The Hobart City Council has approved an ambitious plan to invigorate its inner city area. The plan follows on from a wide ranging community consultation, culminating in the formulation and adoption of Hobart’s 2025 Vision Statement and 20-year Strategic Framework.

Acting Lord Mayor, Ald Eva Ruzicka, said the Council wishes to see the city returned to the people. “It needs to enhance its public amenity because that is what the businesses and the people of Hobart want,” she said. “Accordingly, we now need an Inner City Development Plan to manage the continued evolution of the inner city as a people place and to guide future investment in public and private infrastructure.”

A project brief has now been prepared to undertake the specific task of creating an Inner City Development Plan for the City. It will take into account the following key areas:

- Assessment of people movement across the city;
- Transport to and from the city;
- How the city and the public spaces are used by people;
- What recommendations are needed to improve the level of people activity and movement within the inner city area and;
- The translation of various aspects of the 20-year vision into a physical reality to build a foundation for other key Council and regional strategies.”

Priority actions and plans will centre on improving the vitality, liveability and involvement of the community of the inner city. The project, which has support from the major city retailers including Myer and Target, is expected to commence in December and take around 12 months to complete.
Major improvements to the *Dog Control Act 2000* have been introduced to State Parliament.

The *Dog Control Amendment Bill 2009* was tabled in the House of Assembly on 19 May by the Minister for Local Government, Jim Cox MP. The bill was passed by the House of Assembly, without amendment, at the end of August.

The main features of the Bill include:

- A new classification of restricted breed dog with stronger control requirements;
- Mandatory de-sexing of restricted breed dogs and dangerous dogs;
- Restrictions on selling and exchanging dangerous and restricted breed dogs;
- Compulsory micro-chipping of dogs;
- A new noise abatement notice process to tackle problem barking dogs; and
- Stronger provisions for councils to seize and detain dogs.

The Local Government Division will be working closely with the LGAT, the Animal Management Officers Association of Tasmania (AMOT) and other stakeholders on the implementation arrangements once the Bill is approved. Public awareness material will be prepared and council employees with responsibilities under the amended legislation will be provided with the necessary support and advice to ensure the changes are put in place successfully.

The Bill provides for a phased introduction of different aspects of the new legislation. For example, it is expected that the new requirement for mandatory micro-chipping will be given an extended lead time to ensure the registry arrangements are in place and owners have ample lead time to arrange micro-chipping of their dogs. Other aspects such as de-sexing of existing dangerous dogs will be a priority.

Preliminary work is underway on the micro-chipping registration system, which is expected to require an approval/licensing system for implanters and database operators. It is anticipated that the system will be very similar to those operating in Victoria and Queensland. Close attention will be given to ensuring that the system is robust and easily accessible by councils for updating of changes to owner or dog details, and that there are links to other registries so that searches can be made for dog and owner details.

Councils will have an important role to play in the implementation of this legislation and the Division will be discussing ways of promoting micro-chipping, possibly through fee discounts and micro-chipping clinics, with the LGAT and AMOT.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Pete Morrow at the Local Government Division on (03) 6232 7022 or email Pete.Morrow@dpac.tas.gov.au.
Signing Heralds New Era of Partnership Agreements

The first in a new era of partnership agreements that are streamlined, strategic and outcome-focused, was signed on 28 July by Premier David Bartlett and West Coast Mayor Darryl Gerrity in Queenstown. The second partnership agreement will see the parties work towards outcomes in: tourism at Lake Margaret; the supply of emergency health transport; supporting youth participation; and the establishment of a Child and Family Services Centre in Queenstown.

Mayor Gerrity said the partnership agreement had been crafted to create fast, efficient and effective outcomes for the local community. “We wanted the new agreement to be targeted and outcome-focused,” Mayor Gerrity said. “Also, because of the remoteness and isolation of the West Coast, we wanted to improve the lines of communication with the Government in Hobart.”

“We will also work together to improve hospitality standards on the West Coast, develop and implement a West Coast recreation plan and establish a community road safety partnership plan,” he said.

The partnership agreements program was evaluated during 2008. The evaluation report recommended shorter development timeframes and more targeted partnership agreements that focus on achieving specific outcomes. The partnership agreement with the West Coast was developed within four months and lists specific objectives against which the agreement will be measured over its 18-month implementation.

To see the partnership agreement with the West Coast Council and the evaluation of the partnership agreements program, go to www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgd.

Capitalizing on Kindness

Why 21st century professionals need to be nice

According to Kristin Tillquist, the Chief of Staff for the City of Riverside, the capital city of one of the largest, fastest-growing counties in America, and Author of Capitalizing on Kindness: Why 21st Century Professionals Need to Be Nice, to be successful in the 21st century global marketplace you need many things - determination, well-articulated goals and a bit of luck. But more than anything else, you need kindness. Kindness becomes the key business asset when you couple a caring attitude toward others with a focus on achieving your goals. Often people see business as a choice between being kind and being successful. This is a fictitious trade-off. Nice people are more successful.

Those who wish to succeed in the 21st century business climate which is characterised by intense competition, ever-evolving technologies and escalating expectations, must make the conscious development of kindness their business imperative. Yet most people and businesses are completely unaware of how kindness creates work success. Instead, they focus on customer service, business leadership training, effective communication skills, leadership competencies and a myriad of other terms that miss the point of simply demonstrating care for others in business.

“When the going gets tough, the tough get... Nicer!”

Capitalizing on Kindness is available from good book stores for RRP $27.99.
Local Government Board Review

What does it mean for your Council?

Earlier this year, the Break O’Day and Glamorgan-Spring Bay Councils became the first Tasmanian councils for a number of years to formally consider a voluntary merger. At their request, the Minister for Local Government, Jim Cox, instigated a Local Government Board review, which commenced on 3 July, into the benefits and impacts of a potential merger of the two East Coast councils.

At the end of August, the Sorell Council wrote to Minister Cox and requested that the Council also be included in the Board’s review. Due to the significant progress made on the existing review, it was decided that this would not be appropriate and that the review would continue in accordance with the existing terms of reference. The Board will also be preparing guiding principles for any other future voluntary mergers.

The Chairperson of the Local Government Board, Brent Armstrong, said that the development of guiding principles would be an important piece of work for future reform. “The guiding principles would be provided in a separate report to the Minister, once the Board’s review on the East Coast proposal had been finalised,” he said. “The principles will be drawn from the Board’s findings on the East Coast proposal as well as from input from councils around the state,” Mr Armstrong said. “We will be inviting councils and other interested parties to give us their views on what might underpin sustainable mergers, keeping in mind the interests of communities and ratepayers.” The Board will release details for consultation for this report in the near future.

The Board is aiming to provide its report on the potential Break O’Day and Glamorgan-Spring Bay merger to the Minister for Local Government shortly. It is expected that the second report on merger guiding principles will be submitted after that, following an opportunity for comment by councils and the public.

Guidelines setting out the scope of the reviews can be found at www.dpac.tas.gov/lgboard. For more information please contact the Board’s Executive Officer, Patricia Zapotocky, on 1300 404 607 or email lgboard@dpac.tas.gov.au.
New Trail Promotes Healthy, Active and Connected Community

A new $120,000 cycling and walking trail was officially opened in Bridgewater on 30 July by Premier David Bartlett and Brighton Mayor Tony Foster.

The 3km Brighton-Green Point Foreshore Path runs from Gunn Street to the East Derwent Highway Bridge and in the future, it may be possible to extend the pathway to Gagebrook. The pathway has been developed by the State Government in partnership with the Brighton City Council, with Council contributing $70,000 towards the project and the State Government providing $50,000.

The shared-use pathway has been designed to accommodate the needs of cyclists, walkers and joggers, and to encourage locals of all ages to get active and enjoy the foreshore area. An added environmental benefit is that the pathway has created better access to the foreshore for weed removal programs by council staff. Construction of the pathway provided more than two months employment for five Brighton Council employees and the gravel used to construct it was sourced locally.

The State Government will develop a series of community pathway projects such as this across Tasmania. The 2008 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey showed walking (42.1%) and cycling (9.6%) continue to rank among the top physical activities among Tasmanians, and nationally, participation in these forms of physical activity has increased significantly since 2001. 

ABOVE: (L-R) Bradley Palmer, Emily Copplemen, Michelle Cronly (cutting ribbon), Labor candidate Rebecca White, Mayor Tony Foster of Brighton Council, Premier David Bartlett and Labor candidate Brendan Sullivan mark the official opening

MAIN PHOTO: (L-R) Melanie Lowe, Michelle Cronly, Corey Smith, Premier David Bartlett, Bradley Palmer and Logan Braunack of the East Derwent Primary School try out the new pathway
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Part of every day.
RSPCA EMU Returns

For the third year running, the RSPCA’s Education Mobile Unit (EMU), a 13-tonne state-of-the-art classroom on wheels, is making its way to Tasmania during October. This unique attraction not only engages students in life-long learning but also helps to foster a generation of citizens who show kindness to animals and to people.

Laying this foundation for the future is a costly exercise and, while the promotion of values such as kindness, responsibility and courage could save thousands of lives and millions of dollars in years to come, finding the necessary funding still remains a challenge for the RSPCA. Several councils and businesses around the state have recognised its importance however, and have either contributed to the costs of the EMU visit through grants, or facilitated its appearance at events.

Last year, Launceston City Council provided a grant to allow the EMU to visit schools in the area and sponsored its attendance at the Festival of Kites and the Anglicare Children’s Festival in City Park. Similarly, the EMU was made welcome by Clarence City Council at the 42 Degrees South Kite Festival in Hobart. So far this year, West Tamar Council and Northern Midlands Council have made funds available to facilitate visits in their regions and the RSPCA anticipates that other councils will also provide assistance during the EMU tour from 6-26 October.

For further information and bookings, please contact the State Education Coordinator, Erica Davison, at edavison@rspcatas.org.au, or phone 0400 008 050.
Derwent Valley Council Signs Second Partnership Agreement

The protocol arrangements for the second partnership agreement between the State Government and the Derwent Valley Council were signed on 13 August.

The protocol arrangements were signed by Member for Lyons Mr Polley, representing the State Government, and Derwent Valley Council Mayor Tony Nicholson.

The Derwent Valley Council is one of a growing number of councils around the state that has committed to negotiating a second partnership agreement.

The protocol lists the issues to be considered during the negotiation of the second agreement. These issues include:

• A review of Council’s local tourism structure;
• Exploration of opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing;
• Ongoing involvement in southern regional community recovery planning meetings and exercises;
• Using the Communities for Children Project to build community capability to support young children and their families;
• Continued co-operation on the Real Action Forward Thinking (RAFT) program for youth development and community involvement; and
• A community safety strategy to promote economic, social and environmental wellbeing in the Derwent Valley.

Together, we can create a better Tasmania

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Board Farewells Dedicated Member

The LGAT Assist Board has farewelled long-serving Australian Services Union (ASU) representative, Ian James, who has given 22 years of loyal service to the fund.

During this time, Ian has been dedicated to helping Local Government employees. The Board has also benefited greatly from Ian’s experience and willingness to be involved in the many difficult decisions. Ian’s friendship and good humour will be missed, as well as the spirited football and cricket debates!

The Board welcomes, as Ian’s replacement, John Phillips, who has been employed with the Hobart City Council for 34 years and is currently the Financial Management Officer for the City Services Division. John has been a member of the ASU from the first day he started at Council and is currently on the State and National Executives of the Union. He is also a member of the Hobart City Council Superannuation Fund Policy Group.

The current LGAT Assist Board consists of Chairperson, Kaye Reeves, Tony Wolfe from Kingborough Council (ASU Rep), John Phillips from Hobart City Council (ASU Rep), Geoff Dodge (LGMA Rep), and LGAT CEO, Allan Garcia. Administration services for the fund are provided by the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

LGAT ASSIST provides Local Government employees with support and assistance during times of health, financial and general personal difficulties. Among other activities the fund can:

- Offer grants, including funeral grants and low interest loans to those who are in need; and
- Offer University of Tasmania bursaries to families of members.

Low interest loans and grants are available to staff members currently employed on a permanent basis by a local council, Local Government single or joint authority, or a water and sewerage corporation within Tasmania, who are current members of the Quadrant Superannuation Scheme.

Further information about LGAT Assist may be obtained from Board members at their respective councils, or from Janet Storan at the LGAT office. Phone (03) 6233 5970 or email janet.storan@lgat.tas.gov.au.
Clarence Makes Life Saving Funding Decision

Clarence City Council has announced a three-year partnership agreement with Surf Life Saving Tasmania to continue the provision of lifeguard services during the busy summer months at Clifton Beach. The funding agreement will enable Surf Life Saving Tasmania to provide 500 lifeguard service patrol hours per season, training and management of lifeguard service personnel and broadcasting regular beach safety messages on local radio.

The Mayor of Clarence Alderman Jock Campbell said Council was delighted to assist with the funding to ensure beaches such as Clifton were safer places for the local community to swim. “Surf Life Saving Tasmania provides an invaluable service to beach users in Tasmania and, with our support, that service means that Clifton Beach will have full time patrols over the summer,” Ald Campbell said.

Over the last three years the Lifeguard Service has saved 12 lives and last summer, over 500 beachgoers were provided with basic surf safety tips. Clifton Beach is one of Tasmania’s most popular beaches due to its surf and proximity to the metropolitan area.

Marker Commemorates History of Launceston’s People

It’s About Us 2006 was a year-long event that marked 200 years of European settlement and more than 40,000 years of occupation of the Tamar Valley area by the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. It contributed to a sense of place and community identity by bringing the people of Launceston together. A commemorative marker was unveiled during National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week in July as a legacy to the event and the relationships which have formed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Local resident, John Millwood worked closely with Launceston City Council officers and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Advisory Group to create the marker, which stands at 120cm tall and is made from two pieces of marble with a bronze top. The top of the marker features a map of Tasmania outlined in shells, recognising the unique Tasmanian Aboriginal tradition of shell necklace art. The marker also shows the coming together of two cultures, with two bronze hands linked at the front.

RIGHT: Aboriginal Elder Phyllis Pitchford, local high school students Alixandra Webb and Tristan McCarthy and Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten unveil the It’s About Us 2006 commemorative marker
Governor Takes Gruelling Schedule in his Stride

Among the many requirements for a Tasmanian Governor, and one that few are aware of, is the need to have a high degree of energy. Each year, there are hundreds of official engagements and functions, involving many thousands of Tasmanians and interstate guests. Built into this demanding schedule are day-long tours of each of the state’s 29 municipalities - visits which the incumbent Governor Peter Underwood AC, and Mrs Frances Underwood are tackling with enthusiasm.

Each municipal visit includes a formal Civic Reception hosted by its Mayor. On 2 and 3 June this year it was the turn of Latrobe and Kentish municipalities, the 14th and 15th tours respectively, marking the halfway point of this statewide exercise. His Excellency describes the experience as being “just about the best way to find out what Tasmanians are doing in their local areas, to talk about the role of the Governor and, just as importantly, to listen to people.”

Notwithstanding the economic downturn and the inevitable problems every municipality has to deal with, the Vice-regal couple has been struck by a genuine spirit of optimism in local communities. “We see this particularly in the many small business enterprises that we visit,” the Governor said. They had first hand evidence of the commitment and quality of small business enterprises in both municipalities, visiting the award-winning Anvers Chocolate Factory in Latrobe, the new Seven Sheds Brewery, Meadery and Hop Garden in Railton, Steve Brown’s saffron farm and the exclusive Eagles Nest Retreat overlooking Mount Roland.

The Underwoods were also shown the positive results of direct Local Government input into community developments, most notably, the state-of-the-art Dulverton Regional Landfill. That particular tour included a ride in a 40-tonne dump truck, an inspection of the $15 million Port Sorell developments, an aged care facility, a child care centre and a new shopping precinct.

As important as the Governor’s role is in ensuring the stability of the constitutional process, he also acts on behalf of all Tasmanians in a capacity that is above politics. Together with his wife, His Excellency moves about the community encouraging enterprise and initiative as well as recognising the work of volunteers who care for those in need and who care for the environment and the Tasmanian way of life. The municipal visits are providing an excellent opportunity for engaging directly with individuals on their turf and the Vice-regal couple is making the most of it.

Pictured at the Court House Museum in Latrobe from L-R His Excellency Governor Peter Underwood AC, Mrs Underwood, Mayor Mike Gaffney or Latrobe Council, Elizabeth Gleeson, Mike McLaren and Bill Gleeson.
WomenCan Campaign Gains Momentum

JUSTIN MEEKER, PARTNERSHIPS COORDINATOR
Local Government Division

More women are expected to stand in this year's council elections following a series of successful functions encouraging them to consider becoming councillors.

More than 120 women (and a few men) put on their winter woollies to take part in the functions held as part of the WomenCan campaign. WomenCan aims to encourage more women to nominate for the October poll. It is a Premier’s Local Government Council (PLGC) program and is jointly supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) and the Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA).

Devonport Mayor, Ald Lynn Laycock, said there are women of real talent who are not standing for council. “The PLGC is encouraging these women to stand because they will add new skills and new perspectives to their councils,” she said.

Cllr Cheryl Fuller, President of the Tasmanian division of ALGWA agrees. “Women who are interested in running for council need to know they are not alone and that there is information, mentoring and support available to them.”

The Mayors of the Hobart City, West Tamar, Devonport City, Waratah-Wynyard and King Island Councils, all strong supporters of the campaign, hosted the functions, which were followed by two half-day campaigning workshops on how to run an election campaign, write a candidate statement, and work with the media. A series of WomenCan information sheets has been developed as part of the campaign and ALGWA is providing on-going advice and support for prospective candidates.

While half the population is made up of women, less than 25% of Local Government representatives are women. The sector lags significantly behind female representation in other spheres of government. At the 2007 Tasmanian council elections, only 25.4% of candidates were women - now only 23.7% of current councillors are women.

For information on the WomenCan campaign, the ALGWA mentoring program, or to join the WomenCan mailing list email wilg@dpac.tas.gov.au, visit www.women.tas.gov.au, or phone Mandy Johnson at Women Tasmania on (03) 6232 7106.
Council Cooperation Required to Help Overcome Census Challenges

The Census of Population and Housing is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and one of the most important.

The Census aims to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census Night and the dwellings in which they live. From this, ABS can provide timely, high quality and relevant data for small geographic areas and small population groups, to complement the rich but broad level data provided by our surveys. Census data is a vital tool for planning Australia’s development. The information it provides is widely used by Local Governments to assist in making informed decisions to support planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities.

An example of this is the Central Coast Council’s Youth Strategy. The strategy, intended to provide opportunities for young people to grow and develop, incorporated Census data. Education, employment and volunteering data were examined to show the characteristics of the Central Coast Council area youth population. Following the release and implementation of the strategy, initiatives in the community have included the employment of a Youth Officer and the formation of the Central Coast Youth Council. Population data, based on the Census, is a key factor in determining the amount of funding Local Government receives from Federal Government revenue distribution.

The five-yearly Population Census is a huge logistical undertaking with many challenges such as: counting vulnerable groups accurately; overcoming physical barriers; and finding adequate human and physical resources to support operations. ABS has already started planning for the 2011 Census and a key aspect of the planning is the Census Engagement Strategy, which aims to establish a network of organisations that are interested in the Census and making sure their community counts.

Over the coming year, ABS staff will be visiting various parts of Tasmania to gather local intelligence and share ideas for addressing challenges in field collection. Opportunities to work with organisations, especially councils and other community groups, will be sought. ABS is seeking to tailor plans to meet the different challenges associated with different Local Government areas.

Local Government can support the Census 2011 by assisting with recruitment and promotion of the Census and allowing ABS access to relevant administrative data for validation purposes. It will be of benefit to all levels of government. This cooperation will go towards a successful Census and improved data quality to support informed decision-making.

For more information, or to be part of the planning for the 2011 Census, please contact Cassy Short on (03) 6222 5803.
If in Doubt, Step Out

ALISTAIR SCOTT, DIRECTOR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Local Government Division

Requirements relating to the declaration of interests are often misunderstood, yet the penalties for contravention of Part 5 of the Local Government Act are serious. If you breach Part 5 you could be fined up to $6,000 per offence, dismissed from office, or barred from nominating as a candidate at any election for up to seven years. As a councillor you need to know what it means to have a pecuniary interest, and what to do about it.

What is an interest? You have an interest if the matter were decided in a particular manner, receive, have an expectation of receiving, or be likely to receive a pecuniary benefit or pecuniary detriment. The interests provisions apply only to pecuniary or financial interests. If a decision leads to: increased or decreased sales or profits for a business; increased or decreased value of a property; employment benefits, such as an increase in salary, or a promotion; or the provision of labour or services, then it is likely to mean there is a pecuniary interest. You also need to be careful regarding non-pecuniary conflicts of interest, as they’re dealt with in council codes of conduct.

If you do have an interest in a matter, you are not to participate in any discussion or vote. You must declare the interest and leave the room, as well as advise the general manager in writing within seven days of the details of the interest declared. The general manager keeps a register of interests. If you are unsure whether you have an interest, seek advice from your general manager, or seek independent legal advice. If you’re in any doubt, step out.

Some examples of a potential breach of the pecuniary interest provisions are:

- A councillor votes on an application for funding submitted by an organisation of which the councillor is a committee member;
- A councillor votes on a development application alleged to benefit a close family member by creating improved road access to the family member’s property; or
- A councillor votes on a development application alleged to benefit the councillor’s business.

There are some exemptions to the pecuniary interest provisions, including if the matter relates to the making of a rate or charge, or if the expected benefit or detriment is one received in common with all or a substantial proportion of electors.

You should also look at section 51 of the Act, an extensive provision which sets out those who are deemed to be ‘close associates’. It includes family members, business partners and employees. If a close associate has a pecuniary interest in a matter (even if you do not) you can be in breach of the Act if you vote on that matter.

As the provisions of Part 5 of the Local Government Act are extensive, this article is intended only as an introduction, and should not be relied upon for legal advice. All councillors and council staff should familiarise themselves with the legislation.

Developing Age Friendly Communities

ROLAND NAUFAL, DIRECTOR
4C Consulting

Increasing longevity is changing the nature of local communities. An Australian woman currently aged 50 has a better than even money chance of living to 90 years of age. Councils need to start planning for these major changes in the demographic base of their community and to the seismic shifts in the expectations that will be placed upon them.

The age friendly community concept was developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to provide a framework for Local Government to respond positively to the issues and opportunities we confront in an ageing society. The WHO initiative identifies that the development process used to foster an aged friendly community can address change in a proactive way and support older people to develop their own solutions to the issues they face.

There is a strong compatibility between consumer and Local Government goals in the area of supporting people to age well and develop age friendly communities. Both want to see outcomes which support people to remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible. Key trends in services for older people include:

- Older people are increasingly unwilling to move into residential care and want to remain living in their own homes;
- With the exception of people who have dementia and significant behavioural issues, most people can now be supported at home until the end of their lives;
- Aged services are shifting from a medical model to focus on wellbeing;
- Intergenerational socialisation opportunities are being sought by older people and delivered by innovative planners; and
- Greater self-reliance and choice is being achieved through positive service culture and clever building design.

Australia can learn from countries that have had considerable success in supporting local communities to age well. Boulder County Ageing Services in Colorado used a community development approach with a strengths based emphasis. Boulder found cultivating strengths increases the likelihood that, as people age, they experience a higher quality of life and fewer problems.

In 2008, the UK Audit Commission undertook a large-scale study of best practice in older peoples’ services in ten Local Government areas. They found increased awareness, better engagement and innovation could help many older people without significant expenditure. The commission recommended that councils should engage their local communities in the task of becoming age friendly and that there are many older people ready and willing to assist.

The diagram to the right highlights the key steps in the community engagement process that we have been using with great success in both rural and urban areas. Although the diagram presents the stages as sequential, none of the steps are static and areas of activity may at times overlap or occur in a different order.
Engaging Communities: an Age Friendly Approach

1. Offer
A common understanding of the philosophy, vision and values underpinning an age friendly community needs to be explored with all stakeholders.

2. Invitation
A sense of invitation to participate is vital to engage community interest. Local Government needs to put a lot of effort to ensuring older people and key agencies feel a sense of personal invitation to be involved.

3. Welcome
Hospitality is used to create a welcome that helps built trust, relationships and a wish to continue engagement. Every community contact from phone inquiry to attendance at an event must be designed to be highly positive and very welcoming.

4. Experience
Community forums create an experience that demonstrates the positive attributes of cooperative communities. They maximise sense of belonging, with a focus on community engagement and collaboration through facilitated group processes. The forums tap the diversity of interests in the community.

5. Commitment
People begin to contribute and genuinely engage based on the trust and relationships developed. Engaged community members are now central to the ongoing engagement of new members. The community engagement process has proven highly successful and in one Local Government area, there are now over 400 people and all key local agencies collaborating to develop an age friendly community.

In all of our work, the same theme keeps emerging. People want Local Government to set a vision for an age friendly community and then support older people to build on individual, familial and community strengths and find their own solutions to the problems they face. The key messages are equally strong:

- Older people are diverse... services should be too;
- Older people are natural community leaders and community assets; and
- Local Government needs to engage older people in service planning and implementation at the personal and local levels.

Smart Local Governments are planning for ageing baby boomers. It is far better to mobilise them now to address their own impending issues, rather than wait for them to become disaffected, demanding older people.

After four years as CEO of one of Australia’s largest aged care organisations, Roland Naufal established 4C Consulting in 2006 to provide best practice leadership in aged services, working with rural and city based Local Governments. Roland Naufal was a keynote speaker at the 2009 Local Government Conference. For further information, visit www.4clivingwell.com.
Building Community Resilience

CHRIS BEATTIE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
State Emergency Service

“Resilience” - and building “community resilience” is the current catch-cry of governments, policy-makers and emergency managers at all levels.

Indeed, at the meeting of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on 30 April, first ministers resolved to “…re-examine Australia’s arrangements for managing natural disasters and identify any further strategies aimed at building greater resilience”. Similarly at the last meeting of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management - Emergency Management (MCPEM-EM), ministers agreed that the “…future direction for Australian emergency management should be based on achieving community and organisational resilience”.

So what is all the fuss about, why is it happening, what is resilience anyway and why should Local Government care? Take any dictionary and you’ll find that the term resilience is often used to describe the notion of “withstanding” and “bouncing back” and this reflects its origins from Latin resiliere (to jump back). This usage is limited as it neither captures the reality of irrevocable disaster impacts, the complexity of post emergency community restoration, nor the disaster management approaches currently taken with consideration of measures across Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR). Similarly, the literal use of the term does not emphasise the importance of communities and individuals understanding their risk environments and taking action to reduce those risks.

It is well recognised that in the face of a likely escalation in risk from man-made and natural hazards, the responsibility for protecting communities from the impacts of such disasters is a shared responsibility that cannot be borne by the emergency management sector alone. A whole-of-community effort is required to be better able to withstand a crisis and have an enhanced ability to recover from impacts.

For emergency management, building community resilience emphasises the strengthening of communities, individuals, businesses and institutions to minimise the effects of disasters and is the principle that will form the basis for future frameworks to guide national and state policy and programs for natural disaster arrangements. In theory, community resilience is developed and enhanced through prevention/mitigation and preparedness activities, and has an effect (in terms of reduced consequence) on outcomes during response and recovery operations.

The State Emergency Service (SES) along with many other emergency management organisations recognises that total resilience is not an achievable state, as vulnerabilities and exposures will always exist. However, the resilience approach envisages that individuals, households, businesses, governments and communities will recognise and understand current and future risk, take action to reduce exposure and vulnerability to those risks, and be better able to adapt to change and bounce back from emergencies and disasters of all types.

Currently at the national-level, a disaster resilience strategy is being developed by the Australian Emergency Management Committee to support a more appropriate balance between increasing community expectations of governments and their emergency management agencies (of which SES is one). As the risk of increasing intensity and severity of hazardous events (attributed to climate change) lifts, a national strategy for optimising the finite resources available to governments and employment of the heavily volunteer-based response and recovery workforce is seen as imperative. In addition, new national emergency risk assessment guidelines are currently in production with an expected publication before Christmas.

In Tasmania, Local Governments can expect to see the philosophy of resilience manifest itself in a number of ways - the first of which is a new funding program titled the Disaster Resilience Australia Package. This new initiative, announced in the most recent Australian Government budget will consolidate funding formerly available under a range of programs previously administered by the SES.

Related state initiatives include examining the role of land use planning and natural hazard risks, introduction of a standard schedule and new building regulation arrangements related to developments in bushfire prone areas, building new emergency management capabilities and reforming emergency management plans and arrangements.

At SES we are taking a long-term, ‘enabling’ approach to enhancing resilience by developing our own education and training continuum for the emergency management functions listed in state legislation at local, regional and state-levels. To support this, SES will also be publishing and distributing new Municipal Emergency Management Guidelines to all councils and local stakeholders.

Taking a resilience approach to emergency management does not throw the baby out with the bathwater. It builds on and extends our actions across PPRR, reinforces the role of business continuity and the shared responsibility we all have to better understand the risks we face and to take action to reduce our community’s vulnerability to threats.
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News in Brief

Rating Approaches Reviewed
A high level analysis, undertaken by the Hobart City Council, on a range of rating approaches under the Local Government Act by a number of Tasmanian councils has now been placed on the Council’s website. Lord Mayor of Hobart, Ald Rob Valentine said the analysis was undertaken on alternative ratings structures following implementation of the Valuer-General’s AAV adjustment factors in July 2007. “At the time of this adjustment which gave rise to movement in the rate base and burden, there was some concern about the way rates were being levied, when compared with other Tasmanian councils,” he said. “The Hobart City Council made a decision to review the means of setting the rate for 2008-2009 by addressing alternative rating methods, including the model used by the Brighton Council. A high level of modelling was adopted, weighing up all issues together with financial, legal and sustainability factors,” said Ald Valentine. The Hobart City Council’s modelling report is available online at www.hobartcity.com.au.

Pontville Oval and Stables get a Facelift
The facilities at the Pontville Oval and stables will get a $125,000 upgrade to improve accessibility to the grounds all year round. The State Government is working with Brighton Council and other stakeholders to develop the Brighton recreation area and enhance the quality of life for residents in the fast-growing Brighton community. The Brighton Recreation Area provides an array of sport and recreation opportunities and is home to cricket, football, soccer, touch football, and other community groups. Pontville Oval Three is marked for the upgrade and 25 different groups from around Tasmania stand to benefit from the development of new stables. The State Government provided $50,000 towards the redevelopment, Brighton Council - $60,000, the TCA - $10,000 and AFL Tasmania - $5,000.

Skinners Creek Walkway Takes Shape
The Huon Valley’s network of walking tracks is growing steadily, with work on the latest addition along Skinners Creek in Huonville well underway. The new section of track will extend from Burwood Drive to the Channel Highway. When completed, it will significantly improve the safety of pedestrians walking to Huonville along the Channel Highway from Flood Road. The addition to the Skinners Creek Walkway is part of a strategy commissioned by the Huon Valley Council to investigate options for walking track development in and around the five major townships of the Huon Valley. Council received $364,000 for the walkway’s upgrade from the Australian Government’s $250 million Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

State Support for Emergency Management Planning
The State Emergency Service in partnership with councils, State and Australian Governments are about to commence a 14-month project that supports councils with their emergency management planning responsibilities. Called the State Preparedness Project, SES will work in close consultation with chairpersons of municipal emergency management committees and municipal coordinators to renew Tasmania’s local emergency management plans for each region. The project is also supporting the development of 15 new state plans, updating the regional emergency management plans and developing some resources for exercises. Work on the plans is expected to commence in October and SES regional managers will keep municipal coordinators updated on the project’s progress. For further enquiries, contact the SES Regional Manager in your region, or email sesplanning@ses.tas.gov.au.

Tassie’s Leaders go Head to Head in the People’s Debate
A free, public, pre-election debate between Premier David Bartlett, Will Hodgman and Nick McKim will be held at Hobart’s Federation Concert Hall on 1 December. The People’s Debate will be independently moderated and cover a broad range of issues for Tasmania’s economy, community, democracy and environment. It is an opportunity for our political leaders to outline how they will govern in the interests of all Tasmanians. The People’s Debate is being coordinated by TasCOSS with support from the Local Government Association of Tasmania, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, Australian Medical Association Tasmania Branch, Property Council of Tasmania, Unions Tasmania, and Environment Tasmania. Admission is by ticket only. For more information, or to register for your free ticket, phone TasCOSS on 6231 0755, or visit www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au.

“The council has just launched its community safety strategy...”