President's Report 3
Training Provides Leg up on Learning Curve

Chief Executive Officer's Report 4
The Road to Recognition

Faces of Local Government 6
Five Minutes with Mayor Albert Van Zetten
Star Performers
Valentine Officially Hobart's Longest Serving Lord Mayor
2009 Local Government Election Results

News and Reviews 14
Investigation Finds No Benefit to East Coast Council Merger
A Strong Vision for Women in Local Government
Sport and Recreation Framework for People with a Disability
Social Inclusion Update
Council Welcomes Federal Funding
Exercise your Power to Choose
Hobart Reaches out to Homeless
Top Building Designers Reap Rewards
New Guidelines Pave the Way for Solar Installations
Heritage Reforms Underway
Excellence in Greenspace Design Awarded
Launceston Receives Heritage and Culture Award
Conversations on the Couch
Art at the Heart
Youth Strike Gold in Crimestoppers Challenge
World-Class Mountain Bike Park Opened in Clarence
Report Sheds Light on the Early Years
News in Brief

Policy 28
Looking Ahead to 2011
Think Big. Work Local

People and Performance 31
Dealing with Difficult People
Communications for a New Council
Not Time Management – Event Management

Health and Wellbeing 34
Seniors Embrace the Opportunity to Get Going
Riverside Primary Gets off to a Healthy Start
Local Government Supporting Active Communities
Rural Alive and Well Program Extended

Environment 38
New Household Chemical Drop-off Service Launched
Council Carbon Emissions Come Under Scrutiny
Environmental Scorekeeping Results in Better Performance Outcomes
Water Corporations Moving On
Councils Urged to Celebrate 20 Years of Clean Up Australia Day
Local Dive Clubs Join Global Underwater Clean Up
Anti-Littering Partners Put a Lid on Rubbish
Launceston Works Towards a Greener Future

Tourism and Events 47
Land Ho for the Seafarer’s Festival
Burnie Jobs Expo a Huge Success
New Tool Kit to Assist Event Organisers
Dogs Day Out Offers Fun For All
Food Trail Guide Launched
Launch of Great Western Tiers Cycle Touring Trails
Great Short Walks Republished
Underground Machine Captures Burnie’s Heritage

ICT 52
Digital Media Not Reaching All
Dealing with Spam
Government Open to Discussion on Broadband

Business and Finance 54
We’re living longer than ever - will your super savings last
Taking a Proactive Approach to PR
Help at Hand with SuperFriend
Veolia Welcomes New General Manager

Roads and Engineering 58
Helpful Hints for Fleet Managers
Tasman to Extend Safer Speeds Trial
New Truck Safety Rule to Save Lives

Around the Nation 60

Diary Dates 62

Advertiser’s Index 64

COVER PHOTO: ‘Bayside Bowes’ designed by Mike Cleaver - winner of the 2009 Building Designers Association of Tasmania Awards
Photography by Richard Eastwood

December 2009 LGAT News
The Glamorgan Spring Bay and Break O’ Day Council elections, being held this month, cap off yet another exciting and challenging year for Local Government in Tasmania. It’s a nail-biting time for those candidates involved and we wish them every success.

For the results of the 2009 Local Government Elections for all other Tasmanian municipalities, head to page 10. If there was ever proof that “every vote counts”, then a notable example would be Ald Albert van Zetten who was narrowly re-elected as Mayor by just three votes. Ald van Zetten reveals what was going through his mind in Five Minutes with Mayor Albert van Zetten, on page 6. Another high note of the elections was the achievement of Tasmania’s Lord Mayor Rob Valentine, who gained almost 81% of the total vote and, in the process, became Hobart’s longest-serving Lord Mayor.

Councils are employing some innovative means of engaging the community in meaningful dialogue. One example, featured on page 23, is Kingborough Council, which has been using a mobile, red couch as a clever conversation starter with the municipality’s youth, to discuss the transport issues they face. The project has enjoyed considerable success and is a terrific example of a council interacting at a grassroots level with members of the community to gain valuable input on a local issue.

In a first for Tasmania, residents around the state now have access to a household chemical drop-off service, thanks to a partnership between Local Government and the State Government. The 2009-10 service commenced in November in the state’s south and will conclude at Launceston in March 2010. We trust that councils will actively promote the service to residents. Further details about the ChemSafe Homes Tasmania program can be found on page 38.

The striking image on the cover of this edition of LGAT News, taken by photographer Richard Eastwood, is the winner of the 2009 Building Designers Association of Tasmania Awards, Bayside Bows, located at Lauderdale. For a closer look at the stunning design by Mike Cleaver and other innovative and energy efficient housing designs that were recognised at the 2009 Awards, head to page 18.

LGAT management and staff, the team at Nova Design and Print, and Advertising Media and Associates wish our members, associates, readers, editorial contributors and advertisers a joyous and restful Christmas and New Year.

Seasons Greetings from LGAT News
To those elected members who were successful at the recent elections, congratulations! I would particularly like to welcome those who are new to the role. For those who chose not to stand, or who were not successful, it is appropriate that your commitment and achievements be recognised at this time.

The role of an elected member brings with it significant responsibility. Where people choose to live and raise their families is largely a product of the environment, an environment over which councils have an enormous influence. As a councillor, you have the ability to affect the quality of life of those living within your community.

Entering Local Government at this time brings with it new challenges. The recent water and sewerage reforms, the ongoing Local Government sustainability debate and the potential surprises that a looming State Government election can throw up, places elected members in the hot seat. However, a sound vision and belief in the future of your community will stand you in good stead.

While several platforms and causes would have been touted by candidates during the election campaign, it is important that each elected member takes responsibility to present their respective councils as professional and sound decision-making bodies that deliver the priorities of their communities. For newly elected members there can be a steep learning curve, regardless of their personal or professional background and experience.

All councils offer an induction program for newly elected members and you are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities made available to you. You will be provided, among other things, with an outline of the planning function of councils, council finances, how council meetings work and the asset management processes. If you feel that your knowledge is lacking in a particular area, don’t be afraid to ask for further help or assistance. Your council and community will benefit from having an informed and aware team of elected members.

The Association also offers programs to assist elected members to enhance their knowledge and skills. A planning short course is currently being finalised with newly elected members in mind. The course will be offered over two weekends in late January/early February next year. It will provide a comprehensive overview of the planning process, structures and instruments, and will equip participants with a good understanding of how the system fits together, how it works, and the role of council in the various processes.

On 20-21 February 2010, a weekend workshop for newly elected members will be held in Launceston to provide an overview of good governance, the role and responsibilities of councillors, asset management, meeting procedures and finances. The weekend workshop also provides a wonderful opportunity for networking and for having your questions answered. I would encourage all elected members to undertake development courses and induction days offered by your respective councils and the Association as part of your commitment to a professional Local Government sector. We all have a responsibility to be informed and to develop the necessary skills to face the challenges that lay ahead.

In closing, I must make reference to correspondence I received following publication of the September 2009 edition of LGAT News. Unfortunately the mail was sent anonymously and consisted of hand written comments over the “Presidents Report”. Whilst always encouraging comments and questions, I believe on this occasion it would have been far more beneficial if the author had made a telephone call so the issues could have been openly discussed and resolved. My door is always open so please make contact if you wish to share any concerns or ideas of benefit to the operations of the Association and Tasmania’s Local Government sector.
One major issue looming on the national front which is occupying the efforts at the Association at the present time is Constitutional recognition.

Constitutional recognition has long been the Holy Grail for Local Government and while several attempts have been made to achieve the elusive goal, the timing or broad-ranging support has never quite been there in terms of political parties and the Australian public. The present campaign is seeking to ensure that the lessons learnt from the past are heeded and that a comprehensive and adequately resourced process is put into place to maximise the chances of success.

Local Government employs almost 170,000 Australians and spends around $20 billion each year. Its role in supporting Australia’s economy and communities is significant. However, the Australian Constitution which governs the legal framework of the nation does not formally recognise the role of Local Government. Reforming the Constitution is about recognising the proper place for councils in the Australian system of government, highlighting the importance of democratic representation at the local level and removing an antiquated funding arrangement that presently exists between the Commonwealth and Local Governments.

A critical first step in this process has involved the development of a strategic framework within which to progress the priorities and address the challenges that need to be overcome to get the matter to the stage of a referendum. This is not a given and much work is required simply to get the issue on the referendum agenda, let alone the work necessary to get the referendum question right and the material necessary to support the affirmative case.

The challenges are significant. Making the case for constitutional change is imperative. It needs to be clear, concise, relevant and focused. Negative perceptions of Local Government need to be addressed. People are not going to support a change to the Constitution that benefits Local Government unless they are generally positive about the sector. There is much confusion and ignorance in the community about the Constitution itself and the actual role of Local Government. Seeking a change to something about which people are unaware, tends to see a cautious and conservative approach resulting in a no change outcome. There is also the matter of timing. Many people are still feeling the impacts of the global financial crisis and the flow-on repercussions. They, and the Government, may not be inclined to want to contemplate dealing with constitutional recognition when there are “more important” matters to be addressed.

Work is progressing on the development of fact sheets and information brochures and the identification of ‘Constitutional Ambassadors’. A range of stakeholders, members and committees across the political spectrum are also being targeted for lobbying to ensure that there is a clear understanding of intent and broad ranging support. Qualitative and quantitative research within communities across the country has been undertaken to gain an understanding of attitudes towards levels of government, understand any prejudices toward Local Government, explore information gaps and assess opinions based on state, size of council, gender and other demographic variables.

The task is huge and the surface has not yet been scratched. There are many issues to be addressed and it is important that each task undertaken in the process is well considered and appropriately resourced. To date, the professional and expert resources being utilised have highlighted the enormity of this entire task, particularly in terms of the value proposition that needs to be developed for the voter. The image of councils is paramount in this entire campaign and it will be important to highlight the value of councils to the community and the positives they bring to people’s lives. On a positive note, the recent statewide community survey outcomes did paint councils in a very good light in terms of broad satisfaction levels but this will need to be built upon and sustained for a successful campaign.

At this stage there has not been a call to arms of councils but once the campaign comes out from behind the closed doors, where the research and lobbying is presently being undertaken, it is expected that each and every council will have a significant role to play in securing the support of their community in ticking the appropriate box on Referendum Day. While the big question remains as to when will that day will be, it is abundantly clear across Local Government that we need to make sure that whatever day it is and whenever it is, it is the right day and the answer is the right one as well.
Doing business while travelling doesn’t have to be hard work. At Country Club we offer all the facilities you need to get the job done – and have a great time when the workday is over. Our well-equipped business centre, in-room broadband access and complimentary valet parking allow you to conduct your business with ease.

At the end of the day, unwind in one of our many bars and restaurants or enjoy corporate drinks hosted in the award-winning Terrace Restaurant. We’re the perfect base for doing business in the north.

**Call today and ask about our corporate rates on 1800 132 870**

or simply e-mail corporate@federalgroup.com.au