news and reviews
Highlights of the 98th Local Government Conference

Tasmania’s councils are working hard to make Tasmania a great place to live. Not content to rest on their laurels, this year’s Local Government Conference was all about striving for improvements to ensure a sustainable future.

Over 180 elected members, general managers and officers from councils around the state converged at Wrest Point in Hobart from 12-14 May for the 98th Local Government Conference, to share knowledge and explore ideas about the long-term sustainability of Local Government.

LGAT President, Barry Easther, said the conference theme, Up Up Up – a Focus on Excellence and Innovation, appropriately highlighted the necessity for Local Government to be continually mindful of the need for improvement in all aspects of their activities. “Striving for improvement should be our constant goal,” Clr Easther said. “Without the right focus on moving forward with the times, be it in the realm of information technology, health, sustainable planning or resource sharing, Tasmanian councils will be left behind.”

Clr Easther said the conference theme reflected the challenges our constantly changing world brings to Tasmanian councils and the need to be responsive to new innovations, ideas and suggestions.

The Local Government Conference, coordinated by the Local Government Association of Tasmania, in association with the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia and Local Government Managers Australia, addressed not only a range of challenges facing Local Government today, but highlighted future issues likely to affect the sector.

Finding Excellence in an Era of Change

Graduate of The University of Sydney and Managing Director of the Centre for Skills Development, Dominic Thurbon, gave an energetic keynote address about how Tasmanian Local Government could be a nation-leader in times of ambiguity by embracing innovation and change.

Mr Thurbon said that Local Government must see the changing face of business as a positive, not a negative. “We are living through a revolution in human communications, driven by rapid and significant changes in communicative and social technologies, and the driving force behind these changes is the rise of web 2.0 tools, social networking, content sharing and knowledge aggregation,” Mr Thurbon said.

“While many businesses, including Local Government, may be afraid to embrace these changes, this communication revolution is making it fundamentally easier to build connections and share information, expertise and ideas.”

By using entertaining anecdotes and humour to amuse and engage the crowd, Mr Thurbon definitely inspired conference delegates to improve their channels of communication, both in and out of the workplace.

Planning a Sustainable Future for Tasmania

Dr Carol Boyle, an expert in clean technology, waste minimisation and planning and creating sustainable infrastructure, travelled to Tasmania from her home base in New Zealand to address delegates at the conference, giving a keynote speech on day one, and running a workshop program on day two.

Dr Boyle talked about the need for sustainable cities with sustainable infrastructure, an issue that is becoming ever more prevalent as Tasmania’s population increases. “Problems such as increasing population and rising sea levels due to global warming look set to place a huge strain on local infrastructure and Tasmanian councils should take proactive steps to combat these problems,” she said.

“Local councils need to proactively investigate the problems they are going to encounter in the future and then put long-term, sustainable infrastructure in place to ensure they can meet the needs of the future, and there are no guarantees that current technologies will achieve the level of sustainability needed to preserve Tasmania’s reputation as an environmental haven.”

“New technologies, new materials and new systems are constantly being developed to provide sustainable solutions to meet the needs of urban populations while preserving our quality of life. Local Government
absolutely needs to think proactively when it comes to planning for a sustainable future,” she said.

**Broadband Rollout Something to Tweet About**

Keeping with a running theme of technological advancements, expert in broadband technology, Brad Wynter, led conference delegates through an explanation of current developments in the National Broadband Network and new social media tools relevant to Local Government.

Mr Wynter, who travelled from Victoria to speak with delegates, said that the roll-out of the NBN would level the playing field for rural and regional areas that have been disadvantaged because of unavailability or the previous high cost of broadband across most of Tasmania.

“Governments are already communicating with their municipalities through new media such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, as well as through traditional media like newspapers and TV. Local Governments must work to develop an understanding of the opportunities that broadband has already created and investigate how to incorporate them into their own communication strategies before they get left behind.

“Clever councils won’t ignore the internet or social media as a communication tool as high speed internet access becomes available to all Tasmanians; they will take steps to embrace it as we move into the future,” he said.

**Active Design Worth Planning For**

Stephanie Knox, an expert in urban and social planning, spoke to delegates about planning and designing communities that increase the incidental physical activity built into a normal working day, before taking delegates on a walking tour of the Wrest Point area to demonstrate both good and bad planning decisions.

Ms Knox said with obesity and unhealthy lifestyles shortening the life span of a large proportion of Tasmania’s population, Local Government and businesses must find ways to actively encourage healthy living and regular exercise. “Tasmania rates poorly against the national average on several measures of health, including higher than average rates of cardiovascular disease and preventable risk factors such as obesity and smoking,” she said.

“By providing walking and cycling trails, community focused meeting places like parks and streets that are designed for pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles, Local Government can contribute to improving the general health of all Tasmanians.”

**Civic Mutual Plus Conference Dinner**

On 13 May, 330 delegates enjoyed a wonderful evening of fine food and wine at the Civic Mutual Plus Conference Dinner, held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart. In keeping with the futuristic conference theme, the ballroom was transformed into an intergalactic themed wonderland.

During the evening the winners of the 2010 Local Government Awards for Excellence were announced, highlighting an exceptional year of community initiatives in Local Government across Tasmania. In total, 25 nominations from 13 councils were submitted for this year’s Awards, with the four winners announced at the dinner.

After the awards, guests danced the night away to the sounds of Hobart-based cover band, Sugartrain.

**Special Thanks to our Sponsors and Supporters**

The Local Government Conference has been made possible through the generous sponsorship support of: **Platinum Sponsor** – Civic Mutual Plus, a division of MAV Insurance; **Gold Sponsors** – Commonwealth Bank, Marsh, Bistec Tasmania and Kompan Playful Living; **Silver Sponsors** – Pitt & Sherry, TechnologyOne, Thorn Lighting and Regional Development Australia (Tasmania). LGAT would like to acknowledge our **Valued Contributors** – Stornoway, Print Mail Logistics, Tasmanian Public Finance Corporation, Country Club Tasmania, Simmons Wolfhagen, Wrest Point, Crucial Displays, Font Public Relations, Quadrant and the Premier’s Physical Activity Council. Thanks also to our conference partners, IPWEA and LGMA, and to the many trade exhibitors who supported this year’s event.
**Wrest Point Competition Winner**

Congratulations to Ian McCallum of Devonport City Council, who registered as a conference delegate and was drawn as the winner of a Wrest Point Special Occasions Package for two people, valued at over $850. The prize features two nights accommodation in a Tower Executive Suite, two full buffet breakfasts in the Wrest Point coffee shop each morning, dinner for two at the Point revolving restaurant to the value of $150 and a bottle of sparkling wine on arrival. Thank you to Wrest Point for providing this fantastic prize.

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Launceston City Council received two awards at the 2010 Local Government Awards for Excellence and was joined in the winner’s circle by Brighton and Kingborough Councils which also took out prizes for exceptional council initiatives.

Announced at the Civic Mutual Plus Conference Dinner on 13 May as part of the 98th Local Government Conference, the awards aim to promote outstanding achievement and inspire leading management practice and continuous improvement among Tasmania’s 29 councils, recognising initiatives that have, or are delivering, a positive result for communities and the Local Government workplace.

This year, 25 nominations were received from 13 councils throughout the state, showcasing a diversity of significant council projects. LGAT congratulates the winners and finalists of this year’s awards and would like to thank all those councils who participated including Brighton, Burnie, Central Coast, Clarence, Devonport, Flinders, Glenorchy, Hobart, Huon Valley, Kingborough, Latrobe, Launceston, and the Northern Midlands Councils.

Proudly sponsored by Civic Mutual Plus, this year’s awards were presented by the new Minister for Local Government, Hon Bryan Green, MP.

Delivering Excellence for our Communities Award

Winner
Conversations in Kingston: Youth Transport Project
KINGBOROUGH COUNCIL

Kingborough Council took a simple yet innovative approach to youth consultation on transport issues in their municipality with the use of an iconic red couch which travelled throughout Kingborough to initiate a series of conversations with local youth. The red couch, accompanied by an interviewer and a film crew, was placed in strategic locations throughout the Kingborough area and beyond, including local high schools, the University of Tasmania, bus stops, aboard the Bruny Island ferry, the main street of Kingston, Blackmans Bay Beach and other public spaces. The entire process was filmed and a 40-minute documentary and a report with recommendations were produced.

Apart from leading to strategies now embedded in the Kingborough Integrated Transport Strategy, the Council is also already actioning ideas generated from the project to improve transport options for young people in their municipality.

Runners up
Home Energy Audit Toolkit (HEAT)
HOBART CITY COUNCIL

Submitted by Hobart City Council on behalf of the Southern Tasmanian Council’s Authority and Brighton, Central Highlands, Clarence City, Derwent Valley, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Huon Valley, Kingborough, Sorell, Southern Midlands, Tasman and Launceston City Councils, this project provides households with a Home Energy Audit Toolkit (HEAT), specifically developed to allow users to undertake energy audits in their own homes.

These toolkits also provide practical and affordable suggestions to give users a thorough understanding of energy use that could lead to real savings in individual homes.
CRSP Update

CRSP continues to expand its influence across the 21 participating municipalities. Several new projects have been introduced in recent months.

Kentish Motorcycle Safety

Congratulations to the Kentish Road Safety Committee which has developed a new motorcycle safety brochure, through support from the Motor Accidents Insurance Board.

The brochure called Ride Kentish Safely provides important safety information and advice about local riding conditions for visiting motorcyclists.

The brochure, which is now available at many community outlets, has been well received by local and visiting riders.

What’s Around the Corner on West Coast roads?

The local West Coast Community Road Safety Committee has introduced You Don’t Know What’s Around the Corner?

This program targets visitors to the region by increasing awareness of difficult driving conditions, which are often encountered on West Coast roads.

Key messages promote awareness of the dangers presented by ice and snow in cold conditions, native wildlife at dawn and dusk, the presence of heavy vehicles and winding bends. Planning rest stops and parking safely off the road are also emphasised.

While the program is directed towards visitors, it also has significant benefits for local residents. Watch out for these messages if travelling down the west.

Sorell Youth Gig

Recently the Sorell Council and local Youth Task Force conducted the Southern Beaches Big Gig in the Gardens. As part of the event a CRSP road safety activity was included, where young locals entered a competition to identify driver distraction factors.

A mobile phone, CD, spider, coffee cup and fast food package were concealed in the interior of a crashed car for the observers to find as part of a competition.

High school students look for distraction ‘clues’ in the crashed car.

MORE INFORMATION?

Anyone interested in obtaining more information regarding the CRSP Program can contact Project Manager, Geoff Frier (DIER) by phone 62 334861 or email geoff.frier@dier.tas.gov.au
Early Childhood Delta Dog Safe Program
LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

The Early Childhood Delta Dog Safe Program has been running in the Launceston City Council area for a number of years now, providing a valuable and effective educational presentation to primary schools to prevent childhood injury involving dogs – with minimal cost and resource output to Council.

The program is structured so that children first receive important messages about how to behave around dogs, participate in activities to reinforce what they have learned, then receive show bags to again reinforce their learning and to help educate parents and family members at home.

Delivering Excellence for our People Award

Winner
Employer of Choice
LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

The only Tasmanian council to be awarded a State Government Employer of Choice Award in 2009, Launceston City Council has altered its day-to-day activities to achieve continuous improvement and cultural change by providing employees with a working environment that is innovative and supportive.

Council’s work culture encourages new ideas and open communication where employees provide formal feedback through bi-annual surveys, as well as directly contributing through committees. In partnership with its employees, Council has achieved a workplace which provides initiatives that attract new employees and assist in the retention, good morale and satisfaction of existing employees.

Runner up
Workplace Bike Program
DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL

Tackling both health and wellbeing, and reducing the impacts of climate change, Devonport City Council’s Workplace Bike Program is an example of a great initiative where Council has supported employee-provided ideas to improve workplace health and wellbeing.

As part of the program, Council acquired two bicycles and their associated accessories and, where possible, Council staff are encouraged to cycle to work related activities such as site visits and meetings.

Demonstrating excellence in delivering the program, participating staff must undertake a training course covering bicycle safety and maintenance. Bicycles are also available out of work hours, promoting healthy lifestyles both at work and at home. Linked into Council’s broader health and wellbeing program, the Workplace Bike Program also demonstrates community leadership in the importance of being active.

Delivering Excellence in Natural or Built Environments Award

Winner
Launceston Aquatic
LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

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social, recreational, sporting and health and wellbeing activities for all ages and community groups.

Construction of the new facility was undertaken after extensive community consultation to ensure minimal disruption during the construction process and maximum satisfaction within the community once it was completed. Environmental factors were kept in mind through the implementation of sustainable design initiatives to minimise environmental impact and operational costs by reducing water and electrical usage.

Runners up

Rosny Park Tennis Club Car Park
CLARENCE CITY COUNCIL

In a first for Australian Local Government, Clarence City Council used recycled, crushed glass as sand replacement in asphaltic concrete at the Rosny Park Tennis Club Car Park. Clarence City Council leveraged funding from the private sector for this project, which potentially opens new markets for the 20,000 tonnes of recycled glass collected each year in Tasmania through Veolia’s statewide kerbside collection service.

As a result of this project, the environmental footprint of Local Government may be substantially reduced in future, with this one application avoiding the mining of 53 tonnes of natural sand. As well as the product, the resulting cost benefit analysis will be of interest to all councils who wish to employ environmentally friendly surfacing techniques.

Devonport Road Network Strategy
DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL

Devonport City Council has taken a proactive approach to the management of their road network by developing a Road Network Strategy that will provide a long-term vision to meet the needs of community, business, tourism and industry within the municipality.

This consultative project allows Council to identify and track infrastructure priorities over the next three years and the model is easily adaptable to other councils. Devonport is commended as an early adopter of this approach which integrates areas of asset management, regional connectivity, economic development, traffic management, road safety and sustainable transport.

Demonstrating Operational Excellence Award

Winner
Common Service Provision Model
BRIGHTON COUNCIL

One of the smaller local governments among Tasmania’s 29 municipalities, Brighton Council has developed strategic agreements for resource sharing with six Tasmanian councils, selling the expertise of its professional staff and particular services to councils which don’t have the resources.
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Brighton benefits from the income it receives from selling its services, its clients benefit through reduced costs and staffing requirements, and the Brighton community benefits from enhanced services and minimal rates increases. In addition, Council has developed operational software that is now used by nine Tasmanian councils, three councils in Western Australia, two in New South Wales and Suva City Council in Fiji.

**Runner up**

**Corporate Advertising**

**DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL**

As part of a broader community consultation program, Devonport City Council learned that many of its community members felt they were not adequately informed about council activities and, as a consequence, did not provide input into local developments and activities. To build community trust and confidence and improve the provision of information about Council’s activities and services, Devonport City Council developed a weekly corporate page in the local newspaper, after learning from the community that it was their preferred source of information. As well as improving services to the community and increasing positive promotion of Council, the weekly corporate page achieved significant savings in advertising expenditure.

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Multi-million Dollar Housing Development for Brighton

A housing development comprising 400 dwellings is underway at a former Brighton army site, north of Hobart. The largest housing development in Brighton for 30 years, the project was officially launched by Brighton Mayor Tony Foster.

Brighton Council has approved the development of 328 lots to accommodate 400 new dwellings on the 62-hectare former army estate at a value of approximately $120 million. The project is being undertaken by developers Touma International, with the first lots now being prepared.

Clr Foster said the development would help meet the growing demand for residential development in the area. “Importantly, it demonstrates how developers are recognising the growth of the municipality and vision that we have for future development for the area,” Clr Foster said.

“Over the next six years Brighton’s population is set to climb from 14,000 to 22,000. This exciting development will allow young people to stay in the district in which they have grown up, and encourage others to move to the area,” he said. “It will also complement other major projects that are happening here including the Brighton bypass and the growth of the industrial estate as more business and industry relocates because of the Brighton transport hub.”

The estate will feature a through road for public transport access and the larger blocks, around the estate’s perimeter, were precluded from unit development.
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Put Yourself in Our Shoes

As part of the Year of Women in Local Government, Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA) Tasmania asked each of Tasmania’s 29 councils to contribute a shoe that reflected the character, vitality, attraction and essence of their Local Government area to become part of an art installation.

The art installation was unveiled at the Country Club Tasmania/ALGWA Cocktail Hour, held during the annual Local Government Conference in May, providing a stunning focal point in the exhibition foyer at Wrest Point.

Shoes were boldly decorated, pasted, painted, or constructed and ranged from sandals to gumboots, a very valuable boot worn during the filming of the Mad Max movie, a miner’s boot and a new shoe whipped off a Councillor’s foot. The King Island and Flinders Island Councils shoes were distinctive and elegant through their use of shells.

Displayed on a spiralling tube, the installation was designed to create a sense of the energy and vitality that local governments instil. The eye-catching exhibit was designed as temporary art piece but its life will be preserved in the form of a postcard to be used by the ALGWA as part of their ongoing campaign to promote the role of women in Local Government.

Tasmanian Secretary of the ALGWA, Clr Alwyn Friedersdorff of Waratah-Wynyard Council conceived and organised the installation in honour of the Year of Women in Local Government, along with a signature cocktail, named Women’s Influence, that was enthusiastically tasted by guests during the evening. Women’s Influence was concocted by Clr Vaughan Pendlebury, also of Waratah-Wynyard Council.

**Women’s Influence Cocktail Recipe**

- 20 ml Chambord Royale Deluxe Liqueur
- 30 ml Lucaston Park pure apple juice
- Sparkling wine to fill
- Sugar for rim of glass
- Wild hibiscus flower in syrup

1. Frost the rim of the glass with sugar
2. Place a hibiscus flower in the bottom of the glass and add the Chambord
3. Add the apple juice
4. Top up glass with sparkling wine
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New Dog Laws Commence Soon

New dog control laws aimed at improving public safety in Tasmania highlight the responsibility of dog owners to properly control their dogs.

Councils will continue to have a central role in implementing the dog control laws, with general managers having the power to enforce the new requirements which include:

- Improved powers for councils to seize and detain dogs
- A new noise abatement process to tackle problem barking dogs
- A requirement that a dog, where it is on a road or in any area declared by the council as one where a dog must be on a lead, be held on a lead not more than two metres long
- A requirement that a dog, if in an area where it is not required to be on a lead, be under the effective control of the owner at all times.

The new laws also place stronger controls on dogs declared to be dangerous dogs, and on certain breeds that are predisposed to aggressive behaviour. Dangerous dogs and restricted breed dogs must be de-sexed and micro-chipped, and wear an approved collar at all times.

Such dogs must always be muzzled and held on a lead when in a public place.

When not under the control of a person, a dangerous dog must be kept in an enclosure that meets certain standards, as outlined in the Dog Control Regulations 2010. A restricted breed dog must be securely confined to private premises when not under the control of a person. Dangerous or restricted breed dog warning signs must be erected at each entrance to a property where such a dog is kept and a dangerous dog may only be transferred to a new owner with council approval.

All of the above measures commence on 1 July, and an additional new requirement that all dogs be micro-chipped will commence on 1 July 2011. This gives dog owners another year to arrange for their dogs to be micro-chipped. The Local Government Division is working with the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Animal Management Officers Association of Tasmania to put the new laws in place.

Food for Thought

Hobart City Council has announced a free online product, I’M ALERT, to help food business operators promote safe food handling practices in a convenient and easy manner.

Lord Mayor of Hobart, Ald Rob Valentine said that safe food handling practices are of paramount importance to achieve compliance with the Food Standards Code. “Education is essential for food business operators to ensure they are aware of what is expected of them and how to comply with food safety legislation. This new training tool allows for a nationwide consistent approach to food hygiene training in line with the Food Standards Code,” Ald Valentine said.

“The I’M ALERT system (A Learning and Educational Resource Tool) has many benefits for local businesses. For example, it is available online via the Hobart City Council website and available to any kind of internet connection. It’s free! It’s very convenient and allows the food handler to be trained at a time and place convenient for them.”

This new system has easily manageable sections reflecting all the important sections within the Food Standards Code and includes narration. The user has the ability to select only the required sections, allowing it to be tailored to individual’s job descriptions. The easy to use, interactive program also features printable templates like cleaning schedules and temperature monitoring sheets.

While promoting consistency across the state and nationwide, the learner can print acknowledgement forms of skills and knowledge gained through the process, which can be used as evidence for compliance with the skills and knowledge requirement of the Food Standards Code,’ Ald Valentine said.

The I’M ALERT website is located at www.hobart.imalert.com.au.
The Mayor of Clarence, Ald Jock Campbell, has opened a community garden in Richmond named in honour of Tasmania’s first female Councillor in a rural council, the late Dr Margaret Helen Mitchell. Dr Mitchell was instrumental in protecting the built heritage of Richmond in the 1960s, preserving the village to make it the tourist icon it is today.

Ald Jock Campbell said that Dr Margaret Mitchell’s successful election onto Richmond Council allowed her to achieve a long-term vision for Richmond. “Dr Margaret Mitchell was instrumental in securing this land for community use and, as a founding member of the Richmond Preservation and Development Trust, was committed to protecting the built heritage of Richmond. She ensured that Richmond was acknowledged for its significant place as a colonial village and penal settlement,” Ald Campbell said.

The garden is landscaped with plants endemic to the Coal River Valley and the southern Tasmanian region, and features a boule court and giant chess board for community use. It also includes a pavilion containing panels with information on the history of the valley and its flora and fauna, including the Ramsar wetland at the mouth of the Coal River.

The naming is particularly significant as 2010 marks the Year of Women in Local Government. The garden’s construction was funded by the Tasmanian Community Fund, Clarence City Council and through in-kind and cash donations from the local community.

(L-R) Pictured at the opening of the new Richmond garden, Dr Margaret Mitchell’s daughter - Rowena Smith and husband - Dr Fergus Mitchell, Clarence City Council Mayor Jock Campbell, and Dianne Snowden, Chair, Richmond Advisory Committee.
It is almost a decade since discussion started on the need to address the gap between Australia’s building laws and the general non-discrimination requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The Federal Government has now launched the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards (Premises Standards) in Parliament and in doing so set Australia on the path towards greatly improved access in public buildings.

The Premises Standards aims to clearly set out the requirements for building access to a level that, as far as possible, eliminates discrimination. The effect of a Premises Standard is that owners, developers and managers of buildings used by the public are able to meet their obligations under the DDA (as they apply to buildings) by meeting the requirements of the Premises Standards.

**Improvements in Access**

Some of the major changes from the current BCA access requirements include:

- Increased requirements for the number of accessible units in hotel and motels
- The introduction of requirements for access into public swimming pools where the perimeter of the pool is greater than 40 metres
- Some improvements in signage in relation to accessible facilities
- Increases in the number of accessible entrances and doorways to buildings
- Increases in circulation space requirements in most areas such as in lifts, accessible toilets and at doorways
- The introduction of a requirement for passing and turning spaces on passageways in some situations
- The introduction of requirements for accessible facilities in some new or upgraded accommodation such as bed and breakfasts or cabins in holiday parks.

- Improvements in the types of lifts usable and access features within lifts
- Improvements in the number and distribution of accessible spaces in cinema and theatres
- The introduction of access requirements to certain common areas in new apartment blocks where short-term rented units are available
- Significant increases in the number and location of unisex accessible toilets and the introduction of ‘ambulant accessible cubicles’ in standard toilets

• Increases in the areas covered by hearing augmentation systems in rooms with a built in PA system

**Taking Effect**

The Premises Standards will apply to new buildings and new parts of existing buildings undergoing renovation or upgrade, taking effect from 1 May 2011. Existing buildings not undergoing any upgrade or renovation will continue to be covered by the existing complaints provisions of the DDA, as well as access issues not covered by the Premises Standards such as fit-out.

The delay in application until May 2011 allows all parties involved time to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the new requirements are effectively and rigorously applied. It also gives States and Territories time to make the envisaged changes to the BCA and relevant regulations to ensure consistency between the requirements of building and discrimination law in relation to the construction of buildings.

The Premises Standards contain many exciting and long overdue improvements in the design and construction of public buildings. Their adoption will significantly improve the safety and usability of buildings for all Australians and take us closer to addressing the regulatory duplication and inconsistency that currently exists in the building area.

Plant Ahead Program Growing on Clarence Community

Clarence City Council, in partnership with local community groups, aims to educate and assist people to create low-maintenance gardens through their Planting Ahead garden program.

The program helps people enjoy working in their gardens and highlights the financial and lifestyle benefits of growing their own food. A range of methods such as raised garden beds, mulching and the smart selection of plants requiring little water are the key platforms of Planting Ahead gardens. Once established, Planting Ahead gardens are perfect for those with limited mobility, or with limited time to spend in the garden.

Anyone interested in the Planting Ahead program can visit the Warrane-Mornington Neighbourhood Centre which now has its own low-maintenance garden built on the Planting Ahead principles. The community garden spans all ages and educates young and old in how to maintain an easy-care Planting Ahead garden.

The centre will use produce grown in the garden for programs such as senior’s lunches, playgroup and social activities. The Warrane-Mornington Community Garden was created with funding from the Planting Ahead program and the Warrane-Mornington Neighbourhood Centre management committee.

The centre is located at 150a Bligh Street, Warrane. Contact Leanne on (03) 6244 6346 for more information. To become a volunteer gardener or learn about Planting Ahead principles, contact Jan Abey on (03) 6245 8678, or Julie Andersson on (03) 6245 8780.

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Message from the Minister

I have come to Local Government at a dynamic time for the sector and I look forward to working with all councils and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on the many issues facing Tasmanian councils.

I am pleased to bring together once again the planning and Local Government portfolios. As planning is a major responsibility of councils, I believe it makes sense that they both fall within my portfolio responsibilities. I am particularly interested in talking with all of you regarding the future of the Local Government sector.

The challenge of sustainability of Local Government is one that I intend to address together in order to ensure that Local Government in Tasmania has a strong future. Sustainability requires joint solutions and I believe that we will achieve the best outcomes for our state if both spheres of government work together.

Much has already been done to strengthen and renew the Local Government sector. The development of statewide residential planning standards and the continuation of the regional planning approach are important ongoing tasks for the State Government and Local Government. I hope that this regional work in the planning arena will encourage even greater resource-sharing at a regional level in other areas of council operations.

I understand that implementing these planning reforms, as well as addressing climate change and broader sustainability issues, will require significant effort from councils and I recognise your contributions in these difficult areas. The work currently going on at the national level, through the Local Government and Planning Ministers’ Council and the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, provides great opportunities for Local Government in Tasmania.

Ongoing work on the development and implementation of long-term financial and asset management frameworks, as well as the development of a national local government workforce strategy, will help Tasmanian councils to address their financial viability and skills shortages. This work complements work already being done by LGAT and councils in these areas.

I fully support the Year of Women in Local Government and encourage all councils to continue working to increase the participation of women as elected members and senior managers at councils around the state. Maximising female talent is one way in which councils can address the skills issues they face.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr Jim Cox, who is missed in the Parliament but who I am sure is enjoying his retirement. Much of the work started under the stewardship of Mr Cox, particularly in relation to the sustainability and reform of the Local Government sector, will aid our progress over the coming years.

I look forward to working with you all in my new role as Minister for both Local Government and planning.

Hon Byran Green MP, Minister for Local Government

Vice-Regal Municipal Visits

During 2010 the Governor of Tasmania, His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood AC, and Mrs Frances Underwood have continued their official visits to Tasmania’s municipalities.

On 16 March, they visited Flinders Council where they toured Flinders Island District School, the Furneaux Museum, Wybaleena Cemetery and the Flinders Multi-Purpose Centre at Whitemark. A civic reception was held at the Furneaux Arts and Entertainment Centre. On 17 March they toured the farm of Mr Terrance Ellwood, Unavale Vineyard, the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association and Tasports.

On 14 April, the Governor and Mrs Underwood visited the Southern Midlands, where they toured the Oatlands District High School, Casaveen Knitwear, the Midlands Multi-Purpose Health Centre, Callington Mill, Oatlands Jail and Supreme Court House and the Companion Bakery. A civic reception was held at the council chambers.

The Government House website provides details of visits made by the Governor, selected speeches, and protocol advice, and can be found at www.govhouse.tas.gov.au.

(L-R) On the Flinders Island farm visit Terrance Ellwood, His Excellency the Honourable Peter Underwood AC, Governor of Tasmania, Mrs Frances Underwood, Flinders Council Mayor Carol Cox.
Investing resources and energy into children’s early years brings lifelong benefits to children and to the whole community. The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a measure of how young children are developing in different local communities. This information helps Local Government pinpoint the types of services, resources and support that young children and their families need.

Like a census, the AEDI involves collecting information to help create a snapshot of early childhood development in local communities across Australia. Teachers complete a checklist for children in their first year of full-time school. This checklist measures five key areas of child development:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Social competence
- Emotional maturity
- Language and cognitive skills (school-based)
- Communication skills and general knowledge

Together with other socio-demographic and community information, the AEDI results are a contributing tool for influencing planning and supporting local community decision-making and change.

To access all the AEDI results, online maps, community profiles and resources, visit www.aedi.org.au. For further information, contact Sally Giacon on (03) 6233 7795, or email aedi@education.tas.gov.au.

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New Homes to Old Stuff

Got stuff you’re not using? Give it to the arts. That’s the message from the Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) and arts@work, the industry development arm of Arts Tasmania, who have set up stuffBank in Tasmania.

StuffBank is an innovative new service that recycles used office equipment, furniture and commercial waste from companies to the arts community. Stuff that is no longer needed by an organisation can be registered on a website. Artists and arts organisations can browse the site for stuff they need.

Jane MacFarlane, Director AbaF - Tasmania, says that resources in greatest demand include whiteboards, desks, chairs and computers, but any office equipment or furniture is welcome, as long as it is in good condition and is likely to be useful.

Companies can list their items on the stuffBank register and arts organisations can request them – all for free. Tasmanian businesses large and small have already embraced the program including NAB, Domaine A and the Federal Group.

Arts@work and AbaF also run spaceBank, a service that connects artists with unused commercial spaces to be used as studios or rehearsal spaces, www.arts.tas.gov.au/spaceBank.

The stuffBank register is located at www.arts.tas.gov.au/stuffBank. For spaceBank, go to www.arts.tas.gov.au/spaceBank. For further information, please call Jane MacFarlane on (03) 6233 5934, or Fiona Barber on (03) 6233 5939.
News in Brief

John Hart Conservatory Opens
Launceston City Council and the Australian Government unveiled the refurbished John Hart Conservatory on 17 February. The refurbishment began after problems with the conservatory were identified in the 2005 City Park Conservation Management Plan. The renovation involved replacing the roof, standardising the glass to restore the original patterns, repairing the electricity and drainage inside the conservatory, repairing the floor and general painting and maintenance inside the building. Launceston City Council contributed $87,000 to the project and the Australian Government, $90,000.

New Education Program for Local Government Leaders
Due to the Australia and New Zealand School of Government’s (ANZSOG) involvement with the new Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, a program specifically tailored to the distinctiveness and diversity of Local Government will be offered from this year, dedicated to promoting outstanding public sector leadership. Funded by the Australian, New Zealand and State Governments and working through a network of 15 universities and business schools, ANZSOG has been offering a highly successful, three-week residential program for senior leaders annually since 2002. This year’s program will run from 22 November - 10 December in Melbourne. For further information, email Victoria Musgrove at v.musgrove@anzsog.edu.au, or visit www.anzsog.edu.au.

Young Mums Rock at Expo
Young parents and children from the Huon Valley gathered together at the Huon Valley PCYC for the launch of the Rock on Young Mums pamphlet at the Young Parents Expo, held in March during National Youth Week. The expo aims to support young parents and to raise awareness of services available to young parents in the Huon Valley. The pamphlet was based on feedback from young mums and implemented by the Huon Valley Council’s Youth Service in partnership with Department of Health and Human Services, Anglicare and Huon LINC. The pamphlet aims to give a realistic picture of what it is like being a young mum, focusing on both the rewarding and more challenging aspects. The expo and pamphlet are part of ongoing support for young parents in the Huon Valley community.

Ride Launceston
The weather was perfect as nearly 300 people, including many families, jumped on their bikes and took part in the annual Ride Launceston event in March. Held during State Bike Week, the event aimed to promote the benefits of cycling as part of a healthy and active lifestyle. Cyclists rode 7km through the picturesque Inveresk, Heritage Forest and University of Tasmania trails before enjoying free entertainment outside the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten said Launceston City Council is keen to support and encourage cycling in the community. “Ride Launceston helps promote the health benefits of cycling for each individual, while participants enjoy a fun day suitable for the whole family,” he said.

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