President’s Message

I thought that even though our “favourite subject” - water and sewerage, should receive top billing in this week’s newsletter, I have decided to leave that for another time and instead tell you of a program that has just been brought to my attention.

Yesterday I was made aware of a program ‘Care Packages for our Troops’ by a resident of West Tamar, Andrew Nikolic AM CSC. I know Andrew is a candidate for the next federal election but, for what I am about to write, I have put that to one side. As a highly decorated member of the Australian Army, now retired, and with several overseas deployments, Andrew’s enthusiasm for this program has encouraged me to become involved and I hope that many elected members will also consider participation.

It is the enduring spirit of Anzac Day that brings out the finest in our nation and it is why I believe we should spare a thought for those men and women currently serving in the Australian Defence Force around the globe on operations, far from those who love them and far from the land they love.

As we approach Anzac Day 2012, we have an opportunity to send a Care Package to a member of the Australian Defence Force. Care packages to our troops can be sent via Australia Post, which offers free delivery for packages weighing no more than 2 kg to our soldiers on the front line. Ask your Australia Post store for a ‘BM-size box’. To ensure packages reach the troops by Anzac Day, packages must be received by Australia Post by Thursday, 5 April.

If it is not possible to achieve this timeline, packages can be sent at any time during the year and I am assured that when received, there is a noticeable boost in morale. When sending a parcel, it is important to include a short note of support to the troops and include a stamped self-addressed envelope so they can send a letter back to you. Parcels can be sent to an Australian Defence Member in the Middle East (including Afghanistan), East Timor and the Solomon Islands. For something a little different, you may even wish to send a care package to one of the Explosive Detection Dogs, not forgetting a little treat for the handler!

It is not possible to provide all of the information needed to participate in the program here, so I therefore direct you to Andrew’s website where addresses are provided along with suggestions of treats that can be included, and importantly what should not be sent!

Full details of the Care Package Program can be found at www.defence.gov.au/anzacday/2012. I sincerely trust that those of us involved in Local Government will accept this opportunity of showing support for our troops overseas.

Speed of Planning Approvals

Leading the Nation

Deputy Premier Bryan Green announced this week that the speed of planning approvals in Tasmania was far better than most Australian states. Nationally collected data showed it is six times quicker to have a development application approved in Tasmania than in QLD. The data also shows that Tasmania is also well ahead of NSW and WA in the time it takes to get approvals, and SA and the ACT are comparable to our performance.

Mr Green said this demonstrates that far from Tasmania being bogged down by unnecessary delays and redtape, our councils are among the best performing in Australia. “The data indicates that the average time Tasmanian councils took to process development applications was just 28 days, well within the statutory 42-day limit,” he said. “In Queensland it takes 185 days, Western Australia 100 days and New South Wales 71 days.”

Water and Sewerage Vote Welcomed

The Local Government Association voted to support, in principle, a single water and sewerage corporation, subject to agreement on a range of governance issues. Premier Lara Giddings welcomed the result of the vote saying that the State Government supported the Local Government-led process to investigate the creation of a single body and it is pleasing to see the recommendation passed 19/9. A working group will meet in early April to develop a governance model which will be considered by councils at a Special Meeting of the Association at the end of May.
New Planning Schemes for Tasmanian Councils

Another major milestone in the overhaul of Tasmania’s planning system has been reached with the handover of the first new planning schemes for local councils. The Minister for Planning, Bryan Green, received new schemes from seven of the eight northern councils including Launceston City, West Tamar, George Town, Northern Midlands, Meander, Break O’Day and Dorset Councils. Flinders Council will present its new scheme shortly.

Mr Green said the new schemes had been achieved with unprecedented cooperation with local councils. “The new planning schemes build on some of the most important planning reforms Tasmania has ever seen including a single, statewide template, new residential building code and regional land use strategies,” Mr Green said. “These councils are the first cabs off the rank and are to be commended for what has been a huge task.” Planning schemes for all other Tasmanian councils are expected to be finalised before the end of the year.

Local Government Awards for Excellence

Councils are encouraged to consider projects worthy of nomination for the 2012 Local Government Awards for Excellence, proudly sponsored by MAV Insurance. The Awards recognise outstanding achievement and aim to inspire leading management practice and continuous improvement among Tasmanian councils. There are three categories this year including: Delivering Excellence for our Communities; Delivering Excellence in Natural and Built Environments; and Achieving Excellence through Innovation. Award details will be uploaded to the LGAT website next week at www.lgat.tas.gov.au and forwarded to all member councils. Winners will be announced by the Local Government Minister, Bryan Green on 13 July at the Local Government Conference, to be held at Wrest Point in Hobart. For enquiries, please phone LGAT on 6233 5966, or email stephanie.watson@lgat.tas.gov.au.

HCC Wins National Award for Australia’s Best Government Nursery

Hobart City Council’s Regional Nursery has won the highly prestigious, national award – ‘Best Government Nursery’. The Award was presented at the Nursery and Garden Industry Australia Conference held on the Gold Coast recently. The Awards recognise and reward excellence within the nursery and garden industry and acknowledge industry leaders as they strive to achieve best business practice. Congratulations to the nursery team!

National General Assembly Call for Motions

The 2012 National General Assembly (NGA) will be held in Canberra from 17-20 June, where a number of important policy motions will be debated. The involvement of each council at this year’s NGA will assist ALGA to maintain the focus on Local Government and drive improved outcomes for councils and their communities at the national level. The ALGA Board is calling for motions under this year’s theme ‘National Voice, Local Choice - Infrastructure, Planning, Services’. Motions should be submitted electronically via the online form on the ALGA website and should be received by ALGA no later than 27 April. Register before 27 April and save over $250. For more information, head to www.alga.asn.au/?ID=6515&Menu=36,303.

Information sessions for National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme

With the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme expected to commence on-ground activity in mid 2012, the Australian Government, with the assistance of state governments, is holding information sessions across Australia that will assist Local Government, recyclers and charities, and will highlight the important role that they can play, particularly in the management of television and computer waste. The sessions are also an opportunity to provide feedback on local issues and to learn about the information that is needed to communicate about the scheme with local communities. Sessions will be held in Burnie (16 April), Launceston (17 April), and in Hobart (26 April). To RSVP, or to find out more, please contact ewaste@environment.gov.au. For more information on the scheme, visit www.environment.gov.au/ewaste.

TasCOSS Guide for Planners


Alternative Futures Conference 2012

The Alternative Futures Conference, to be held in Newcastle from 21-24 May, will provide an innovative platform for delegates interested in exploring emerging trends, progressive leadership and new pathways towards sustainability for regions across Australia. The conference will feature some of the leading thinkers and innovators from around the country and overseas, addressing many of the challenges facing regional Australia’s future planning and development. Key themes include: climate and risk; biodiversity protection; sustainability; and urban design. Further information can be found at www.alternativefutures.com.au.
Review of the Tasmanian Government’s Disability Framework for Action 2005-2010

The Tasmanian Government is reviewing the Disability Framework for Action 2005-2010. The review aims to report on what has been achieved by Government over the past five years; ensure Tasmanians with disability are involved in setting priorities for future action; and to update Tasmania’s disability policy to take into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the National Disability Strategy. A discussion paper has been prepared to help seek feedback from the community and inform the review. People with disability, their families and carers are especially encouraged to provide comments and feedback. The closing date for submissions is 11 May. To participate, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/DFAreview, phone 1800 204 224, or email disability@dpac.tas.gov.au.

New service to help Tasmanian workplaces improve health and wellbeing

WorkCover Tasmania has introduced a free service to help Tasmanian workplaces improve health and wellbeing. Two dedicated Health and Wellbeing Advisors are now available to work with Tasmanian businesses to identify practical strategies to support employee health and wellbeing. The Health and Wellbeing Advisors can help Tasmanian businesses implement health and wellbeing strategies by assisting in the development of a health and wellbeing program, identifying activities and health topics relevant to the workplace, monitoring and reviewing the program outcomes, as well as putting the business in contact with health and community organisations in their region. To find out more, phone 1300 776 572, or visit www.workcover.tas.gov.au.

ABS Newsletter Revamped

The latest issue of Local Government and ABS (cat. no. 1376.0) has just been released with a new look. The product has changed from a biannual release to an annual release and a ‘rolling’ update feature for new information as it becomes available during the year. This issue showcases the recent release of the ‘National Regional Profile (NRP) 2006-2010’. The new format incorporates dedicated pages with the latest information for local governments on the Population Census, Australian Statistical Geography Standard, Regional Population Estimates and Local Government Finance. A ‘Historical List of Feature Articles’ page has also been included. View it online at www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1376.0.

Make Fire Safety a Priority

As it gets colder more homes in Tasmania catch fire but most fires can be avoided. Daylight savings concludes on 1 April and the Tasmanian Fire Service is urging householders to change their smoke alarm battery. The message is being reinforced using a statewide media campaign which commenced mid-March. Only working smoke alarms save lives. To find out how you can make your home safer, please contact the Tasmania Fire Service Community Education Unit at communityed@fire.tas.gov.au, or visit www.fire.tas.gov.au.

2nd Annual Reputation Management Excellence

The 2nd Annual Reputation Management Excellence Forum, to be held in Melbourne from 19-20 April, will assist delegates to refine the art of reputation management through timely issues and crisis management and effective stakeholder communications across all channels. The 2012 forum will showcase actual events and focus on the lessons learned on crisis management and re-building reputation. For the registration form, visit www.marcusevansassets.com/doc/pdfs/Ep_18683.pdf.

2012 City to Casino Fun Run and Walk

The City to Casino Fun Run will be held on Sunday, 20 May. Councils are encouraged to enter a corporate team of four or more members in the 7km walk/run, or the 11km run. Team members will receive weekly health tips by email and exclusive access to the ‘Team Only Area’ after the race where lunch and free massages will be provided, and there will be great prizes to be won. Register your team today. Contact the Heart Foundation on 6224 2722, or visit www.heartfoundation.org.au.

Upcoming Events

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<td>LGMA Congress, Perth</td>
<td>20-23 May</td>
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<td>General Management Committee Meeting, Hobart</td>
<td>30 May</td>
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<td>National General Assembly, Canberra</td>
<td>17-20 June</td>
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<td>AGM / General Meeting, Hobart</td>
<td>11 July</td>
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<td>100th Local Government Conference</td>
<td>12-13 July</td>
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