President’s Message

As you will have read or heard through media reports, the Auditor General’s report on Local Government was tabled in Parliament yesterday.

It is certainly very encouraging to note the report concluded that no single Tasmanian council is financially unsustainable. This must surely be the result of positive steps taken by councils following the Access Economics Study which was commissioned by the Association some four years ago.

The Auditor General’s report focuses on a range of indicators that reflect the average performance of councils over a four-year period, in fact, the same four years during which councils have been working diligently at addressing some of the issues raised in the Access Economics study.

I know that funding depreciation and closing the asset renewal gap have been high on council agendas. The Association is due to commence a major financial management project with councils focusing on the implementation of a robust asset management and long-term financial planning regime. This will provide councils with an improved ability to assess their medium and longer-term financial requirements. Many councils are already a long way down this path and the Auditor General’s report is clearly reflective of this.

The report contains some very interesting information and I recommend to all elected members that time should be taken to review the contents of the report and, in particular, note how the financial position and performance of your Council compares with others.

Sustainability Indicators Project

The Local Government sector is working hard to move towards a sustainable footing. Local Government is driving projects at the statewide, regional and local levels to realise efficiencies through improved financial and asset management, resource-sharing and other innovations.

To support the Local Government sector’s sustainability objective, the Premier’s Local Government Council is driving a new project that aims to measure the sustainability of Tasmanian councils. Council performance will be measured against agreed targets in key strategic priority areas such as financial sustainability, asset management and governance. The sustainability indicators project will replace the KPI project. Unlike the KPI project, the sustainability indicators project will focus on a small number of indicators that are of high significance to Local Government performance. Only areas that are within the direct sphere of influence of councils will be measured through the project. The results can then be used by councils to recognise high performance and improve low performance.

A detailed discussion paper was released at the General Meeting of the Local Government Association of Tasmania on 12 May and is now available online. A consultation paper will be released shortly, after which regional workshops will be held, written submissions invited, and councils encouraged to discuss the project directly with project managers at LGAT and the Local Government Division in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. For further information, visit www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/lgat, phone LGAT on 6233 5964, or the Local Government Division on 6232 7022.

Employer of Choice Awards

Is your workplace a great place to work? Tasmanian employers say being officially recognised as an ‘Employer of Choice’ gives them the edge in the competition for skilled labour. Enter the 2010 Employer of Choice Awards now. Entries close 10 September. For more information, call Business Point on 1800 440 026, email businesspoint@development.tas.gov.au, or visit www.development.tas.gov.au/eocawards.

Blood Donors Urgently Needed

The Red Cross Blood Service is running low on blood and needs more donors urgently. Many Tasmanians rely on donated blood, including people undergoing cancer treatment and accident victims. You are encouraged to show your support by giving an hour of your time and half a litre of blood. The Hobart and Launceston centres will open for special donation sessions on the Queen’s Birthday public holiday, on 14 June. To donate, call the Red Cross Blood Service on 13 14 95.
Public Place Recycling Training – Last Chance to Register
Want to learn how to effectively reduce litter and recycle within your community’s public place areas? The Packaging Stewardship Forum of the Australian Food and Grocery Council is pleased to offer its free Public Place Recycling Training program to Tasmanian service providers, State and Local Government officers on 16 June in Hobart. Participants will learn how to effectively manage litter and recycling in public places by going through the principles, concepts and good practice systems for reducing litter, minimising waste and recovering valuable resources in public places; and will gain practical knowledge and understanding to enable them to implement effective litter and recycling systems in public places. Call Lorraine Stark on 1300 799 938, or email lorraine@sustainablelearning.com.au.

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards 2010
Do you know of a program that has reduced crime and violence in your area? Are you involved in a project that works towards a safer community? Nominations for the 2010 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards, which recognise programs that reduce crime and violence in Australia, are now open. Programs of all sizes that help to reduce crime and violence against children, women, men, Indigenous people, or ethnic communities, are encouraged to nominate. National winners will be flown to Canberra for the awards presentation at Parliament House. Nominations close on 16 June. For more information, please visit www.aic.gov.au email acvpa@aic.gov.au, or call (02) 6260 9216.

Natural Connections - Incentive Program for Biodiversity Conservation
Cradle Coast NRM invites applications in an incentive program for community groups, land managers and local councils to undertake biodiversity conservation works in priority areas of the Cradle Coast region. Grants are available ranging from $5,000 to $25,000 for projects that protect threatened species and/or ecological communities. Projects undertaken via this program will need to be completed by 30 June 2011. Refer to the Natural Connections Application Form and Program Guidelines at www.cradlecoastnrm.com for full details. Applications are open until 9 July. For enquiries, contact Cradle Coast NRM on 6431 6285, or email adugand@cradlecoast.com.

AEBN® Understanding National Pollutant Inventory Reporting Workshop
The Australian Environment Business Network (AEBN®) Understanding National Pollutant Inventory Reporting (NPI) Workshop is designed to assist industry, business and councils to understand their obligations under the NPI requirements, and provide practical guidance that will assist in preparing and submitting the necessary reports by 30 September. The workshop will provide: an overview of the NPI regulation; an understanding of the implications of NPI reporting; updates; case studies and much more. The half-day workshop will be held on 21 July, in Melbourne. Cost is $320 (AEBN members) or $395 (non-members). Phone (03) 9397 2511 for details, or register on-line at www.aebn.com.au/default.asp?_Register&FormID=5.

2010 Telstra Business Women’s Awards
A nationwide search for Australia’s most inspiring business women is on again with the 2010 Telstra Business Women’s Awards open for nominations and entries. The awards celebrate the diversity and achievement of women in business – including government and the community sector - who lead by example and inspire others. There are five award categories, with awards offered in each category, and winners are eligible for the national finals in November. The awards offer more than $200,000 in cash and prizes. Nominations close on 21 June. Find out more at www.telstrabusinesswomensawards.com, or call 1800 817 536.

Online Reporting Tool to Turn Tables on Discrimination
Tasmanians can now expose discrimination and inciting hatred anonymously and in confidence through an official incident form now available online. The form is a new avenue for reporting racism and other discrimination or harassment to the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner (OADC). It was developed with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) and the Tasmanian Settlement Network. Reports can be made anonymously and confidentially. People making the report do not have to be directly involved in the incident. Information received can be used to undertake a range of targeted strategies, such as community education, to address unlawful, discriminatory behaviours in our community. The form is available online at www.antidiscrimination.tas.gov.au/forms/Incident_form, or phone 1300 305 062.

Upcoming Events
ALGA National General Assembly, Canberra 14-17 June
General Management Committee Meeting, Hobart 21 June
General Meeting, Launceston 23 July
General Management Committee Meeting, Launceston 29 July

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