President’s Message

What interesting times we continue to experience in Local Government!

I know that the content of the presentation by Miles Hampton at our General Meeting last week came as a surprise to many but, given the sensitivity of the subject matter, I do not believe it would have been wise to have had a detailed agenda item covering the issue to be discussed. I am sure you would agree that the subject matter would have generated much media focus prior to our meeting and I do not believe that this would have been at all helpful. So if an apology is necessary from me, I do apologise!

By now you will have received the discussion paper provided by the working group, established at last week’s General Meeting. I trust that as many elected members as possible will be able to attend the regional briefing sessions to be held over the next couple of weeks. We now have an important decision to make.

Three years ago, we were pushed into a corner by the then Treasurer, Michael Aird, and now, two years after the commencement of the new water and sewerage corporations, we find ourselves once again ‘between a rock and a hard place’. With the State Government’s known position, the Opposition’s recently announced policy, and the pending recommendation from the Parliamentary Select Committee, preferences appear to be in favour of a single water and sewerage entity. I am of the view that now is the time for Local Government to drive the process of reform and establish a structure for a single water and sewerage corporation that we are all more comfortable with.

Together with the working group’s discussion paper and regional briefing sessions, we should all have sufficient information on which to base our considered decision. I am aware that there is some concern as to the timeframes we are working to however, as I have said to the media, where there are people involved, we do need to make a decision sooner rather than later.

I look forward to catching up with you at the briefing sessions.

Discussion Paper on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

The Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government has released its discussion paper for public comment by 4 November and all councils are encouraged to make a submission. The Expert Panel has been asked by the Federal Government to assess whether there is sufficient public support to recognise Local Government in the Constitution and to provide recommendations on options for changing the Constitution. The discussion paper seeks to gauge public support for recognition in general, and for one or more of four specific options for change which include:

- **Symbolic recognition** of Local Government by including it in a new Preamble or Statement of Values;
- **Financial recognition** of Local Government, which would allow the Commonwealth to directly fund Local Government;
- **Democratic recognition** of Local Government, which would require states to establish and maintain Local Government; and
- **Recognition through federal cooperation**, which would seek to encourage cooperation between the levels of government, including Local Government.

There is overwhelming support for the financial recognition option among Local Government, with 77% of councils nationally passing resolutions supporting it. The discussion paper can be found at www.localgovrecognition.gov.au/content/discussion-paper. If your Council has not advised ALGA or LGAT of your affirmative resolution, please do so as soon as possible.

Social Media Survey

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) is about to capture a snapshot of how Australian Local Government is using social media. On 4 October, a short, online questionnaire will be sent to every council in the country requesting the CEO, General Manager, or relevant person in the organisation to share their views and experiences about using social media. The results will feed into an ACELG issues paper, which aims to assist with building capacity and understanding in the Local Government sector when it comes to using social media. LGAT encourages every council to take 10 minutes to complete the survey and share their attitudes and experiences with regard to social media.
LGAT Policy Director - a Finalist for Prestigious Awards
Local Government Association of Tasmania Policy Director, Dr Katrena Stephenson, has been named one of seven finalists for the 2011 Telstra Business Women’s Awards. The prestigious awards, which celebrate the leadership, innovation and achievements of extraordinary business women, are now in their 17th year. Katrena joined the LGAT in 2007 where she develops and advocates for LGAT policies and services on behalf of the Association’s 28 member councils. She is a finalist in the White Pages Community and Government Award category. Previously, as a senior manager for Housing Tasmania, she was influential in the development of the Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy, a long-term plan to provide sustainable, low-cost housing for those in need. The award winners will be announced in Hobart on 5 October. More information on the awards can be found at www.telstrabusinesswomensawards.com.

Help for Small Businesses in Managing Emergencies
A new resources package to help small businesses deal with emergencies has been released by the Minister for Small Business, Senator Nick Sherry. The Emergency Management and Recovery Resources package was developed by the Australian Government’s small business website, in response to natural disasters in Australia during the past year. A feature of the package is a template with an instruction guide that businesses can use to create their own emergency management plan. The package can be found at www.business.gov.au/BusinessTopics/emergencymanagementandrecovery/pages/default.aspx.

Community Recycling Sector Survey
Australia’s Community Recycling Enterprises Community Recycling Network Association, in partnership with the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Non-profit Studies, are undertaking a national study to identify the community recycling sector. An online survey of enterprises aims to identify community recycling enterprises in Australia and indicate their size, structure and impacts. Community recycling enterprises that wish to be included in the study are encouraged to contact creonline@qut.edu.au.

Conferences, Workshops and Seminars

UTAS Postgraduate Information Evenings (Burnie, Launceston, Hobart)
Whether you are considering professional development for career advancement, or wanting to undertake further study for personal interest, the range of postgraduate coursework and research offerings available at UTAS is likely to contain a program that suits your needs. Postgraduate Information Evenings are being held from 4.30pm – 6.30pm in Burnie on 3 October, Launceston on 4 October, and in Hobart on 6 October. Find out which course might best suit your needs, how a study timetable might fit with your work commitments, the possible associated costs, and the scholarships which are available. Further information can be found at www.utas.edu.au/postgraduate, or contact the UTAS Information Centre on 1300 363 864.

The Carbon Economy: A Discussion Forum (Launceston, Hobart)
A forum will be held in the North and South of the State concerning issues relating to the new carbon economy, what it means for Local Government, the community, business and the environment. The interactive forum will raise questions and explore opportunities for our regions. Feedback from the discussions will help RDA Tasmania and the NRMs to identify issues that need addressing, and opportunities to grow our regions. Speakers include: Anthony Bennie, Department of Climate Change & Energy Efficiency; Margi Johnson of Rio Tinto Alcan; Mark Bowles of the TCCI; and Gavin Dufy from St Vincent de Paul. Forums will be held in Launceston on 5 October - RSVP at http://contacts.rdatasmania.org.au/rsvp/reply/Carbon_Forum_5_Oct.html, and in Hobart on 6 October – RSVP at http://contacts.rdatasmania.org.au/rsvp/reply/Carbon_Forum_6_Oct.html.

Mediation in the Workplace (Hobart)
Unresolved conflict can severely disrupt workplace communication, performance and employee job satisfaction and can be costly in terms of productivity and possible legal fees. Workplace mediation is a pragmatic approach to dealing with conflict. A mediation workshop, facilitated by Ron Snashall, will be held in Hobart from 5-6 October. The program is designed for anyone in the work place whose role is to mediate conflict in their office. The cost is $690 (TCCI members) and $790 (non-members). To register your interest, please contact Judy Phair at the TCCI on 6236 3666.

BFA Biological Roadshow 2011
The Biological Farmers of Australia will be hosting the BFA Biological Roadshow 2011 on 10 October at New Norfolk. Don’t miss this rare opportunity to learn from two highly renowned biological farming consultants about soil health, crop management, reducing production costs and maintaining long-term environmental and financial sustainability. Increase soil health and reduce dependence on inputs. Entry costs $50 (BFA members) and $70 (non-members). To book, visit www.bfa.com.au, or phone 1300 331 309.
Biomass Energy Forums (Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, Devonport)
A series of 45-minute seminars, to be held in October, will detail the opportunities for councils to save power costs while generating bio-energy from waste materials. Andrew Lang, Board Member of the World Bio-energy Association, will present the findings from his tour of bio-energy facilities in Finland, Denmark and the U.S.A. Bio-energy is the largest source of renewable energy overall in the EU and there are now funding opportunities for Tasmanian Councils. Craig Perkins from Regional Development Australia will present details at the seminars to be held in Hobart on 10 October, at Inveresk on 11 October, in Burnie on 12 October and in Devonport on 12 October. For full details, visit www.newforestindustry.com. To RSVP, contact Diana.Hall@dier.tas.gov.au, or phone 6336 5300.

Power Shift 2011: Start the Transformation! (Brisbane)
The Australian Youth Climate coalition presents Power Shift 2011, a three-day summit to be held in Brisbane from 15-17 October, bringing together over 1,000 young people from different walks of life to learn about climate change and how they can be part of the solution. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from world renowned speakers, develop leadership and campaigning skills through workshops, connect and build relationships with other passionate young people, attend a concert and participate in a large public action. Power Shift is going to be the moment when the younger generation comes together, and starts the transformation to renewable energy! Find out more at www.powershift.org.au.

ENGAGE 2011 (Sydney)
If you are looking to understand how social media and digital communications can transform your organisation, ENGAGE 2011 will show you how to create news, content and communication that drives engagement, changes opinions and gets results. The keynote speaker is Lee Aase, Director of The Mayo Clinic Centre for Social Media in the USA and a pioneer in digital communications and outreach. Take advantage of communicating in the "made for digital" age at ENGAGE 2011, from 10-11 November, in Sydney. Registration costs $900 (+ GST). To reserve your place, visit www.frocomm.com.au.

3rd Annual International Arts and Health Conference (Canberra)
From 14-18 November, Arts and Health Australia will present the third International Arts and Health Conference at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, which houses the nation’s largest art collection. This prestigious conference venue will enable an innovative and creative focus on visual arts programs that have been designed to support health and wellbeing. The conference will showcase best practice arts and health programs incorporating music, theatre, dance, comedy, circus arts, creative and narrative writing, film and digital media. For more information, visit www.artsandhealth.org.

2011 National Local Roads and Transport Congress (Mt Gambier)
More than 20 speakers have been confirmed for the 2011 National Local Roads and Transport Congress, to be held in Mount Gambier from 16-18 November. The theme - Better Roads are Safer Roads, will be addressed by road safety experts and academics, as well as police and engineers, who deal with road safety issues on a day-to-day basis. Commonwealth officials will also be presenting on the management of the Roads to Recovery Program. As many Local Government representatives as possible are encouraged to attend the event to ensure that Local Government sends a strong message to the Federal Government about the importance of the Roads to Recovery Program to local communities. Registration details are available on the ALGA website at www.alga.asn.au/policy/transport/congress/2011/07.registration.php.

Upcoming Events

- Local Government Procurement Session, Burnie: 10 October
- Local Government Procurement Session, Riverside: 11 October
- Local Government Procurement Session, Kingston: 13 October
- Local Government Election Polling Period: 11-25 October

Local Government Association of Tasmania
34 Patrick Street, Hobart, TAS 7000   GPO Box 1521, Hobart, TAS 7001   Ph: (03) 6233 5966   Fax: (03) 6233 5986   Email: admin@lgat.tas.gov.au