Welcome and congratulations to newly-elected and re-elected members of Local Government. This is an extremely exiting time for Local Government in Tasmania, with all 29 councils welcoming new members to their teams.

The great thing about Local Government is that there is no level of public life that so directly involves issues that impact on the community and its way of life. So it is essential for newly-elected members to quickly familiarise themselves with the issues facing their municipality and Local Government in the state.

One of the most important roles for elected members is to promote the interests of the community, by facilitating regular and effective communication between the council and the community it represents.

Time for review

With a new council raring to go, it is a perfect time for councillors and council managers to review internal and external communication strategies and policies, to ensure they underpin a well-run and professional sphere of government and invite confidence by the community, including the media.

There are a few simple things to consider when reviewing your council’s communication strategies:

• Does Council have a procedure in place around its media spokesperson or spokespeople? Define who is most appropriate to represent Council on various issues - this may not always be the mayor.

• Is your current media spokesperson equipped to be a good strong representative of Council? If not, it may be worth considering media training to provide them with some practical tips for dealing with the media and to build their confidence.

• Are all Council staff and councillors aware of the communication strategies and policies in place? It is essential that all levels of council are aware of the procedures around communication strategies, particularly crisis management.

• Is Council adequately prepared for unexpected and sometimes serious events? If Council does not have a solid crisis management plan in place, it's time to review your existing strategy, or develop a new one.

West Tamar Council demonstrated a fine example of how crucial it is to have a successful crisis management plan in place during and following the Beaconsfield mine crisis. Having an effective plan allowed the Council to demonstrate strong leadership, communicating promptly and effectively with the media and hence, reassuring the local and wider community. This not only held in good stead to deal with the crisis as it happened, but it also provided them with direction for community recovery, which is still ongoing.

Time for change

Once you have established Council’s position on internal, external and crisis communications, you can pinpoint areas that need improving and initiate change.

As a policy-maker, councillors are responsible for ensuring regular review of your Council’s rules, regulations and guidelines, to ensure they best meet the needs of your municipality. Communication policies and strategies are among the most important, as they drive the public’s perception of council and Local Government as a whole.

It’s therefore vital to use this time, with the benefit of a fresh new team, to look at your Council’s current strategies and ask whether there is room for improvement. If there is, what are you waiting for? This is your chance to raise the profile of your Council and Local Government, so that the community is reassured of an efficient, effective and essential tier of government.

Becher Townshend is the Managing Director of public relations consultancy Beyond PR, having spent nearly a decade as a State Political Reporter for the Advocate Newspaper and Southern Cross Television. He has also worked for a number of years in Dublin, Ireland for a change management consultancy and now specialises in effective and crisis communications. He also conducts regular media training seminars for a raft of organisations, including the TCCI’s College of Management.
What To Do With Board Members Who Don’t Do Anything

Reproduced with permission from
JAN MASAOKA, MANAGEMENT ISSUES
www.management-issues.com

Whose responsibility is it to “do something” about a board member who is AWOL, deadwood, undependable, a procrastinator, or worse? Answer: Yours! Every board member shares in the responsibility to involve each board member in contributing to the wellbeing of the board and the organisation. If you are the board president or an officer, your responsibilities include monitoring non-participation and intervening with board members when necessary. In some cases, you may need to talk with the executive director about improving the way he or she works with board members. If you’re the executive director, you may need to discuss the situation with board leadership.

There are two things you must do in the case of a board member who is not participating. First, you must do something. The problem is likely only to get worse, and non-participating board members have a demoralising impact on even the best of boards. Second, be confident and hopeful. Many board members just need a little reminder to be more conscientious, and others will be grateful that you’ve given them a graceful way to relinquish tasks, or even leave the board. Things will work out.

Short-term strategies

• Check to be sure that expectations were made clear to the board member before he or she joined the board. “I know you joined the board recently and I’m not sure that you realise that we ask all board members to attend the annual dinner and, hopefully, to help sell tickets. Let me explain to you what most board members do, so you can see whether you’ll be able to work on this with us.”

• Hold a board discussion at which expectations are reconsidered and re-affirmed. Agree on a list of expectations for every board member.

• Be sensitive to possible health issues or personal reasons why a good board member isn’t participating as much as he or she has in the past.

• Transfer responsibilities to someone else. “I’m concerned about finishing the revision of the personnel policies. Since you’re so busy, maybe it would work out for the best if John took your notes on the policies and developed a first draft.”

• Together with the board member, explore whether he or she really has the time right now to be able to be an active board member. “I’m calling to check in with you since you haven’t been able to make a meeting in the last several months. Are you just temporarily a lot busier than usual? We really want to have your participation, but if it isn’t realistic, perhaps we should see if there’s a less time-consuming way than board membership for you to be involved.”

“He never comes to meetings or does anything. Why does he even stay on the board?”

“She always says she’ll take care of it and then she doesn’t follow through. AAAGH!”
Longer-term strategies

- Make it possible for individuals to take a “leave of absence” from the board if they have health, work, or other reasons why they cannot participate fully for a while. An individual can, for example, take 6-months ‘maternity leave’ or ‘disability leave’.
- Have a board discussion or a written board survey on what makes it difficult for people to participate fully. “Are there things we can change about the frequency, day, time, or length of board meetings that would make it easier for you to attend?” “Are there things about the way that board meetings are conducted that would make it easier for you to attend, or that would give you more reason to want to attend?”
- Consider whether board participation is meaningful to board members. Have lunch with some of the semi-active members and/or the executive director. “I’m sensing that board participation just isn’t as substantive or significant as some board members want it to be. What do you think are the reasons, and what do you think we can do to make board membership more meaningful?”
- Revise what is expected of board members. Perhaps responsibilities have been given to a board member that are unrealistic for any but the super-board-member. Reduce the number of committees and utilise short-term task forces instead. Redesign jobs and responsibilities to fit the ability of a busy achiever to accomplish them.

ROAD TRANSPORT TRAINING

The Transport Industries Skills Centre Inc., trading as Road Transport Training is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Providing Nationally recognised training and assessments for the Transport and allied industries in Tasmania.

Road Transport Training currently conducts training courses and assessments for;

- All classes of Heavy Vehicles
- Forklift
- Transport of Dangerous Goods and Explosives
- Taxi Driver training courses
- Defensive and Effective driving courses
- 4WD training courses
- Professional Log Truck Driver accreditation (for entry to Gunn’s mills)
- Livestock (volume loading) courses
- Certificate I-III in Transport and Distribution (Road Transport) for Furniture Removalists.

Heavy vehicle driver training courses and licence tests are conducted from locations in Hobart, Launceston and the North West.

Specially equipped vehicles are provided for Medium Rigid, Heavy Rigid and Heavy Combination licence classes.

Forklift Operator Training courses and licence tests are conducted regularly at our Hobart premises, and ‘On-Site’ at other locations throughout Tasmania, subject to the availability of suitable resources and facilities.

Bulk Dangerous Goods licence courses and re-Accreditation courses are conducted regularly in Hobart, Launceston and the North West, as are courses in the transport of Explosives.

Licensed Passenger Vehicle Certificate (TAXI) courses are conducted regularly in Hobart, Launceston and the North West, using our specially equipped Taxi training vehicle.

Defensive and Effective Driving courses are provided on demand, and are usually conducted ‘On-Site’ state wide, as are 4WD training courses.

Professional Log Truck driver courses are conducted regularly at locations in Hobart, Launceston & Burnie.

Persons successfully completing courses eligible for a National qualification are issued with a Statement of Attainment detailing the units completed.

For further Information contact the offices of Road Transport Training at 5 Lamb place Cambridge 7170.
Phone 6248 5455. Fax 6248 5624.
email: admin@RoadTransportTraining.org.au

www.RoadTransportTraining.org.au

Driver Training & Licence Testing

Heavy Vehicles
Forklift
Taxi
Dangerous Goods
more...

6248 5455 admin@RoadTransportTraining.org.au
One of the interesting things about generational change is that we tend to look at the other generation and wonder “Why can’t they be like us?” There are well-documented circumstances which will affect how businesses are managed in the future, and SCOPE Local Community Partnerships help address these and make the transition of young people from education to working lives easier for all.

The differences between the values and priorities of young people and older generations need to be acknowledged and the team at SCOPE are working hard to bridge the gap. Their primary objective is the education of schools, businesses and parents, with that information to flow on to young people.

What can SCOPE do for you?

SCOPE’s programs and initiatives are designed to bring young people and business together, either in the business or school environment, to not only provide young people with valuable information about the business, industry, training or education required, but also to give employers an introduction to young people, which takes away the uncertainty of the unknown for many businesses.

SCOPE is not a recruitment service, nor do they provide work experience - in the traditional way, although some of the businesses for whom they have arranged programs and events, have sourced apprentices and employees from the student groups with whom they have worked. SCOPE provides valuable linkages and resources to all facets of the community, to prepare Hobart and Southern Tasmania for inevitable skill shortages and to help ensure that the workforce of the future is as prepared as possible.

An example of an Adopt-a-School project, facilitated by SCOPE Local Community Partnerships, is selected Year 7 and Year 10 students from Rokeby High School having the opportunity of working with Clarence City Council’s Horticultural Department to learn about the importance of saving water... and designing a great native garden at the same time. The students will design a water-wise garden that they will build later as part of the Performing Arts Centre environment at the school.

The project will provide valuable work skills and also address identified skills shortages within the community. Clarence City Council will further assist students with refining their designs in AutoCAD and consider the value of the project is in helping young people contribute to community initiatives and gain a better understanding of what councils do. There are winners all around! A visit to the Council’s Old Rosny Farm water-wise garden was an important part in learning which native plants to choose and what design features to consider in their plans for their own water-wise garden.

For more information on how SCOPE can help your Council or organisation, phone 6245 7823.

Southern Career Opportunities through Partnerships and Enterprise (SCOPE) is an incorporated not-for-profit community-based organisation, and part of Colony 47’s range of programs. SCOPE is contracted by the Australian Government and funded through the Department of Education, Science and Training to conduct Local Community Partnership programs, as part of Careers Advice Australia.