President’s Message

Everyone would be well aware of the three regional planning projects that are in varying stages of development of the Draft Interim Planning Schemes. In the northern media this week, there has been much commentary expressing views and concerns of developers and councils. I am aware that the northern project is reaching the final stages of preparation and the expectation is that draft schemes from four of the eight councils in the region will be in the hands of the Minister for his sign-off by mid-September.

Seven of the eight councils in the northern region did hand to the Minister their schemes earlier this year however, at that time, the agreement was that this was for the express purpose for the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) to review them and provide advice to the councils as to their compliance with the Land Use and Approvals Act. That process did drag on but has now essentially been completed.

The TPC have provided advice and recommendations to the councils, identifying changes that they are willing to support. However, I am aware that some of the recommendations in their report are not at all acceptable to the councils. The differing views revolve around advice that the TPC have sought from the Solicitor General and there seems to be concern with regard to some of the rezoning that has been included in the Draft Interim Planning Schemes. The northern councils are concerned that the TPC have displayed an extremely conservative approach in developing their advice and councils are very likely to submit their schemes to the Minister excluding some of the changes recommended by the TPC.

The reason for highlighting these issues in this week’s column is to alert other regions to the likelihood that some hiccups are to be expected. However I trust that, by the time other schemes are completed and handed to the Minister, these issues will be resolved.

Many thousands of dollars worth of developments are waiting for the finalisation of these schemes and we cannot accept any further delays, not to mention the criticism we will get from the ‘amalgamation lobby’ - criticism which I believe should not be directed towards Local Government.

I congratulate all who are involved in this major Local Government reform; you have done well developing your schemes.

Review of Councillor Numbers

The Local Government Board has recommended a reduction of councillors at six Tasmanian councils. The Minister for Local Government, Bryan Green, said he was now seeking feedback from councils and their communities before deciding whether to accept the recommendations. Seven councils asked to be included in the review of councillor numbers and the Board has recommended a reduction in the numbers at Central Coast, Devonport City, Glamorgan-Spring Bay, Glenorchy City, Kingborough and Tasman Councils, and no change at Break O’Day Council. The Board has developed a framework for determining the appropriate number of councillors for each council and members of the public are invited to provide their comments. Mr Green expects to make a decision on the Board’s recommendations before the end of year. The Board’s Report on the Review of Councillor Numbers is available at www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgd/local_government_board.

Keep Australia Beautiful Week

Keep Australia Beautiful Week kicks off on 20 August. This year’s campaign will target motorists, calling on them to stop rubbishing our highways and roads with litter. Councils are encouraged to get involved by assessing and addressing local litter issues and infrastructure, as well as targeting residents with the anti-litter message through local media coverage. According to the annual National Litter Index, highways and roads are the highest littered areas in Australia. A template media release will be available for councils to adapt with local clean-up costs and messages. Councils may also like to arrange litter clean-up activities with local community groups or schools during the Week. To get involved, visit www.kab.org.au, or contact Lara Shannon at laras@kab.org.au.
Webinars for Local Government
Three new webinars are being offered at a discounted rate by the Local Government Association of Tasmania, in partnership with the Local Government Association and Shires Association of NSW.

- Social Media in Local Government (2.00 pm – 3.30pm, on 8 August)
- Implementing Sustainable events: Tools, tips and tricks! (2.30pm – 3.30pm, on 21 August)
- GST and Funding via Grants and Appropriations (11.00am to 1.00pm, on 23 August)

Group discounts are available. For full details about the webinars, or to register, visit www.cpdlive.com/lgat/index.html.

Food for all Tasmanians Grants Program
The Tasmanian Government has announced the $1 million Food for All Tasmanians Grants Program to support projects that give struggling Tasmanian families access to affordable and healthy food. Initiatives that will be considered for funding include community gardens, storage facilities and delivery options to take food directly to those who need it, with a particular interest in proposals that involve partnerships between community groups, charities, emergency food relief providers, food distributors and producers. Councils, organisations, schools and businesses are invited to put forward innovative ideas to address the issue of food security. Applications close on 10 September. Full guidelines for the Food for All Tasmanians Grants Program are available at www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu.

Southern Regional Economic Development Plan
The three levels of government are continuing to work together in building a Regional Economic Development Plan for Tasmania’s southern region - based on local needs, opportunities and capabilities. A series of community conversations were held in March, where a commitment was made to provide feedback on what was heard, what was learned and how this information is to be integrated into the Regional Economic Development Plan. A second series of two-hour conversations will take place from 12.00pm – 2:00pm at: Triabunna (21 August); Kempton (22 August); Sorell (23 August), Bellerive (27 August), Kingston (28 August); Huonville (29 August); New Norfolk (30 August). An evening session will be held from 5.30pm – 7.30pm in Hobart on 27 August.

2012 LIFE Awards
Nominations are invited for the 2012 LIFE Awards which acknowledge the outstanding work being done within the suicide prevention sector across Australia. Suicide Prevention Australia encourages you to nominate an individual, organisation, program, initiative or group that you feel has significantly contributed towards the prevention of suicide within Australia. Nominations close 31 August. For info, go to http://suicidepreventionaust.org/conference/life-awards.

New Tools for Local Government
David Engwicht, Director and Lead Trainer at Creative Communities, is offering to host a free, two-hour seminar in November to the first 12 cities that express their interest. The focus of the seminar is New Tools for Local Government, an integrated set of DIY kits that: help you think outside the box about your projects and generate creative solutions; give you new tools for engaging the community; and provide a self-help system for retailers and residents. To find out how your city can host this seminar, visit www.magikmail.com.au/link.php?M=79028&N=360&L=295&F=H.

100 Women of Influence Awards
The 100 Women of Influence Awards, supported by the Financial Review and Westpac Group, aim to identify and celebrate bold, energetic women who are capturing the spirit of change and helping to shape a vibrant and diverse Australia. Nominations are being sought for Australian women who are making an important contribution to reshaping Australia’s social and economic life, across business – small or large, the community and arts, philanthropy, the public sector and not-for-profits. Entries close on 17 August. For more information please go to https://rubyconnection.com.au/articles/financial-review-westpac-100-women-of-influence-awards.

Upcoming Events

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