Following the 2005 Local Government elections, there were two prosecutions under the bribery and influence provisions, one which was unsuccessful and one which was discontinued. The Association felt some uncertainty had been created and approached the State Government seeking to clarify these provisions.

A Bill is currently before Parliament to amend the Local Government Act 1993 to deal with the matter raised above and also some other ‘tidying-up’ amendments. The changes proposed include:

- Preventing the mention of the giving of donations, gifts and prizes in electoral advertising, and make it clear that a person must not offer, promise or give gifts, donations or prizes to a specific organisation or organisations generally during the election period.
- Enabling a Councillor or Alderman who wishes to resign at the time of the mid-term elections – that is, half way into his or her four-year term – to do so without causing a vacancy on Council.
- A reduction in the time in which candidates must submit electoral advertising returns, from 90 to 45 days.
- Clarification of responsibility for authorisation of electoral material by making it clear that previously published material kept on display during the election period must be properly authorised.

Because of the timing of the introduction of this Bill, it appears that the impact on the conduct of the forthcoming elections will be limited.

Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment Act 2007

Whilst work on the Better Planning Outcomes project continues, there were a number of issues with LUPA that the State Government considered should be addressed in the short-term. Many of the amendments related to procedural matters and correction of drafting anomalies. The changes of most significance to councils include:

- The requirement for the review of future planning schemes every five years, with the capacity to direct that older schemes be reviewed within a time frame to be set by regulation;
- The requirement that planning authorities consider the provisions of a planning scheme of an adjacent planning authority when considering whether to amend their own planning scheme.
- The ability for the RPDC to hold a hearing into a planning scheme amendment where there are no representations.
- The prevention of planning authorities from refusing to accept a completed development application.
- Clarification that the Tribunal is to determine an appeal in accordance with the planning scheme that was in place at the time the planning authority made its decision.
- Clarification that a permit is valid unless it lapses through non-commencement or a sunset clause.
- New provisions to assist planning authorities to better control illegal signs; and
- The extension of a number of time frames to compensate for public holidays.

Although councils were consulted though this process, not all their concerns with the proposed amendments were addressed.

Dog Control Act 2000

A submission has been made to the State Government in response to the Dog Control Issues paper, which addresses, amongst other matters, restricted breed legislation and compulsory micro-chipping.

The Local Government Office is currently reviewing submissions and developing recommendations for legislative change. The Association has requested that it is closely involved in the development of these changes to ensure that the practical implementation issues for councils are taken into account.

Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations

Following consultation with councils last year, a submission has been made to the State Government in relation to these regulations. To a large extent these appear to be working well. A number of the issues raised, seek clarification rather than changes to the Regulations. As part of this review, it is hoped that the issue of tied votes of Planning Authorities can be satisfactorily resolved.
There has been substantial progress with the development of regional waste strategies in the North and North-West of Tasmania, which will complement the arrangements already existing under the Southern Waste Strategy Authority.

The Cradle Coast Authority (CCA) has now developed a proposal for a regional waste management strategy that outlines the scope, proposed management structure and required resources to implement the strategy. Once in place, the strategy will be delivered through CCA, with project coordination occurring through the Dulverton Regional Waste Management Authority. Member councils have agreed to the introduction, from 1 September 2007, of a regional waste levy and a detailed strategy will be delivered within the first year of operation, with preliminary emphasis on education, recycling and resource recovery.

Northern councils have signed a regional waste management agreement and the collection of a regional levy commenced on 1 August. The Northern Group has an indicative program of activities for the next twelve months, which the general managers will refine, with a view to developing a regional strategy and operation plan. These are important developments for Local Government that will enhance its ability to address broader waste management issues at a regional and, where appropriate, state-wide level.

**Tasmanian Waste Management Strategy**

Further stakeholder consultation workshops are to be held as part of the development of the Tasmanian Waste Management Strategy. It is anticipated that the consultant’s final report will be delivered by the end of October.

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection System**

At its August General Meeting, the LGAT agreed to recommendations made by the Local Government Waste Management Reference Group that Local Government jointly fund, with the State Government, a pilot project to implement a household hazardous waste collection system in Tasmania. The pilot will operate for up to 5 years, with a review to occur after the first two years, and will be based on a supplementary modelling report provided by the original project consultants, Asterisk One, which recommended a temporary collection program involving an agreed number of sites in each region on an alternating rotational basis. Local Government will soon formalise the joint funding relationship with the State Government and appoint a project officer to scope and implement the project.

**Council Careers Promotion**

This year, the Association has coordinated Local Government representation at various career events around the state. These have included the two-day National Careers and Employment Expo, held at the Derwent Entertainment Centre, and careers events in Burnie and at Rosny and Elizabeth Colleges.

The Association would like to thank councils for allowing their officers to participate in the events. Their enthusiastic support underlines the importance of having people available to provide first hand advice on the work that they do. It is also encouraging to note that individual councils are becoming more engaged in promoting Local Government careers in schools within their own communities. Engagement at the local community level provides an effective and meaningful avenue of communicating career opportunities to students.

**Review of Local Government Guidelines for Recreational Vehicles**

The Association recently established a joint State and Local Government Working Group to examine ways to develop a consistent Local Government approach regarding facilities and management arrangements for recreational vehicles (motor homes and campervans) across the state. As a first step, the Association is conducting a survey of all councils to determine what arrangements they have, or are planning to put in place to deal with these vehicles in their municipal areas. The survey findings will assist the working group in reviewing and updating the current guidelines.

For further information on these issues, contact Dr Christine Standish on 6233 5966 or email christine.standish@lgat.tas.gov.au.