President’s Message

It is hard to imagine how quickly the New Year has come around and I trust that, like me, you have had the opportunity of enjoying some quality time over the summer holiday break. I continue to enjoy a few days but, next week, must return from my ‘summer office’ to the West Tamar!

This year will undoubtedly be one full of challenges for Local Government. I see some of the main issues we will need to be exerting our efforts on include: planning; Local Government reform; and, dare I mention it, water and sewerage!

From my perspective, I believe that the Regional Draft Interim Planning Schemes will be declared by the Minister perhaps around mid-year and I sincerely hope that will put a stop to the criticism so regularly being levelled at councils. There does seem to be a general lack of understanding that in the planning area, councils are simply implementing State legislation.

Whilst on the subject of planning, I have become increasingly concerned with the State Opposition’s position in this space. I think the time has come when someone needs to ask the Opposition to put some meat on the bones of their bland statement of introducing a “single planning scheme” for the State. We need to be told how they intend to achieve this objective. Who do they have in mind to develop the scheme and how do they propose the scheme be administered?

It has taken three years and an incredible amount of effort and consensus for Local Government to get the regional schemes to the stage they are at right now. Councils and their planners are to be congratulated for their hard work. I look forward to some detailed explanation from the State Opposition with regard to their ‘policy’.

Local Government reform is certainly high on the agenda, as is the review of water and sewerage. It is quite evident to me that our communities will be keeping a watchful eye on how we handle these issues. The only comment I will make is that we need to be very mindful of what we consider to be in the best interests of our communities as we progress these important matters.
National Awards for Local Government 2012
If you are proud of your Council’s innovative approach to meeting your community’s needs, your organisation has until 17 February to submit an entry for the National Awards for Local Government. The Awards recognise, reward and promote the work of Local Government across Australia. They are an important component of the Government’s partnership with Local Government, showcasing unique local solutions to common problems. Award categories include: Active Arts; Asset and Financial Management; Energy Smart; Excellence in Alcohol Management; Improving Services to Remote Communities; Innovative Infrastructure Development; Youth Engagement and Participation; and others. For enquiries, visit www.regional.gov.au, or phone 1800 065 113.

2012 Spirit of Community Leadership Award
Do you know a woman who has changed her community? The inaugural Spirit of Community Leadership Award, coordinated by Women and Leadership Australia, will be presented to a regional or rural woman who has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to her region or community. This contribution may take the form of an event or activity, an innovative business venture, a support network or group, fundraising or philanthropic activity, or dedication of personal time and skills. This woman will embody the true essence of what it means to be a driving force for positive change within the community. Nominations must be submitted by 8 February to be considered for the award. To learn more, please visit www.wla.com.au/leadershipaward.

International Women’s Day 2012
International Women’s Day (IWD) is celebrated on 8 March every year. IWD is a day of international recognition for the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. Individuals, community groups and organisations throughout Tasmania are encouraged to host or participate in International Women’s Day events. Every year, the Department of Premier and Cabinet’s Community Development Division compiles a Calendar of Events for each region to advertise events being held across the State. If you are planning to hold an event and would like it included on the calendar, please contact Marie Meakins for a form on 6434 6462, or email Marie.Meakins@dpac.tas.gov.au. The closing date for entries is 20 February.

Forest Industry 3-Year Plan Briefings
Every year, forest industry company representatives contact councils inviting them to attend a 3-year plan (3YP) briefing to engage with and assist councils in council planning of road use etc. As a great deal of effort goes into the 3YP process, the active participation of councils at the briefings is greatly appreciated. General managers, works infrastructure and engineering staff, planning staff and elected representatives are invited to have input into this process. For details of scheduled briefings, contact Michael Lawson (North/North-East regions) on 0409 005 443, or email michael.lawson@tppl.com.au; Ian Brumby (North-West region) on 6433 2635, or email ian.brumby@forestrytas.com.au; or Peter Volker (Southern region) on 6235 8344, or email peter.volker@forestrytas.com.au.

Neighbour Day
Australia’s annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day, will be held on 25 March across the country. Free artwork for local event posters has been designed to allow your Council logo to be inserted. This artwork is provided as a hi-res jpeg which can be printed up to A1 size. These resources can be downloaded from www.neighbourday.org/resources/localgovernment. Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC has provided the 10th anniversary message which may be used in all, or some, of your Council communications for Neighbour Day. The text and a PDF of the message may be downloaded from www.neighbourday.org/resources/governor-general-message. Access to the resources is free of charge.

Donatelifeweek
Would you know what to say if you were asked, “Did your loved ones want to be an organ and tissue donor?” Donatelifeweek is Australia’s national awareness week to promote organ and tissue donation. The national Donatelifeweek campaign is supported by community events and activities across Australia. Only 57% of Australians know the donation wishes of their loved ones. During Donatelifeweek, 19-26 February, all Australians are encouraged to ask and know the organ and tissue donation wishes of family members because in Australia the family will always be asked to confirm the donation wishes of the deceased. For more information, visit www.donatelifeweek.gov.au, or call Donatelifeweek Tasmania on 6270 2209.
Conferences, Workshops and Seminars

ABS Information Session (Hobart)
In December 2010, the ABS released the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) which replaces the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC). The ASGS defines more stable, consistent and meaningful units than the ASGC and will become the essential reference for understanding and interpreting the geographical dimension of ABS statistics. The ASGS will significantly impact upon sub-state population estimates, as estimates will be prepared and released based on an entirely new geographic classification. Because of this, an information session will be held in Hobart to assist in clarifying plans for the preparation and release of these estimates. The session will commence at 11.00am at the ABS, 200 Collins Street, Hobart, on 6 February. To register your interest, please contact Naiche Hicks on 62225901, or email naiche.hicks@abs.gov.au.

Community Engagement Training (Hobart)
Whether we use the term participation, communication, development, education, it does not matter as it is all about ‘engagement’. Taking Action is a licensed provider to the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Community Engagement training program. Three modules of the program will be held during February and March in Hobart: Module 1 - ‘Planning for Effective Public Participation’ from 21-22 February; Module 2 - ‘Communication for Effective Public Participation’ on 23 February; and Module 3 - ‘Techniques for Effective Public Participation’ from 20-21 March. Upon completion of all three modules, students will be awarded a Certificate in Public Participation from IAP2. Register by 10 February. For more information, visit www.takingaction.com.au/coursesevents.html, or email enquiries@takingaction.com.au.

Australian Family Friendly Workplace Seminar (Melbourne)
The Australian Family Friendly Workplace Seminar is a significant opportunity to explore the increasingly important need for all employers to provide effective engagement and wellbeing practices within the workplace. This significant nationwide initiative will showcase the strategies of Australia’s most ‘employee friendly’ employers and demonstrate how these strategies lead to a realistic and achievable return on investment. Scheduled to be held in Melbourne from 1-2 March 2012, attendees will hear from an exceptional line-up of speakers, who will provide first hand advice on how to attract and retain talented employees in a highly competitive labour market. For more information, visit http://wtaa.edu.au/familyfriendly/.

Peak Oil, Local Resilience and Financial Crisis (Hobart, Launceston)
An impending crisis? Many assure us there is. What are the issues and opportunities for Tasmania? How can we prepare and respond to ensure we ‘keep the lights on’ both metaphorically and physically? UTAS Sustainability is sponsoring two talks by Nicole Foss in conjunction with Transition Tasmania, Peak Oil Tasmania and Sustainable Living Tasmania. Explore the interrelated issues of finance, energy, resources, environment, psychology, population and realpolitik that make up our current multi-faceted predicament. An explanation of why we find ourselves in a state of crisis and what we can do about it. Sessions will be held from 7.00pm on 13 March at the Hobart Campus, and on 15 March at the Newnham Campus. RSVP by email to UTAS.Events@utas.edu.au, or phone 6226 2521. For more information, visit www.events.utas.edu.au/2012/march/peak-oil,-local-resilience-and-financial-crisis.

Local Government Rates and Revenue Conference (Sydney)

ACOSS National Conference – ‘Sharing the Wealth of the ‘Lucky’ Country’ (Sydney)
The ACOSS National Conference is the premier national event for policy-makers, researchers and those engaged in social services or advocacy. Registrations are invited for the 2012 event, to be held in Sydney, from 29-30 March. Among the conference highlights will be a panel of young leaders discussing contemporary challenges to the sector and their visions of youth engagement, social action, advocacy and policy development. For details, visit www.acoss.org.au/whats_on/conference/acoss_national_conference_2012.

Social Media Monitoring and ROI Metrics Forum (Sydney)
The Social Media Monitoring and ROI Metrics Forum, to be held in Sydney from 29-30 March, is the only forum in Australia focusing on social media monitoring, measuring and explaining how to calculate Return on Investment (ROI) on your social media efforts and campaigns. Discounted rates are available for registrations received before 21 February and for delegates from local councils. For details, visit www.ibrc.com.au, or phone (02) 9896 0776.