President’s Message

A couple of weeks ago, all elected members would have received a Local Government Survey from The Examiner newspaper.

As I read the questions in the survey I became quite concerned that, by completing the form, there was no guarantee as to how, or in what context, the information would be used. I took the view that by answering the survey questions it may be possible that the information gathered might not be used in the overall best interests of Local Government. I communicated my thoughts to West Tamar councillors and to the mayors in the North/North East Region, leaving the decision as to whether the survey was completed entirely in the hands of individual elected members.

In The Examiner of Tuesday, 13 April, appeared an article Councillors urged not to fill out statewide survey and an editorial headed Ratepayers deserve information. The editorial questioned “exactly how accountable, transparent and open are some of our Local Government representatives?”

Whilst I acknowledge one of the roles of the media is to provide information on a range of issues, I am of the opinion that the survey in question is far more suited to being one that has been initiated by councils through LGAT, for the purpose of developing a whole-of-sector policy position. We do not need, nor is it the role of a newspaper, to develop Local Government policy.

For The Examiner to suggest (in the editorial “addressed” to Mayor Doug Burt) that “being secretive and not telling ratepayers where you stand certainly does nothing to promote respect for Local Government”, is quite ridiculous. I know that all councils and councillors answer questions from ratepayers on a regular basis as to their particular position on many issues and, at each council meeting, as provided in the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations, time is set aside for public question time. I strongly believe that we do not need a newspaper to convey elected members’ personal positions on Local Government/council policy matters.

Local Government is open and transparent, with nothing to hide from ratepayers. I wonder whether the return rate will improve greatly from the 10% that had been received as of last Tuesday? I do however leave the decision to each elected member to do what you will with The Examiner survey.

Local Government Conference

Time is running out to register for the 2010 Local Government Conference and Dinner, featuring the presentation of the 2010 Local Government Awards for Excellence. The conference, themed Up Up Up – a Focus on Excellence and Innovation, will be held at Wrest Point in Hobart, from 12-14 May.

Workshop presenters include:
- **Dominic Thurbon** – Flip! How Counterintuitive Thinking is Changing Everything;
- **Assoc Prof Dr Carol Boyle** of New Zealand – Pathways to Sustainable Infrastructure;
- **Geoff Willis** – Progress and Challenges in the Water and Sewerage Corporations;
- **Fae Robinson** – Building Community Advantage through Values; and
- **Prof Graham Sansom** – Pursuing Excellence: New Wine and New Bottles.

The Conference Program and Registration Form is available online at www.lgat.tas.gov.au. Registrations are required by 30 April. For enquiries, phone 6233 5966.

Thanks to our Sponsors - Civic Mutual Plus, Bistec Tasmania, Commonwealth Bank, Marsh, Kompan Playscape, Pitt and Sherry, Technology One, Thorn Lighting and Regional Development Australia (Tas).
Vale Clr David Clement
It is with much sadness that Break O’Day Council councillors, management and staff announced the passing of Clr David Clement last week at age 69. Clr Clement served 4 years with Council and worked tirelessly for the community. Clr Clement championed many worthy causes and was the driving force behind several significant projects including the St Marys main street makeover. He will be remembered for his passion, personality and professionalism, and leaves behind his wife, Jan, three children and a grandson. Our sincere condolences to colleagues, friends and family of Clr Clement at this sad time.

General Management Committee Elections
The call for nominees to fill positions on the Local Government Association’s General Management Committee (GMC) resulted in three positions being filled automatically due to a single nomination and the other three being contested. Mayors Albert Van Zetten from Launceston City Council, Adriana Taylor from Glenorchy City Council and Robert Legge from Break O’Day Council will automatically take up positions on GMC. In the North-West, Lynn Laycock and Mike Downie are contesting the large council vacancy while Anita Dowd, Kevin Hyland and Don Thwaites are vying for the other vacancy. In the South, Deirdre Flint of Central Highlands is contesting the smaller council vacancy against James Graham of Glamorgan Spring Bay Council. Voting for all positions closes at 10am on 28 April and councils are urged to lodge their votes by that date. Best of luck to all those who have nominated for positions. For those wondering about the other two positions, the Lord Mayor takes a seat on GMC as of right and the position of President, presently occupied by Barry Easther, has been extended for a further two years by resolution at an Association General Meeting.

Local Government Reform Funding
For those wondering when an announcement will be made in relation to Local Government reform funding, the process has been delayed due to there not being a State Government with which the Australian Government could enter into a funding partnership agreement. With the outcome of the election now known and the appointment of a Ministry imminent, we expect an announcement will be made in the near future. The Local Government Association remains confident of securing significant funds for sustainability activities and a number of other projects applied for in the funding round.

Voluntary Merger Report
The 16-step process outlined by the Local Government Board in its report on principles for voluntary mergers picks up the majority of issues that the Local Government Association and individual councils have provided submissions and evidence on in the review process. The Association will provide a brief response to the report but will focus more on the proposition of an MOU being developed to consider future reforms for Local Government. There is a need for recognition of the significant effort that will be required of councils to implement regional planning and consistent planning schemes, addressing climate change adaptation and focusing efforts on broad sustainability issues such as asset management and financial planning. Future reform agendas also need to be considered against the backdrop of the Henry Report into Taxation and the implications it may have on the revenue-raising sources of the various levels of government, and the present review into valuation and rating. The Association is anxious to meet with the newly appointed Minister for Local Government to ensure that there is a sound understanding of the present reform environment and the capability of Local Government to adequately respond to a broadening of the reform agenda.

More Local Government Training Funding
For councils that missed out on the $200,000 of Commonwealth training funding that LGAT obtained - there is some good news! Around $30,000 can now be accessed by any Tasmanian council. Eligible courses include certificates and diplomas of town planning, accounting, civil construction, project management, animal control and many other Local Government skills. A number of off-campus study options are in place. The amount of funding received by a council is determined by size. Councils employing more than 200 EFTs receive 50% funding, those with between 200-100 receive 75%, and those with less than 100 receive 90% funding. Councils fund the remaining portions. The total value of courses ranges from $3,200-$3,600. Please contact scott.blacklow@lgat.tas.gov.au as soon as possible for a list of eligible courses, to discuss course contents and to register your Council’s interest.

2010 MobileMuster Local Government Awards
MobileMuster, the official recycling program of the mobile phone industry, is calling on local councils to enter the 2010 MobileMuster Local Government Awards. The awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding efforts by Local Government in promoting the scheme and collecting mobile phones, batteries, chargers and accessories for recycling. The winning councils will be announced during the National General Assembly being held in Canberra from 14-17 June. There are five awards offered, including Best Promoter, Working with Schools Award, Top Collector Award Overall, Top Collector per Capita, and National Excellence. Nominations close on 1 June. To nominate, visit www.mobilmuster.com.au.

ALGWA Dinner
ALGWA Tasmania members and affiliates are invited to dine at the Riverview Inn at 265 Sandy Bay Road, Hobart, from 7.30 pm on 12 May, following the Country Club/ALGWA Cocktail Hour being held at Wrest Point as part of the Local Government Conference. A main course and dessert will cost $25. To join in, please contact ALGWA Secretary, Alwyn Friedersdorff, by 6 May on 0408 421 166, or email alwyn@councillorialwyn.com. Men are most welcome!
Wanted: Photos of Community Infrastructure!

It is now almost 3 years since the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) launched its Community Infrastructure Ideas Register which attracted over 1,000 projects submitted by councils across Australia. The register formed a valuable lobbying tool for ALGA and led to the announcement of $1 billion in stimulus payments for community infrastructure through the Regional and Local Infrastructure Program. In its 2010-11 Federal Budget Submission, ALGA is arguing for the program to be continued, to lock in the economic and social benefits for regional and local communities. Councils are encouraged to submit ‘before and after’ photos of projects funded under the program, which will be collated in a booklet. Details of projects are available at www.economicstimulusplan.gov.au/pages/default.aspx. Please forward photos to Amanda Lynch at amanda.lynch@alga.asn.au, or call 0419 123 862.

Presentation Skills Training

Too often, people have to make a presentation to a manager, internal team, or council client and the main focus is “content”. While important, content is only 35% of a great presentation. Presentation skills include the wide variety of approaches to use in communicating your message. The ability to gain feedback from the “audience” is often the key to your success. Learn the basics of preparing and delivering great presentations, managing your nerves and getting audience response. Training sessions are being held on 4 May in Hobart and on 19 May in Launceston. Cost is $600 + GST. To reserve your place, contact LG Performance Training on 6236 9055, or visit www.highperftraining.com.au.

Women and Leadership Australia

Women and Leadership Australia is a nationwide network whose purpose is to help women along their personal career journey and to support the flow of Australian women into formal and informal leadership roles, both in the workplace and the broader community. Each year, Women and Leadership Australia runs inspiring and engaging forums around the country. Over 40,000 members nationwide regularly interact with WLA, making it Australia’s largest female leadership initiative. Visit www.wla.com.au to find out more about how Women and Leadership Australia can support you in your own leadership aspirations.

Swine Flu Vaccination Clinic for Greater Hobart Area

Brighton, Glenorchy, Hobart, Clarence and Kingborough Councils are working in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate a swine flu vaccination clinic at the Derwent Entertainment Centre on Saturday, 24 April. This will be one of the last public clinics to be made available for swine flu vaccinations. The clinic is preparing for up to 2,000 vaccinations on the day and will be open from 9.30am until 4.30pm.

Heart Foundation Local Government Awards

Is your Council leading the way in creating healthy communities? Are you building a sense of community, encouraging people to be active, smoke free, or to make healthy food choices? Entries for the Heart Foundation Local Government Awards 2010 are now open, with $34,000 in cash up for grabs. Local governments which create supportive environments to promote better health and reduce the risk of chronic conditions are encouraged to enter in one of six categories including: Employee Health and Wellbeing; Facilities; Healthy Weight; Planning for Active Living; Priority Groups; and Tobacco. Entries close 4 June. For an entry form, call 1300 36 27 87 or visit www.heartfoundation.org.au/Get_Involved/Local_Government_Awards/Pages/default.aspx.

Avoiding Disaster: Predicting Water Flow from Tsunamis and Dam Bursts

A public lecture on modelling dam bursts, floods and tsunamis will be held from 5.30pm at Launceston College on 20 April, and in Hobart on 22 April at the Salamanca Inn. Dr Stephen Roberts, Head of the Department of Mathematics at The Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra, will present an overview of the way tsunamis are generated and how the resulting flow propagates. Modelling the effects on the built environment of natural hazards, such as riverine flooding, storm surges and Tsunami, is critical for understanding the economic and social impact of these hazards on our urban communities. The ANU and Geoscience Australia have developed a software program to model water flow and, in particular, inundation events to help draft evacuation plans, design protective levees and design cities safely.

Go Red for Women Breakfast

Most women don’t know that heart disease is the number one killer of Australian women. Join the Heart Foundation and special guest, Dr Abby Bloom, who suffered a heart attack at age 50 whilst driving. A Heart to Heart Panel will answer your questions on heart health and dispel the myths at the Go Red for Women Breakfast, commencing at 7.00am on 5 May, at Wrest Point in Hobart. Tickets cost $30 per person. For more information, visit www.goredforwomen.com.au/ta.

Upcoming Events

AGM, General Meeting, GMC Meeting, Hobart 12 May
Local Government Conference, Hobart 12-14 May