President’s Message

A few weeks ago when I heard on the news that AAA Shipping, the only shipping company that provides a direct freight service from Tasmania to international destinations, were to cease their shipping service to the Port of Bell Bay in May 2011, my initial reaction was to wonder what effect that would have on the sustainability of the port. I then started asking myself the question, who and what businesses are going to be impacted by this decision and what additional costs might they be required to meet?

Since that announcement, I have been amazed to learn of the number of businesses, not only in Northern Tasmania but statewide, who have been dependent on the AAA Shipping service through Bell Bay. This decision means that all Tasmanian cargo will be serviced via transhipment at Melbourne.

We’ve all heard of how expensive the freight charges can be for the Bass Strait crossing, therefore we can only guess what effect the additional costs involved with transhipment of cargo between Bell Bay and Melbourne will have on those businesses that have traditionally used this service for both export and import of goods.

This week I was astounded to hear that Veolia Environmental Services have been significantly impacted by this decision, as a major part of their recycling product has been exported from Bell Bay with AAA Shipping. The impact on Veolia is such that the additional cost is higher than their recycling business makes each year. I am sure you would appreciate that there are not too many options for Veolia!

Waste management has therefore been placed very firmly on our Local Government agenda. What is to be the future of recycling in Tasmania? Additional cost to our ratepayers, or will it possibly be that even more of our collections will be going to landfill?

These and many more questions will need to be addressed without delay and so it is “interesting” that, as this article is being distributed in this week’s newsletter, I will be attending a joint meeting of the three regional waste management groups, essentially to discuss a State Waste Levy! I feel now, with this revelation, the meeting will be discussing much more.

2011 Local Government Awards for Excellence

Tasmanian councils are invited to enter in the 2011 Local Government Awards for Excellence. The awards are presented for projects, large or small, with an internal or external focus, that benefit the community and promote a better future for Tasmania. As well as celebrating outstanding efforts, the awards aim to promote sharing of good management practices and effective responses to community needs. Council initiatives that demonstrate excellence in any of the four award categories are eligible for entry: Delivering Excellence for our Communities; Delivering Excellence for our People; Delivering Excellence in Natural and Built Environments; and Demonstrating Operational Excellence. Nominations close at 5.00pm on 2 May. For a copy of the 2011 Awards for Excellence Entry Form and Guidelines, please visit www.lgat.tas.gov.au, or email fiona.madigan@lgat.tas.gov.au.

Local Government Sessions on Misconduct

The Integrity Commission will conduct information sessions on misconduct prevention for Local Government elected members and employees in the North West at its first regional outreach visit. Commission staff will be based at Burnie on 7-8 April. The Chief Commissioner, Hon Murray Kellam, and Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Barbara Etter, will speak at a public information session and will host a Community Leaders’ Breakfast. Commission staff will also conduct a complaints clinic. The full program is available online at www.integrity.tas.gov.au/news.

Water and Sewerage Consultation

The Premier has released draft Water Service Pricing Regulations for public consultation which provides details about how residents and businesses will be billed for water and sewerage services under a two-part pricing model. The regulations propose increased transparency around price setting and would also provide further protection for consumers from price shocks. Under the new regulations, the Regulator must take into account the impact of any increase in price on different classes of customers. While the regulations provide details of the methodology that could be used for billing, the actual charges for water under a two-part pricing model are yet to be determined by the Economic Regulator. Two-part pricing is due to come into effect from June 2012. The Water Pricing Regulations will be available for comment until 25 March, and are available at www.treasury.tas.gov.au.
Limiting Future Price Shocks for Ratepayers
The Tasmanian Government has developed legislative changes with the aim of establishing a rating model that provides greater flexibility to councils when setting rates and limits any future price shocks for ratepayers. The legislative changes are expected to be implemented in time for the 2011-12 rating year. The Minister for Local Government, Bryan Green, said one third of council areas will be subject to six yearly revaluations in 2011-12 and this will help them address the expected impacts of shifts in property valuations by being able to manage those changes more effectively. The initiative is part of an ongoing rating review which was expected to be completed later this year.

Tasmanian Community Fund
The Tasmanian Community Fund provides grants to community organisations to enhance the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of Tasmanians. Two streams of funding are available for grants of up to $10,000 and grants of over $10,000. Applications are due on 30 March. The funding categories are: children and young people, community participation and recreation, community wellbeing and life skills, connecting communities, and culture, arts and heritage. To request further information, please email admin@tascomfund.org.

Government Delivering on Planning Reforms
A streamlined approvals process for the residential building code in Tasmania is expected to be completed next month. The new statewide residential code will cut costs, ease the regulatory burden for single dwellings and is an important step forward as part of the Tasmanian Government’s overall planning reform package. It will simplify and standardise regulations for visual and acoustic privacy, front fences, setback from a frontages, the width of garages and carports, the building envelope and site coverage and rear area. The Minister for Planning Bryan Green said the Government’s overall regional planning initiative was central to the reform of Tasmania’s planning system. “The Government remains committed delivering new planning schemes to all councils around Tasmania this year, including regional strategies in the three regions,” Mr Green said. “Part of this will include a new statewide template with standardised provisions to further streamline the planning process,” he said. The new regional strategy for the North-West and North is expected to be completed shortly, followed by the South later this year.

ChemSafe Program Heads North
ChemSafe Homes Tasmania, a free household chemical drop-off service, continues this weekend in the state’s north. Drop-off services are available this Saturday at the Wynyard Waste Transfer Station and the Quadrant carpark, Ulverstone. On Sunday, sites are located at Kentish Council Chambers carpark, Sheffield and the Civic Complex, George Town. More sites scheduled in March include Oatlands, Campbell Town, Triabunna and St Helens. The drop-off service gives Tasmanians the chance to dispose of their unwanted chemicals safely and the service is free. So far, more than 50,000kg of potentially toxic waste has been collected and reused, recycled, treated or destroyed. ChemSafe Homes Tasmania is a jointly funded State and Local Government initiative. For a copy of the timetable, visit www.lgat.tas.gov.au.

Special request for assistance: Jetter/Vac Combo Trucks
City Care is Christchurch City Council’s water and sewerage provider. It is dealing with a critical public health engineering issue with sewer and stormwater pipes that are blocked with liquefaction silt from the earthquake. Silt needs to be jetted or sucked out of the pipes as a matter of urgency before it completely hardens and poses a more difficult engineering and public health problem. There has been a request to Australia for up to 20 combination jetter and suction trucks with crews, able to be deployed to Christchurch for 8 to 12 weeks with long day shifts. Alternatives such as straight jetter/CCTV vehicles or skid mounted units with similar jetting or suction functionality are being welcomed. Please contact Bruce Angus at Sydney Water with offers of help. Email bruce.angus@sydneywater.com.au, or phone (02) 8849 3600.

Conferences and Seminars
Reputation Management Excellence
Reputation is a company’s greatest asset and greatest risk. Consumers nowadays are more willing to pay for honesty, integrity and loyalty – the difference in perception has a wide-ranging impact on the company’s brand and image. Reputation Management Excellence, to be held in Melbourne from 11-12 April, explores how to strengthen and build your reputation, how to effectively manage issues and avert crises, how to plan ahead for a crisis and how to integrate link social media to your communications strategies to ensure it fits seamlessly with your offline activities. For further details, visit www.marcusevans.com.

2011 National Employer of Choice Conference
The National Employer of Choice Conference will showcase award-winning HR strategies from some of Australia’s best employers. In recent years the event has guided hundreds of organisations closer to their goal of becoming an outstanding Australian employer. Each presenting organisation will explore key elements of their strategies and discuss challenges around their implementation. The conference will take place in Melbourne on 2 May. Registrations made prior to 25 March will be eligible for the early bird rate, reducing the fee from $795 to $595 per person. For full details, visit www.wtaa.com.au/events/11/eocc/EOC_Conference_Tas.pdf.
4th Annual Parks & Recreation One-Day Seminar
The IPWEA Annual Parks and Recreation Seminar, to be held in Launceston on 24 May, is now open for registrations. The seminar provides valuable learning and networking opportunities in parks and recreation management best practice. Parks managers, landscape architects, parks and recreational planners, swimming pool/facility managers and asset managers are invited to attend. Register at www.ipwea.org.au.

Regional Innovations Australia Symposium
The inaugural Regional Innovations Australia Symposium will be held in Hervey Bay from 25-26 May. The symposium will discuss key issues affecting the regions and how communities can create or, in some cases, re-create their own special places. With a line-up of world-class speakers, including special guests from Vail, Colorado, national and international business leaders, academic specialists and industry professionals, this will be an event not to be missed. Additional details and booking information can be found at www.regionalinnovations.org/workshop/special-places-symposium.

Workshops

Dangerous Goods Storage and Handling Workshop
Organisations must be able to demonstrate national compliance of the Australian Dangerous Goods Code 7th Edition (ADG7), and must also be able to demonstrate compliance with the Dangerous Goods (Storage and Handling) Regulations 2000. Compliance includes providing appropriate training to staff who use or handle dangerous goods. The Australian Environment Business Network (AEBN) has developed two comprehensive workshops at introductory and intermediate level to be held in Victoria on 26 March. The cost is $310 (AEBN members) and $410 (non-members). A comprehensive set of notes will be provided to all participants. For further information, please visit www.aebn.com.au, or phone (03) 9397 2511.

The New Supervisor
A two-day workshop, developed for people who have recently taken on a supervisory role, will be held in Hobart from 30 March. Discover the essential skills for supervising employees at work, gain insight as to your preferred approach to supervising, and learn strategies to make the most of your natural strengths. Topics to be covered include: making the transition to supervisor, choosing the right supervision strategy, giving constructive praise and criticism, dealing with difficult people, delegating and motivating. The cost is $595. For details, visit www.ttc.tas.gov.au, or phone 6232 7255.

AEBN Waste Reduction Opportunities and Audit Workshop
The cost of waste treatment and disposal, as well as the increase in government levies are placing an increasing burden on business. A number of businesses have delivered significant savings through better waste management and minimisation. The Australian Environment Business Network (AEBN) has designed the Waste Reduction Opportunities and Audit Workshop will provide: an update of Waste Regulations, your liabilities and obligations; tools to identify whether your waste can be reused / recycled; potential waste and cost savings to be made; opportunities for waste avoidance; and tools for the development and implementation of an effective Waste / Resource Management Plan. The workshop will be held on 6 April in Melbourne. The cost is $485 (AEBN members) or $615 (non-members).

Diversity in the Workforce
How well does your workplace create an environment that values and utilises the contributions of people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives? Diversity in the workplace covers gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and family responsibilities. Diversity also refers to the other ways in which people are different, such as educational level, life experience, work experience, socio-economic background, personality and marital status. Develop people management strategies that accommodate differences in the background, perspectives and family responsibilities of your employees at one of two Diversity in the Workplace Workshops, coordinated by TasCOSS, at Glenorchy on 12 April and Inveresk on 13 April. Cost is $35 (TasCOSS members) and $45 (non-members) and includes a light lunch. To register, contact TasCOSS on 6231 0755, or email admin@tascoss.org.au.

Upcoming Events

General Meeting, Launceston 6 April
General Management Committee Meeting, Hobart 11 May
LGMA Congress, Cairns 22-25 May
National General Assembly, Canberra 19-23 June
AGM/General Meeting, Hobart 20 July
Local Government Conference, Hobart 21-22 July