoting the many and varied career opportunities it offers. Careers events offer a platform for this.

Currently, the Association is planning for the upcoming National Careers and Employment Expo to be held at the Derwent Entertainment Centre on 13-14 July. This will be the second year that LGAT has participated in the event, in collaboration with the following industry bodies: Local Government Managers Australia, the Planning Institute of Australia, Institute of Public Works Engineers, Australian Institute of Environmental Health; Australian Institute of Building Surveyors and the Tasmanian Association of Municipal Supervisors.

It is encouraging to note that more and more councils are prepared to come on board, to spread the message that Local Government is a great place to work. Not only have councils expressed a willingness to participate in the National Expo, a number of them have indicated they are keen to support other careers events to be held around the state over the next few months.

CouncilConnect: A One-Stop-Shop for Advertising Jobs

I’ve attended quite a few careers events over the past two years and Mike Gaffney, the Association’s President, has been busy waving the Local Government flag at various university forums. One of the most frequently asked questions by students is “Where can I go to find out what jobs are available in Local Government?” Given we are out there enthusiastically promoting our jobs and careers, it makes sense for us to have a convenient centralised facility for advertising vacancies. Fortunately, we already have the capacity to provide a one-stop jobs site on the CouncilConnect website at www.councilconnect.tas.gov.au, the portal that links all 29 council websites. The jobs section on the site has the capacity to display all the jobs that are available in each council in one easy-to-access location. All it requires is for councils to ensure that they post their vacancies to the site at the same time that they put them on their own websites and in the newspaper. Directions on how to post council jobs to CouncilConnect are contained in Brian Oliver’s article in the IT section of the magazine.

Launch of National Skills Shortage Strategy for Local Government

It was pleasing to witness the launch of the National Skills Shortage Strategy for Local Government at the Local Government Managers Australia Congress in Hobart in April. Titled ‘New ways of thinking - Doing business differently,’ the strategy is an initiative of the National Skills Shortage Steering Committee that aims to provide a national framework to assist Local Government to address widespread skills shortages. The strategy features examples of successful initiatives already implemented throughout the sector; proposes a range of other strategic approaches to tackle the issue; and encourages, where appropriate, the formation of alliances between Local Government, the two other spheres of government and the private sector. The full strategy is available at www.lgma.org.au. As its title suggests, Local Government needs to find new ways to approach its business if it is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, not least of which is a changing workforce. The strategy constitutes a positive step in this direction.

For more information on what’s happening in Local Government to address skills shortages, please contact Dr. Christine Standish on 6233 5967 or email christine.standish@lgat.tas.gov.au.
Out of Africa

LIZ GILLAM, POLICY MANAGER
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During my recent travels, I visited the town where I was born - Eshowe in Kwa Zulu, South Africa. I have very few memories of the place but one that I was interested to test was a drain and culvert by the local swimming pool - and there it was, exactly as I remembered! I imagine it was etched in my memory due to dire warnings from my parents about staying away and it appears that risk management hasn’t improved much!

It was also good to be gradually re-introduced into the world of Local Government by an article in the Cape Times a couple of days before I returned home. The Rates Action Group had sought an urgent declaratory order in the High Court to have the City of Cape Town’s rates by-law declared illegal and set aside, just hours before the council meeting to adopt the budget. Many ratepayers were not happy that the value of some properties had increased by over 50% in recent revaluations - sound familiar?

On a more serious note, work priorities at the moment include developing an Association response to the Dog Control Issues Paper, and working with the Local Government Office and the Electoral Commissioner on some amendments to the Local Government Act in relation to elections, which it is hoped will be in place prior to the elections later this year.

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