President’s Message

The issue of ‘water and sewerage’ is the most important challenge to face Local Government since the 1993 amalgamations. In fact, the outcome of these deliberations and the possible domino effect has the potential to dramatically alter the current face of Local Government in Tasmania.

No doubt many councils, water authorities and stakeholders will submit their views on paper to the State Government Taskforce, which is both appropriate and necessary. It is also understood that the variety of responses received from Local Government will reflect the diversity of needs and the circumstances of our municipalities.

The recent workshop, held at the West Tamar Council, clearly demonstrated the maturity of Tasmania’s Local Government. Approximately 60 people, including elected members, council officers and water authority staff attended the forum. Whilst it is acknowledged that councils were going to have differing opinions and priorities, it was pleasing to be involved in a workshop where individuals were able to openly express their concerns.

LGAT’s CEO, Allan Garcia, provided a draft response paper addressing the 12 issues raised by the State Government Taskforce. Each response was discussed and alternate views considered. Recommendations were made and everyone had the opportunity to be heard. Whilst the time frame for responses to the Taskforce is tight, the paper prepared by Allan was a good starting point. LGAT will prepare a further draft paper, to be circulated to councils next week, incorporating the feedback received at the workshop. I would encourage all councils to consider it closely and forward comments to Allan as soon as possible.

As there are many significant issues to be addressed this year by Local Government, it is important that elected members keep up-to-date with the latest developments. All media releases produced by LGAT can be found on the website.

The Water and Sewerage Taskforce discussion paper can be found at www.treasury.tas.gov.au and comment on the paper’s contents must be submitted by 23 February 2007.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“The future depends on what we do in the present” MAHATMA GANDHI

Farewell Jim Mooney

It is with great sadness that LGAT acknowledges the recent passing of Jim Mooney, former Warden of George Town Council.

As President of LGAT between 1970-77 and from 1983-90, as well as President of ALGA in 1971 and 1983, Jim was an inspiration to many. Jim played a key role in the debate surrounding the amalgamation of councils and was instrumental in achieving Local Government support for the formation of the initial Local Government Advisory Board.

Serving as a member of the House of Assembly from 1976-79, Jim maintained his association with Local Government through his position as Shadow Minister for Local Government.

Jim will be missed by the Tasmanian Local Government community and by the national fraternity that he represented so diligently. Our best wishes to Jim’s family at this sad time.

Elected Member Workshop

Councillors are encouraged to attend a weekend workshop, coordinated by LGAT, at Bridport Resort from 3-4 March 2007.

This valuable learning and networking experience will provide delegates the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the impact of tourism at the local level, strategic asset management, accounting, who’s who in State Government, and ways to effectively communicate rating decisions. An overview of NRM activities will also be provided.

The two-day program costs $440 (incl. GST) and the closing date for registrations is 19 February 2007. For further details, phone 6233 5119 or visit www.lgat.tas.gov.au.

Fresh source of guidance on NRM grants and assistance

A new bank of information about financial assistance, advice and resources available to councils in the area of natural resource management has been developed by LGAT.

The Association has developed web pages listing current and future sources of natural resource management (NRM) project funding, including many national grants programs. The web pages also contain links to documents containing case studies and guidance on various aspects of best practice NRM and other areas of environmental management. The web pages can be found at www.lgat.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=461.
Grants Available to Help Councils Stage Community Events

Regional Local Governments across Australia have just two weeks to apply for funding to assist with the staging of local community festivals. Applications for grants under the Federal Government's Festivals Australia program must be submitted by February 15. The program is designed to financially support the staging of cultural festivals outside the nation's capital cities. For details, visit www.dcita.gov.au/arts_culture/arts/festivals_australia.

Employer of Choice Awards

Employers that adopt modern work practices, promote a work-life balance and implement strategies to attract and retain skilled workers, can now be formally recognised as “Employers of Choice” through the State Government's Employer of Choice Awards. Winning organisations will be entitled to display the Employer of Choice logo and to promote their business as a place of choice for skilled workers. Applications close on 23 February 2007. Guidelines can be obtained from www.development.tas.gov.au.

LGPro’s 2007 Annual Conference

LGPro’s Annual Conference, to be held at the Melbourne Park Function Centre from 14-16 February, promises an exciting line-up of national and international keynote speakers. Delegates will have the opportunity to attend a selection of interactive sessions on topics including planning, community engagement, risk management, environmental works, ethics, financial management and organisational culture. Full details can be found online at www.lgpro.com.

Grants for Managing Emergencies

Councils can apply for funding from Emergency Management Australia to help local communities manage emergencies. Applications will be accepted until 2 March 2007 for two funding programs that will foster new initiatives which complement existing emergency management programs, or enhance a community’s ability to deal with disasters and emergencies. For details go to www.ema.gov.au/communitydevelopment or phone (03) 6230 2772.

Regulatory Impact Statement on Reduction of Plastic Bags Available for Comment

The Environment Protection and Heritage Council has released a regulatory impact statement (RIS) for public comment that presents options to manage the impact of plastic bag litter on the community and the Australian environment. The closing date for submissions is 26 February 2007 and the RIS can be accessed at http://www.ephc.gov.au/ephc/plastic_bags.html#plasticbags_RIS

2007 Local Government Remuneration Survey

Councils are invited to participate in the national 2007 Local Government Remuneration Survey. The Survey monitors some 105 generic Local Government positions nationally and includes details regarding superannuation contributions, salary increases and workforce planning information. Copies can be accessed from www.workplacesolutions.asn.au and should be returned by 10 March.

Clean Up Australia Day

Clean Up Australia needs the support of councils to help coordinate activities for Clean Up Australia Day on March 4, 2007. The 2007 Clean Up Australia Day campaign will highlight waste and water issues and their link to climate change. Clean Up Australia Day provides a great opportunity for councils to showcase existing environmental initiatives and generate positive publicity. For details, email kate@cleanup.com.au.

New Councillor for Flinders

Following the resignation of Councillor Lynn Mason in October 2006 from Flinders Council, a by-election was held, resulting in the appointment of Councillor Daryl C. Butler who will serve until the 2007 council election.

Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems

The School of Geography and Environmental studies, based at the University of Tasmania, is offering a Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GradCertGIS) in response to the growing demand for skilled workers in this area. The GradCertGIS meets the needs of people who have previous training or experience with GIS, who are seeking to improve their knowledge and obtain a formal qualification. For further information, phone 6226 2463 or visit the University website at www.utas.edu.au.

State Black Spot Program – Don’t miss out!

Councils are invited to nominate candidate projects for the new State Black Spot Program by Friday 16 February 2007. The minimum eligibility criteria are at least three reported crashes within a five-year period. For more information phone 6233 6447.

Upcoming Events

Elected Members Weekend Workshop
General Meeting
General Management Committee Meeting
Elected Members IT Workshop
Elected Members IT Workshop

Bridport, 3-4 March
Launceston, 7 March
Launceston, 7 March
Burnie, 17 March
Launceston, 18 March