President’s Message

There has been a great response from councils across the country to the request from the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) to pass a motion in support of Local Government being recognised in the Australian Constitution. I am pleased that Tasmanian councils have responded favourably to that request and I say thank you for that. The work of ALGA never ceases and in this week’s mail, mayors would have received a communication from ALGA President, Cllr Genia McCaffery, regarding a campaign which will call on the Federal Government to make permanent the Roads to Recovery Program.

ALGA will be launching the campaign at this year’s National Local Roads and Transport Congress, being held in Mt Gambier from 16-18 November, and councils are being asked to pass a motion in support of the campaign in advance of the launch. The Roads to Recovery program, introduced in 2000 and currently funded through to 2014, has been one of the most beneficial federally funded programs to be made available to Local Government and it is extremely important to ensure that it continues.

The campaign will not only be aiming to make the program permanent but importantly, at a rate that recognises the backlog of needs on local roads. Independent research commissioned by ALGA and released at last year’s Roads Congress showed that there was a national shortfall in the level of funding for local roads of $1.2 billion annually.

I look forward to your support of this campaign and suggest that the passing of a supportive motion at an upcoming meeting could be followed with some letter writing, as put forward by ALGA, could be done once the campaign is launched in November.

Community Satisfaction Survey

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) commissioned Myriad Research to undertake the fifth statewide Community Satisfaction Survey, which has revealed a positive increase in resident satisfaction across a range of important council service delivery areas over the past two years, notwithstanding a decrease in residents’ rating of councils’ overall performance.

Among the highest ranking areas were customer service and council access, waste management, community health, safety and recreation, and cultural facilities and programs. Lowest ranking areas included the involvement of residents in local decision-making, planning and development activities, stormwater and local road maintenance.

LGAT President, Mayor Barry Easther, said the results came against a backdrop of the wettest winter on record and significant damage caused through flooding and storm activity in 2010. “The effects of developing and implementing regional land use planning strategies and contemporary planning schemes have tended to divert attention from some of the day-to-day activities, which will have had a marked effect on customer experience,” Mr Easther said.

A focus on safe and well maintained roads was seen as a clear priority for councils, mentioned by 1 in 4 respondents and, despite the low level of satisfaction in relation to planning and development, only 9% of respondents felt planning was an area of council activity that needed improvement.

“Satisfaction with councils’ overall performance was generally lower for rural residents than for urban and city councils, which may be a symptom of having to do more with less in terms of low rate bases compared with large asset holdings,” Mayor Easther said.

Survey respondents showed a high level of support for the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government, with 67.1% scoring 4 and 5 on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being most important). A total of 78.9% of respondents were strongly in support of ensuring continued direct funding of Local Government by the Federal Government. The full report is available on the LGAT website at www.lgat.tas.gov.au.
Seniors’ Policy for Tasmania Consultation Paper
The Tasmanian Government is developing a three-year plan that will establish priorities and actions for the
government to progress during 2012-14. Your input is required to inform the development of the plan. Individuals
and organisations are invited to respond to the Future Directions: Seniors’ Policy for Tasmania Consultation Paper.
Submissions close on 12 August. To respond, visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/Future_Direction. For further
information, phone 6232 7888, or email seniors@dpac.tas.gov.au.

Aquatic Facility Safety Assessments
Royal Life Saving Tasmania conducts Aquatic Facility Safety Assessments (AGSA) to assess an aquatic facility against the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation and applicable Australian Standards and legislation. Facilities are assessed across a range of areas such as administration, first aid, plant room and chemical storage, facility design, signage, supervision and programs. The guidelines provide recommendations for best practice for both client and employee safety and will assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of quality systems within the aquatic facility. To book an AFSA assessment, contact Royal Life Saving Tasmania on 6243 7558.

Stormwater Harvesting Grants
The 3rd funding round for projects which harvest treat and reuse stormwater has been announced with
information about the grants available at www.environment.gov.au/water/programs/urban/stormwater-
harvesting.html. The grant round is open until 7 December and, in recognition of recent flooding across the
country, projects that include a flood mitigation component will also be eligible for this funding round.

Aussies Urged to Recycle Old Mobiles
Through the ‘Old phones, more trees’ campaign, MobileMuster, the mobile phone industry’s official recycling
program, aims to collect 250,000 handsets and plant up to 25,000 trees around Australia’s coastline. Every old
mobile phone recycled with MobileMuster will enable Landcare and Coastcare groups to make a real difference
to our coastline. The campaign will also keep old mobiles out of landfill and recover over 90% of the materials in
the phones to make new products. MobileMuster will donate 25 grants of $2,000 each to Landcare Australia and
Coastcare groups. Grant application forms and criteria are available at www.landcareonline.com.au.

National Tracks and Trails Conference (Sydney)
The 2011 National Tracks and Trails Conference, to be held in Sydney from 31 August - 2 September, will provide
the opportunity for Local Government land managers to learn and share with a broad range of experts in their
respective fields. Topics to be addressed include: whole-of-landscape trail planning; partnerships; and developing
policy that delivers cost effective solutions and more sustainable health, transport, environmental, recreation and
tourism outcomes to the community. To register, visit www.tracksandtrails.org.au, or call (08) 8168 9999.

Australia Day Awards
The Australia Day Awards seek to inspire national pride and spirit to enrich the life of all Australians. The program
highlights and promotes the wide varieties of ways in which Australians contribute to a strong and vibrant nation.
From medicine, to the arts, to community service – the awards acknowledge the spectrum. Councils are well
placed in the community to know and promote these people for recognition. To nominate an Australian in your
community who makes you proud, visit www.australianoftheyear.org.au.

Creative Business Connections (Hobart)
At a free, two-hour presentation to be held in Hobart on 26 August, Marcus Westbury, founder of Renew Australia
and Renew Newcastle, will discuss strategies for rejuvenating urban and regional centres through sustainable arts
and business partnerships. Renew Newcastle has launched more than 60 new creative projects in 30 empty retail
spaces and was awarded the 2010 AbaF Partnership of the Year. Topics to be covered include: fostering
community; developing a creative economy; rejuvenating urban and regional centres; and developing
sustainable arts and business partnerships. Property owners, property developers, architects, urban planners,
economic development and cultural development managers from Local Government are encouraged to attend.
Light refreshments will be provided afterwards. RSVP by 24 August to Essie on 6233 5553.

New Local Government Online Knowledge Resource
The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) has implemented an on-line, interactive forum
known as IKEN - the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network. IKEN provides a platform for Local
Government practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders to exchange information and ideas, showcase
innovation and provide useful links to resources, research opportunities, collaboration and support. To get
involved, visit www.iken.net.au. The ACELG has launched another web-based portal called the Local
Government Researchers Network. The aim of this resource is to assist councils to learn about, identify and
and collaborate with researchers in addressing needs within their council area, region or state. The Local Government
Researchers Network is accessible via www.iken.net.au/research-network.
Hobart City Council’s Still Gardening Program is currently conducting a study in Southern Tasmania, to gauge interest in getting Garden Mates ‘Hubs’ up and running in local areas throughout the state. The Still Gardening Program promotes healthy ageing and continued independent living for elderly gardeners and gardeners with a disability through its Garden Mates Program. Volunteer Garden Mates support clients to actively garden, easing stress levels and isolation, with added benefits of getting outside into the garden for some gentle physical activity, fresh air and sunshine. The initial Garden Mates Program, operating within the Hobart and Glenorchy areas, has been extremely successful to date, and Council would like to see those benefits extended to a wider number of clients by supporting the development of Garden Mates ‘Hubs’ in the southern region and eventually throughout the State. An extensive resource kit has been developed to assist in this process. For information on the program, visit www.stillgardening.com.au, or phone 6236 9349.

Climate Action: an Industry Perspective (Launceston)
The Tasmanian Climate Action Council (TCAC) is hosting a free seminar series to broaden and stimulate the debate around topics relating to climate change. The next seminar will be held from 5.30pm – 6.30pm on 11 August at the Rory Spence Lecture Theatre, School of Architecture and Design University of Tasmania, Inveresk. Speakers include: Dr Noel Purcell - Tasmanian Climate Action Council Member; Trevor Power - Assistant Secretary, Analysis and Projections Branch Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency; and Marghanita Johnson - Manager, Climate and External Policy, Rio Tinto Alcan. RSVPs are required by 9 August. Bookings are essential. Email climatechange@dpac.tas.gov.au, or call (03) 6232 7173.

Seeing RED over Plastic Recycling
An exciting innovation in closed-loop plastic waste recycling has been introduced to Tasmania by REPLAS and the RED Group. The RED Group, an organisation dedicated to recycling and education, aims to show local councils, schools and businesses how their plastic waste can be recycled into durable, cost-effective outdoor furniture and infrastructure materials. The Clarence City Council has already implemented the RED Project, with plastic waste collection points provided at various public locations. Other councils are encouraged to take up the program. Replas and the RED Group produce environmentally-friendly and sustainable products which not only offer an alternative to the unnecessary use of virgin materials, but also reduce the amount of plastic going to landfill or being shipped overseas. To find out more, go to www.replas.com.au, or phone 6231 3134.

Walk to Work Day
People who walk regularly are more productive and less likely to be absent from the workplace. On 16 September, organisations and their employees are encouraged to step out for the Cancer Council Walk to Work Day. By registering, organisations will receive free information, support and ideas on how to make walking work in their workplace. Registration is free and there are great giveaways for participants. For the first time, Walk to Work Day will be actively raising funds for the Cancer Council. For details, visit www.walk.com.au.

Council activities for Keep Australia Beautiful Week Campaign
Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) Week will kick off from 22 August to remind all Australians that litter on our streets can pollute our oceans, rivers and other waterways, posing a serious threat to marine animals and other wildlife. Local Councils can support KAB Week by promoting anti-litter messages with local displays. It is also a good time to assess how your local rubbish and recycling services are faring and whether they are supporting the needs of the local community. Posters and other resources can be downloaded from the Keep Australia Beautiful website, along with a template media release to help spread the anti-litter message. For further information, visit www.kab.org.au.

Upcoming Events

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<td>General Managers’ Workshop, Bridport</td>
<td>14-15 September</td>
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<td>GMC Meeting &amp; General Meeting, Brighton</td>
<td>21 September</td>
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<td>Local Government Election Nomination period</td>
<td>12-26 September</td>
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<td>Local Government Election Polling Period</td>
<td>11-25 October</td>
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