Acting President’s Message

I noted with interest that, this week, the agreement between Federal Labor and the Greens included a commitment to a referendum being held in this parliamentary term to include Local Government in the Australian Constitution. Our members have put up a number of successful motions on the issue of Constitutional Recognition over the last few years. There is clearly widespread agreement that we should put effort into gaining the appropriate recognition of Local Government in the Constitution. The commitment made by Labor and the Greens this week is just a start. We ultimately need to secure commitment from the Coalition as well and at both Federal and State levels of Government.

Even more importantly we need to convince our communities of the importance of recognising Local Government in the Constitution. As the Australian Local Government Association’s (ALGA) President, Clr Geoff Lake states, “The inclusion of Local Government in the Constitution is all about stable government. It is about removing the current uncertainty stemming from last year’s High Court decision in Pape which has cast serious doubt on the power of the Commonwealth to continue to provide funds directly to Local Government”.

Constitutional Recognition does not change Local Government’s accountability or status but it can secure its ability to cater to the needs of local communities in line with the intent, in 1840, when councils were first established. Work done by ALGA and our own community satisfaction surveys show that there is a relatively high level of satisfaction with Local Government in Tasmania. However, this needs to be lifted to even higher levels and it also needs to be translated into a the desire to see Local Government recognised in the Constitution. This will require continued conversations within our councils, between our councils, our communities and State and Federal politicians in order to succeed.

On a different matter, I met with Christine Mucha from Onstream this week. Onstream have released their draft annual report which is now available on their website at www.onstream.com.au. The Association hopes to have Christine, and possibly Geoff Willis, available to talk to members at the November General Meeting.

Measuring our Councils

Premier David Bartlett and the President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania, Clr Barry Easther, have jointly released a consultation paper to guide debate on a project to measure the performance of councils. The initiative will provide councils and communities with a snapshot of council performance in relation to key indicators and will illustrate the sustainability of councils in terms of their ability to make the best use of resources and capabilities.

The project aims to improve performance management at the local council level, develop a culture of continuous improvement to ensure a sustainable Local Government sector. Councils and the community are encouraged to provide written submissions to the consultation paper by 1 October. Clr Easther said the areas to be measured are up for discussion but may include financial and asset management, governance and community engagement.

Regional workshops will be held in the South on 23 September, in the North-West on 30 September, and in the North on 1 October to provide an opportunity to provide input into the project and to answer any questions raised by the consultation paper. For a copy of the consultation paper, visit www.dpac.tas.gov.au.

2010-11 Trails and Bikeways Grant Program

Grants are available to Local Government, community groups and other not-for-profit providers of sport and active recreation for trail and bikeway construction projects consistent with the Trails Tasmania Strategy and the implementation of city bike plans. Applicants are expected to contribute at least half of the project funding.

Applications close on 1 March 2011. To find out more, visit www.development.tas.gov.au/sportrec/information_for_organisations/grant_programs.
Assessing the Impacts of Climate Change

A new report has been launched by the State Government detailing the challenges posed by climate change in Tasmania, while also setting out early strategies to help protect the state’s unique natural environment. The report, entitled *Vulnerability of Tasmania’s Natural Environment to Climate Change: An Overview*, shows that there will be a considerable impact on alpine regions along with increased risk of fire and other extreme events, increased threat to our native species from habitat changes, greater risk of weed, disease and other pest incursions. Our coastal and marine environments are also susceptible, with sea surface temperatures predicted to have the greatest increases in our region. The report is available at www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/DRAR-88P8CY9open.

Elected Member Planning Course

A two-day Planning Course will be held for elected members on 16 October and 20 November at the University of Tasmania campus in Hobart. Councillors will gain a better understanding of Tasmania’s planning system - the Resource Management Planning System (RMPS), its legal framework, purposes, powers and procedures, and of the responsibilities of different individuals and groups within the system. Procedures under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act* will be a particular focus. Cost is $600 (incl GST). To register, please complete and return the registration form located on the LGAT website at www.lgat.tas.gov.au, or phone 6233 5966.

Australasian Transport Forum

The Australasian Transport Forum (ATRF) will be held in Canberra, from 29 September to 1 October. ATRF is the principal transport research conference in Australasia, bringing together transport researchers, policymakers, advisors and practitioners from a range of disciplines to share and build upon the latest research and thinking. ATRF 2010 is hosted by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, and the Australian Capital Territory Department of Territory and Municipal Services. Early bird registrations are now available. For full details, visit www.bitre.gov.au/atrf2010/index.aspx.

King Island Council Seeks Cadet

King Island Council is offering a professional cadetship for a young person within one of the following areas: Environmental Health Officer, Building Surveyor, Town Planner or Engineer. The cadetship, commencing in 2011, combines paid work experience with the requirement to undertake tertiary studies in the agreed professional field. The successful applicant will be supported in their studies by way of assistance with course fees and time off to study and attend exams. In addition, there is the possibility of a scholarship with UTAS. Secondments with other councils and agencies will also be offered. Applications close on 20 December. Further information can be found at www.kingisland.tas.gov.au, or contact Mark Goode on 6462 1177.

Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women

The Tasmanian Government is calling for nominations for the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women. The Honour Roll recognises women who have made a major contribution to the Tasmanian community. Organisations and individuals are invited to nominate suitable women from all backgrounds and cultures, and all fields of endeavour including community service, humanitarian, business, science and technology, arts and entertainment, sport, education and environment. Posthumous nominations will be accepted. Nominations for the 2011 induction close on 29 October. Nomination forms, selection criteria and general information are available at www.women.tas.gov.au, or by calling 1800 001 377.

2010 Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program

Applications for the 2010 ‘Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program’ are now open. The new program will run in Melbourne from 22 November to 10 December and will be open to a maximum of 80 high calibre participants, both elected representatives and senior managers. The program will be delivered by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and is a core initiative of the new Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG). Ten half scholarships for women are being provided by the Commonwealth Government in acknowledgement of 2010 Year of Women in Local Government. Please visit the ANZSOG website to download a copy of the brochure and application form at http://anzsoeg.edu.au/content.asp?pageId=194.

National Local Government Urban Planning and Development Summit

The national Local Government Urban Planning and Development Summit will be held from 19-20 October, in Sydney. This important summit will analyse current and upcoming legislative reform and the future role of councils in planning and approving development in existing suburbs and towns, as well as greenfield areas. The summit will also provide leading-edge case studies of Local Government urban planning and community infrastructure development solutions, including urban renewal, strategic planning, community engagement and improving the efficiency of development assessment processes. The cost for full delegates is $895. To register, visit www.halledit.com.au/urbanplan2010, or contact Denise McQueen on (03) 8534 5021.
Asset Management for Buildings
IPWEA will present a two-day workshop for practitioners in Building Asset Management, focusing on the practicalities of how to prepare and undertake a building condition survey - including data analysis and reporting. The workshop, to be held in Launceston on 13-14 October, will show how to improve buildings asset management practice, provide a consistent approach to buildings survey and condition assessment, and will provide hands-on professional development. Building asset practitioners including engineers, building surveyors, technical officers, inspectors and assessors are encouraged to attend. For more information, visit www.ipwea.org.au/BuildingsWorkshops.

Postgraduate Information Evenings
Council staff considering furthering their education in 2011 are invited to attend one of three postgraduate information evenings at the University of Tasmania. Whether you are considering professional development for career advancement, or wanting to undertake further study for personal interest, the range of postgraduate course work and research offerings available at UTAS is likely to contain a program that suits your needs. The information sessions will be held from 4.30pm – 6.30pm at the Sandy Bay Campus on 27 September, at the Inveresk Campus on 30 September, and at the Cradle coast Campus in 4 October. To register your attendance, visit www.postgraduate.utas.edu.au, or phone 1300 363 864.

Local Government Urban Planning and Development Summit
Leading examples of Local Government strategies for managing urban growth and improving planning practices will be detailed at the national Local Government Urban Planning and Development Summit, to be held from 19-20 October, in Sydney. Case study presentations will detail leading practices in areas such as: strategic planning for urban growth; community consultation in planning processes; urban renewal and activity centre development; improving development assessment processes; and addressing climate change and other environmental issues councils must address in their planning decisions. For more information, visit www.halledit.com.au/urbanplan2010.

ATO Advice on Property Transactions
Property transactions can be complex. To support taxpayers, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has developed a range of publications which outline the various goods and services tax (GST) treatments on property acquisition, development and disposal, and can assist taxpayers and developers to meet their taxation obligations. The information can be accessed online at www.ato.gov.au. Councils are encouraged to promote this message to their ratepayers, both online and through the council newsletter.

Save a life: Think F.A.S.T. Act FAST!
National Stroke Week 2010 will be held from 13-19 September and aims to raise awareness of stroke and the early warning signs, using the FAST test (Face, Arms Speech and Time to act Fast!). As part of the week, the National Stroke Foundation is utilising technology to help Australians understand what a stroke is and to remember the common warning signs using the FAST test. Get involved and hold an activity or display in your community or workplace to support the national campaign. A great range of resources are available to promote the FAST test such as wallet cards, fridge magnets and screen saver for computers. To order a free Stroke Week pack, visit www.strokefoundation.com.au/national-stroke-week, or email strokeweek@strokefoundation.com.au.

2011 Rural Women’s Award
Applications for the 2011 Rural Women’s Award are now invited. The award aims to increase women’s capacity to contribute to rural Tasmania by providing support and resources to further develop their leadership skills. It is an initiative of the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. The winner will receive a $10,000 bursary to complete a nominated project or initiative, as well as the opportunity to take part in an Australian Institute of Company Director’s course in Canberra. Applications are required by 15 October. For more information, visit www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au, or call Sally Smith on 6336 5418.

Upcoming Events
General Managers’ Workshop, Launceston
General Management Committee Meeting, Launceston
Planning Course for Elected Members, Hobart
15-16 September
23 September
16 October & 20 November

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