President’s Message

Happy New Year and welcome to this first edition of the LGAT Newsletter for 2011.

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural meeting of the Metropolitan Councils Group which has been established within the framework of the Association and subject to Terms of Reference as agreed by the full membership. Representatives from Hobart City Council, Launceston City Council, Clarence City Council, Devonport City Council and Kingborough Council were in attendance, with Burnie City Council joining the meeting via teleconference.

The Mayor of Clarence, Ald Jock Campbell, was elected Chairman of the group and it was agreed that quarterly meetings would be held, rotating around the state. The meeting was very positive, with a genuine desire to tackle the many identified issues common to the metropolitan councils. Many suggestions were made that were considered worthy of pursuing. I am certain that the topics selected at this initial meeting and agreed to be progressed by the group will have flow on benefits, not only for the metropolitan councils but for the whole of Local Government within the state. I am very pleased with the formation of this group and look forward with confidence to some positive outcomes for Local Government as matters are progressed.

On another matter, the Association has been in contact with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) with offers of assistance in whatever form they think may aid the recovery effort following the devastating floods. A number of councils have proposed sending people to assist Queensland councils and LGAT has passed this offer on. We have proposed that LGAQ come back to us with a proposal for assistance, beyond the financial contributions that many councils have already made. We aim to coordinate a response that best meets the needs of Queensland councils and to provide assistance within their preferred timeframes.

STOP PRESS: I pass on my congratulations and best wishes to Robby Walsh on his successful election to the position of Mayor of the Waratah/Wynyard Council. Robby has worked solidly in the Deputy Mayor’s position and, more recently, as Acting Mayor. I’m sure all elected members join with me in wishing him every success as he takes on this new role. Well done Robby!

City Campaigner Greatly Missed

On 17 January, Launceston City Council lost one of its greatest ambassadors when Ald Graeme Beams passed away following a long battle with cancer. Graeme was passionate about Launceston, and represented Council on numerous committees. He also worked tirelessly to secure government funding and support for various projects during his 26-year term. Mr Beams was elected to Council in 1983. He was elected Deputy Mayor in 1987-88 and 1989-90, and held the office of Mayor of Launceston from 1990 to 1993. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to Ald Beams’ family, friends and colleagues at this sad time.

Kevin Hyland Retires

Mayor Kevin Hyland has retired from Waratah-Wynyard Council, citing business and personal reasons for his decision. Mayor Hyland was first elected to Council in 1999, elected Deputy Mayor in 2000 and subsequently as Mayor in 2005. He has been a passionate advocate for the Waratah-Wynyard area and was proud to take on leadership roles with the Cradle Coast Authority, the Local Government Association of Tasmania, and the North-West and Western Wilderness Zone Marketing Groups - established under the auspices of Tourism Tasmania. Former Deputy Mayor, Robby Walch, has taken on the role as Mayor after being elected unopposed for the position.

Accessibility Grants for Councils

FaHCSIA is inviting applications from Local Government for federal funding to improve the accessibility of local communities for people with disability. A total of $5 million is available and local councils are eligible to apply for up to two grants of $100,000 each. They must match the grants with an equal or greater amount of funding from their own sources. Councils could use the funding for improvements to community infrastructure, major renovation or refurbishment of assets. Applications close on 25 February. For details, visit www.fahcsia.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx, phone 1800 501 795, or email disabilityinfrastructure@fahcsia.gov.au.
Funding to Build Stronger Communities
Councils and community organisations can apply for grants of up to $50,000, made available through the Federal Government’s Diversity and Social Cohesion Program, to develop projects that aim to address issues of cultural, racial or religious intolerance, or to develop community capacity-building skills. Projects can use a wide range of avenues such as sports, theatre and leadership programs to address issues that affect their communities. Applications for the second round of funding close on 31 March. For further information visit www.harmony.gov.au/funding/dscp-grants, or phone 1800 782 002.

Disaster Planning Resources
The Planning Institute Australia (PIA) has established a page on its website with links to relevant resources on post-disaster planning. Information has also been included regarding available health services that can provide support for families if needed. This information is located at www.planning.org.au/policy/flood-recovery. PIA has also established a register of volunteers from across the country who are willing to assist and pass on expert planning knowledge during the rebuilding process. To be included on this register, which will be made available to relevant authorities and Local Government, please visit www.planning.org.au/policy/volunteer-registration.

Landslide Risk Management Seminars
The Sydney Coastal Councils Group (SCCG) and the Australian Geomechanics Society are conducting two half-day Landslide Risk Management Seminars on 10 March in Hobart. While there will be a concentration on presentation to regulators in the morning session and a concentration on presentation to geotechnical practitioners during the afternoon session, participants are encouraged to attend both sessions. The seminars will involve the discussion and dissemination of tools to: improve awareness of landslide risk management issues amongst Local and State Government instrumentalities; improve your Council’s ability to conduct landslide risk assessments; and to implement landslide risk management into land use planning. For details, phone 6233 8330, or 0400 588 77.

ARTN's Recovery Mentor Initiative
Have you faced a crisis before and bounced back? Do you know someone who has? As the peak national body representing regional tourism, the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN) has instigated a Recovery Mentors Initiative to link tourism professionals affected by the recent floods in Eastern Australia with their counterparts in other areas of Australia who have faced similar circumstances. The ARTN will match mentors with mentees based on commonalities such as role, organisation type and the scale of the recovery they face. The nature of the relationship will be flexible and depend the availability and requirements of all parties involved. To register your interest, email vivienne@artn.com.au, or phone (02) 6620 3785.

New Works Manual a Guide to Protect Coastal Values
A manual highlighting the latest practices in sustainable management for Tasmania’s coastline is now available for those involved in coastal management. This comprehensive tool provides best practice information and guidelines and brings together advice from coastal experts from around Australia to ensure that future work undertaken on our coastline will have minimal impact on environmental values. The Tasmanian Coastal Works Manual: A best practice management guide for changing coastlines is available free of charge from www.environment.tas.gov.au.

Sustainable Population Strategy
The issues paper, A Sustainable Population Strategy for Australia, its appendices and reports, provided by the three Sustainable Population Advisory Panels, identify and explore issues around Australia’s changing population. The paper is intended to facilitate the expression of community views about the challenges and opportunities created by changes in Australia’s population. Submissions to the issues paper are invited to help inform the government as it develops a Sustainable Population Strategy in 2011. Submissions close on 1 March. Further information can be found at www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/population/index.html.

LGE Health Plan – Special Offer
Council employees are invited to participate in the Local Government Employees Health Plan which offers competitive premiums and benefits, and provides members with a refund of their hospital excess should they, or an eligible family member, be hospitalised and have to pay the excess. The health fund for the LGE Health Plan is GMHBA – a 100% Australian, not-for-profit health insurer. Until 28 February, GMHBA is offering Local Government employees the opportunity to join the LGE Health Plan without having to serve most of the normal 2 and 6-month waiting periods. Employees who are already members of another health fund can switch to the LGE Health Plan on an equivalent level of cover and no new waiting periods will apply. More information is available at www.health-link.com.au/lgatv, or call 1300 543 7526 to speak to a consultant.

Scholarships Available For Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program
Expressions of interest for the 2011 Excellence in Local Government Leadership Program are now open. This world-class new program will be delivered by the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) as a core initiative of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG). The program will be held over two modules in Canberra. Module 1 runs from 18-23 July and module 2 will be held from 5-10 September. Scholarships have been made available from the Commonwealth Government for suitably qualified applicants. For more information, visit http://anzsog.edu.au/content.asp?pageId=194, or contact Victoria Musgrove on (03) 8344 1968.
Island Enclaves: Tasmania as a Sub-National Island Jurisdiction
A public lecture to be delivered by internationally renowned island scholar, Prof Godfrey Baldacchino, of the University of Prince Edward Island, will commence at 4.00pm on 18 February at the University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay campus. Prof Baldacchino’s expertise is in advancing critical, comparative and interdisciplinary agendas including: tourism policies and practices in “cold water” islands; patterns of governance in sub-national island jurisdictions; impact of ‘island-mainland’ bridges on island communities; and successful small business from small islands. RSVP by 15 February to UTAS.Events@utas.edu.au, or phone 6226 2521. For information, visit www.utas.edu.au/events.

Subsidy Applications Invited for Australian Regional Women Leaders Convention
The Australian Regional Women Leaders Convention, will be held in Melbourne from 7-8 April. A large number of subsidies have been awarded to women from around regional Australia in support of their attendance and further Community Access Subsidy applications are invited. A $600 subsidy will apply to each successful applicant, reducing the cost of attendance from $1,295 (Standard) to $695 per person. Applications are required by 25 February. Full details are available at www.wla.com.au/events/dm/11/rwlc/Regional_Women_Leaders_Convention_2011_CAS.pdf.

Information Sessions for Building Practitioners
Free information sessions on the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act 2009 (BCISPA) are scheduled for this month. Councils are increasingly likely to receive claims for payment under the BCISPA and should ensure that staff are aware of the implications of not responding to claims within 10 business days. Tasmanian businesses are now utilising the BCISPA to improve payment practices in their industry. Most common is the use of a ‘payment claim’ to request payment or the reasons for non-payment, but recently there is evidence of increased use of adjudication to resolve payment disputes. BCISPA aims to help resolve these disputes quickly so parties can continue to work together. Sessions will be held in Hobart (7 February), Ulverstone and Launceston (8 February), St Helens (15 February), Triabunna (16 February), and Strahan (22 February). To book, visit www.wst.tas.gov.au/building, or phone 1300 366 322.

How to Bury the Hatchet - Conflict Resolution for Teams
Learn how to manage the impact of conflict in teams, recognise and overcome natural tendencies when confronted by conflict, and how to turn team meetings into an opportunity to engage in robust discussions, at a workshop to be held in Sydney (15 February) and Melbourne (17 February). For full details, visit www.preftrain.com/new_pdf/HowtoBurytheHatchet.pdf.

Dealing with Challenging Situations – Giving You Different Response Options
Learn how to positively reframe the challenge, how to pick up cues and insights when interacting with others, and develop the capacity to work from a non-judgemental perspective, at a workshop to be held in Sydney (15 February) and in Melbourne (17 February). For details, visit www.preftrain.com/new_pdf/DealingwithChallengingSituations.pdf.

Social Media Marketing - The Way Forward
The Social Media Marketing 2011 Forum, to be held from 28 February – 1 March in Sydney, enables marketers to develop and manage a sound strategy for your ongoing and future social media marketing projects, with practical and valuable insights shared by some of the most successful brands and campaign creators. For session details, head to www.marcusevansassets.com/doc/pdfs/Ep_17179.pdf.

Records Management – Disposal Procedures for Local Government
A half-day workshop is being held in Hobart (2 March), Devonport (9 March) and Launceston (10 March) to provide participants with the knowledge and skills to select records for destruction or transfer to the Archives Office using the new Local Government Disposal Schedule. The workshop is most suitable to employees who have administrative responsibility for records management and those who undertake records disposal tasks. The cost is $200. For details visit www.ttc.tas.gov.au, or phone 6232 7255.

Celebrate Workplace Diversity with a Taste of Harmony
A Taste of Harmony (21 - 27 March 2011) is Australia’s biggest celebration of cultural diversity in the workplace. With one in four Australian workers born overseas, the need to support and acknowledge our rich cultural diversity has never been more important. The concept is simple. Register your team or workplace, set a lunch date and ask colleagues to bring a dish from their cultural background or food from a country they would like to try. The result is a multicultural feast where workers have the opportunity to learn something new about the different cultural backgrounds that exist in their workplace and enjoy a delicious meal. To register your workplace, visit www.tasteofharmony.org.au.

Upcoming Events

General Management Committee Meeting, Hobart 9 March