President’s Message

This week I attended the National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra. The assembly hosted the largest number of registrations ever – just over 900 delegates!

Delegates were privileged to have the Assembly opened by Prime Minister, Julia Gillard and we were extremely impressed that she spoke for 45 minutes without notes, didn’t miss a beat and then answered questions for another 15 minutes. Of course, there was a reason for her speaking without notes; ALGA President Genia McCaffery removed them from the lectern with her own papers after the introduction of the PM!!

The recognition of Local Government in the Federal Constitution received much attention throughout the assembly and was highlighted in a panel discussion hosted by James O’Loghlin from the ABC’s New Inventors with journalist Annabel Crabb, John Hewson and Jane Caro from the ABC’s Gruen Transfer. The panel explored the development of public relations campaigns and how we can best market Local Government to our communities which is essential to ensure their support at the referendum.

The assembly was a great occasion, providing many opportunities for networking and meeting elected members from various parts of the country and of course, for many, it was an opportunity to arrange meetings at the ‘House on the Hill’.

Forest Impacts on Local Communities

The Local Government Association led delegations this week with Federal Resources Minister, Tony Burke and the Forest Roundtable mediator, Bill Kelty, to highlight issues and express concerns about the impacts of the forest industry restructure on local communities and the role that will likely flow to councils to pick up the pieces. Minister Burke clearly understood the issues raised and committed to broad community consultation once the report from the Roundtable was in and prior to making funding decisions. The Kelty meeting was promising in the context of there being an understanding of the socio-economic issues and an expectation that some of these matters would be addressed in the strategic planning process proposed by the Roundtable. LGAT will now lobby the State Government to ensure that Local Government is included in the future processes associated with this reform.

Local Government to Benefit from the NBN

Improved Local Government services will result from a $17.1 million program announced at this week’s National General Assembly in Canberra. The Digital Local Government program will help councils take full advantage of the National Broadband Network (NBN) through the development and upgrade of innovative online service delivery to homes and businesses.

The Federal Government’s National Digital Economy Strategy set a goal that by 2020, four out of five Australians will choose to engage with the Government through the internet or by other types of online service. The program aims to develop solutions that can be adopted by councils and rolled out across the country as the NBN rolls out, leading to a steep change in the quality, availability and speed of Local Government services.

The Government will provide $17.1 million to assist Local Government organisations in the 40 communities to first benefit from the NBN with the three-year program, providing grants of up to $375,000 to eligible councils. In Tasmania, the first councils set to benefit include Circular Head, Dorset and Sorell Councils. Councils may apply individually but are encouraged to partner with private sector vendors, or form partnerships with other eligible councils. For more information, visit www.dbcde.gov.au/digitallocalgov.
Awards

**Hobart City Council Wins Environment Awards**
The Home Energy Audit Toolkit (HEAT) developed by Hobart City Council on behalf of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority has won the Local Government Award and the Leadership in Climate Action Award at the 2011 Tasmanian Awards for Environmental Excellence. The toolkits can be borrowed at no charge and aim to help families understand and take control of their energy usage. In 2010, there were 700 loans through 26 councils and by early this year, all Tasmanian councils and a number of government departments and schools were participating in the program.

**Life Members Award for Meritorious Service**
Time is running out to nominate an elected member who has made a significant contribution to Local Government for the inaugural Life Members Award for Meritorious Service. The award, coordinated by the Life Members of the Local Government Association and LGAT, enables councils and communities to recognise significant achievements by elected members within the most recent electoral term. Nominees will have made a demonstrable contribution to Local Government in one or more of the following areas: enhancement of the status of Local Government; introduction of a significant new or amended policy; innovation; entrepreneurship; new or improved services; improved structural or operational outcomes; and engagement and consultation. Contributions may be within a community or council area, or at a regional or statewide level, and the award may be presented posthumously. Nominations close on 27 June. A copy of the Guidelines and Entry Form can be downloaded from the LGAT website at www.lgat.tas.gov.au.

**Australian Safer Communities Awards 2011**
The Australian Safer Communities Awards recognise innovative practices and achievements across the nation that are making our communities safer, stronger, more disaster resilient and better prepared to manage any emergency situation. The awards cover all aspects of community safety and resilience with an emergency management focus including: risk assessment; research; education and training; information and knowledge management; and prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The deadline for application/nomination is 1 July. More information, including eligibility, can be found on the SES website at www.ses.tas.gov.au/acsa.htm.

**On the Hunt for Employers of Choice**
Local businesses are encouraged to put themselves forward for the Employers of Choice Awards which recognise and promote Tasmanian employers who provide great places to work. Employees who have a great place to work tend to be more motivated and productive, as well as happier. The annual awards program is one way the State Government is helping businesses meet the challenge of attracting and keeping skilled and talented workers – by promoting their virtues to potential employees. Entries close on 9 September. Entry forms and guidelines can be obtained from www.development.tas.gov.au/eocawards, or by phoning Business Point on 1800 440026.

Conferences & Workshops

**Local Government Conference (Hobart)**
Don’t miss the opportunity to attend the 2011 Local Government Conference celebrating 100 years of the Association. The conference, themed 100 Years Long: 100 Years Strong, will be held at Wrest Point in Hobart from 20-22 July. Speakers will explore how far we have come over the last century as a sector and as a state, with a view towards the future and the challenges, trends and influences that lay ahead. Partners, sponsors and Local Government affiliates are also invited to join delegates for the Conference Dinner to be held at the Hobart Function Centre on 21 July. Registrations are required by 30 June. For full details, head to www.lgat.tas.gov.au and download the 2011 Conference Program and Registration Form, or phone 6233 5966.

**Energy Efficiency to Boost Tasmanian Business (Statewide)**
Tasmanian businesses are being offered free energy efficiency workshops across the state, to help them save electricity and cut costs. The Business Boost workshops will help small and medium Tasmanian businesses learn about and adopt energy efficient methods in the workplace. Workshop participants will receive a take-home pack, with advice on how to adopt energy efficiency principles and can also access follow-up services over the phone. Participants will also learn how to engage their staff as they transition to more energy efficient techniques. For more information, phone 1800 440026, or email businesspoint@development.tas.gov.au.
NLP for Organisational Excellence (Sydney)
Neuro-linguistic programming is heralding the way forward in all communication and management arenas. NLP’s simple, yet transformational, techniques enable you to efficiently and effectively influence the performance, success and results across the board within your organisation. Learn about the intricate building blocks of essential communication skills that will immediately enhance your interaction with your workforce in a two-day NLP training program to be held in Sydney from 5-6 September. To register, please visit www.marcusevansassets.com/doc/pdfs/Ep_17999.pdf.

2011 Local Government Human Resources Conference (Gold Coast)
Registrations are now being accepted for the National Local Government Human Resources Conference to be held from 7-9 November on the Gold Coast. Keynote presentations include: how to make Local Government more attractive; HR issues of the future; work, health and safety laws; the future of Leadership in Local Government; and the use and abuse of social media. A panel session of HR Managers and a Crisis Counsellor from QLD will explore their roles in the recent Cyclone Yasi, the floods and summer fires. To register, head to https://gsa.wufoo.com/forms/registration-national-hr-conference.

16th Engineering Heritage Australia Conference (Hobart)
Registrations are now open for the 16th Engineering Heritage Australia Conference to be held in Hobart from 13-16 November. About 47 papers are expected on history and heritage aspects of bridges, military engineering, railways, industries, marine engineering, conservation projects, collections and interpretation, historical resources, concrete, power schemes and the engineering profession. Visits to Anglesea Barracks and the Tasmanian Transport Museum are included. A four-day, pre-conference tour will travel to the North and West of the State inspecting the Callington Mill, convict bridges, mining museums, railways and more. Full details can be found at www.cdesign.com.au/ehac2011.

Leadership Journey for Women
Women & Leadership Australia will be delivering the Leadership Journey in-house for organisations across the country. The Leadership Journey has been developed to meet the needs of today’s female leaders. Participants will improve their leadership skills through the program’s four distinct modules: ethics; communication; influence; and resilience. Through mastery of each module, participants take an important step towards understanding and achieving their leadership goals. Running the in-house program exclusively for your employees helps to create a shared language, which enhances the benefits of the program and promotes on-going peer to peer support and development. For more information on how the In-house Leadership Journey will benefit your organisation, go to http://wla.com.au/events/11/inhouse/The_Leadership_Journey_In_House_Program.pdf.

Grants

Digital Regions Initiative
The four-year, $60 million Digital Regions Initiative co-funds innovative digital enablement projects with local governments through a National Partnership Agreement, taking a collaborative approach to improve the delivery of education, health and/or emergency services in regional, rural and remote Australian communities. The program funds trials enabled by the National Broadband Network and concludes in June 2013. For further information, phone (02) 6271 1719, or visit www.dbcde.gov.au/all_funding_programs_and_support/digital_regions_initiative.

Community Action Grants Now Open
Community groups can now apply for small grants to help fund local environmental and sustainable agriculture projects. Grants of between $5,000 and $20,000 are available to help local community groups undertake activities such as revegetating landscapes, removing weeds, controlling pests, holding field days and improving sustainable land management practices. Applications for the 2011-12 Community Action Grants round close on 1 August. More information is available at www.nrm.gov.au, or by calling 1800 552 008.

Upcoming Events

AGM/General Meeting, Hobart 20 July
Local Government Conference, Hobart 21-22 July