President’s Message

I have been intrigued over the past few days as to our Premier’s confidence in the expert opinion of Constitutional Lawyer, Professor George Williams, concerning Tasmania’s proposed legislation to allow for same sex marriage. I sincerely hope that she takes the advice of George Williams and his opinion regarding the need for the financial recognition of Local Government in the Australian Constitution! The process of recognition has been an extremely long journey and, although it remains uppermost in the minds of the ALGA Board, the closer we get to the next Federal election, all that needs to be achieved seems to be getting a little more difficult. In efforts to ensure bi-partisan support for this proposal, the position of the various political parties, and particularly some of their members, is not as clear as maybe it once was. As for the States, it is a mixture of support and opposition, and the position of our State Government is yet to be fully clarified. I am expecting further consideration and discussion of progress to be an important item on the agenda for next month’s ALGA Board meeting.

As you would no doubt be aware, the Water and Sewerage Implementation Steering Committee had their first meeting recently and much information has been distributed to councils for their consideration. Importantly, the committee are keen to receive comments and general feedback on the proposed legislation that essentially provides for the establishment of a single water and sewerage corporation. I trust that this week many of you have been able to attend the briefing sessions on the legislation as it is important that we all have a clear understanding of what is being proposed and participate in the process. The really important papers for your consideration will be the Draft Constitution and the Draft Shareholders Letter of Expectation, as these will cover the issues of governance and what it is that the owner councils require of a single corporation. These documents are expected soon and there will be adequate time for all elected members to consider them and provide comment.

Local Government reform continues to receive attention and, as part of the LGAT campaign to clarify the position of the membership on this matter, I have recently written to all members of the State Parliament on the subject. It is important to continually bring to the attention of the Tasmanian community that we are not prepared to be bullied by a group pretending to represent the community’s best interests into an outcome that benefits the minority. As LGAT has been the catalyst for change in Local Government in the past decade, with the support of our membership we will continue to support and participate in conversations that serve the best interests of our communities.

Cat Management Grants

As part of the implementation of the Cat Management Act 2009, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment has $155,000 available as grants for specific groups, including local councils, to use for the purpose of: infrastructure expansion and equipment purchasing; short-term operational support for activities such as veterinary services; public awareness and education of cat owners with regard to the importance of microchipping and desexing; and subsidised microchipping and desexing programs. An application form will be provided in the next fortnight via LGAT for councils and other organisations to submit proposals. For details, visit www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/invasivespecies.

Loans for LG Employees

LGAT ASSIST has been providing support to Local Government employees for over 50 years, operating under the auspices of the Local Government Association of Tasmania. LGAT ASSIST provides Local Government employees with support and assistance during times of health, financial and general personal difficulties, and can provide:

- Low interest loans to Local Government employees who are employed on a permanent basis and who are members of Quadrant Superannuation. Current interest rate is 8%.
- Bursaries to enable Local Government employees or their dependants to attend the University of Tasmania.
- Non repayable grants for cases of extraordinary financial hardship up to $3,500.
- Non repayable grants for funerals of Local Government employees who are a current member of Quadrant Superannuation.

LGAT ASSIST also provides up to $3,500 non repayable grant for funerals of Local Government employees who are a current member of Quadrant Superannuation. For further information regarding LGAT ASSIST, contact Michelle Freeman on 6233 5970, or email assist@lgat.tas.gov.au.
Revised Protocol Agreement
At the Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) meeting on 15 August, LGAT President Barry Easther and Premier Lara Giddings signed an updated Protocol Agreement. The PLGC was established in 2000 and comprises the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and the eight elected representatives who make up the General Management Committee of LGAT. The Protocol Agreement outlines the principles which guide the work of the PLGC, terms of reference and key procedural matters such as the development of the work program and stakeholder consultation.

City Talks: Urban Landscapes Seminar Series
The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA Tasmania) is partnering with Hobart City Council to present the City Talks Urban Landscapes Seminar Series - a series of talks and events about the role of landscape architecture and urban design in urban areas, towns and cities, focused around existing State and Local Government projects in Tasmania. City Talks will run from September through to April 2013 and aim to foster leadership and excellence in urban design, and provide an environment for professional debate and networking. The first seminar, Landscape Urbanism and Consultation: Setting the Scene, will be held on 14 September in Hobart. Participation is free and a light lunch will be provided. For more information, visit www.hobarturban.com.au.

Social Enterprises and Local Government
Does your Council work with social enterprises? Does your social enterprise work with Local Government? The Institute for Regional Development (IRD) at the University of Tasmania is partnering with the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) on a scoping study to explore the relationship between social enterprises and Local Governments. If you have any reports or published case studies documenting experiences with Local Government and social enterprises, please email A/Prof Robyn Eversole at robyn.eversole@utas.edu.au. The Scoping Paper is expected to be completed by early December and will be available via the ACELG website.

Discounted Hotel Accommodation Offer with GOVFUN
Are you planning a weekend getaway or a family trip during the school holidays? If you work in Local or State Government, then you and your family can enjoy discounted accommodation rates at all Metro Hotels, apartments and resorts throughout Australia. To book the GOVFUN rates and save 10% off the existing Best Available Rates, visit www.MetroHotels.com.au, go to ‘Make a Reservation’, select the property you wish to stay at, enter ‘GOVFUN’ in the Promo Code section and continue with your booking.

Intergenerational Forum
Bringing together the generations plays a vital role in supporting the health and wellbeing of all concerned. Intergenerational spaces and programs offer diversity and the sharing of resources. They enable sponsoring organisations to collaborate with others, find new sources of funding and share the risks. A one-day forum will be held in Melbourne on 24 September and Sydney on 28 September to provide an opportunity to contribute ideas and learn about what works when planning for intergenerational spaces and programs. The forums will showcase leading experts & projects and explore the opportunities and challenges. Visit www.intergenforum.com.au.

Sustainable House Day
Over 200 homes will open their doors across Australia for Sustainable House Day on 9 September as Australians continue to embrace renewable energy, recycling and other practices designed to lessen our impact on the environment. In Tasmania, twenty energy efficient homes in Northern Tasmania will open for free, providing a fantastic opportunity for people seeking to make their own homes or rental properties greener. Sustainable House Day provides the chance to get a real-life look inside houses that have been designed, built, or fitted out with sustainability in mind and to talk to the owners. For location details, visit www.sustainablehouseday.com.

Support the Heart Foundation Doorknock Appeal
Close to 4,000 Tasmanian volunteers will start hitting the streets across all Local Government areas this weekend in support of the Heart Foundation Doorknock Appeal from 1-30 September. Every donation to the Heart Foundation Doorknock Appeal will help in the fight against heart disease, the number one killer of Tasmanian men and women. If you’re not home when a doorknock volunteer visits, please make a donation by calling 1800 55 22 55, or online at www.heartfoundation.org.au/doorknock.

Upcoming Events
General Managers’ Workshop, Riverside 12-13 September
General Meeting, Brighton 26 September
GMC Meeting, Brighton 26 September
LGMA Conference, Bridport 3-5 October