A meeting of the General Management Committee was held in Launceston at the Country Club Casino on Wednesday 18 August 2004 commencing at 3.08pm.

PRESENT:

Clr Lynn Mason President
Lord Mayor Rob Valentine Hobart City Council
Mayor Ross Hine West - North West Region
Mayor Mike Downie West - North West Region
Mayor Barry Easther Northern Region
Clr Robert Legge Northern Region
Mayor Deirdre Flint Southern Region
Mayor Don Hazell Southern Region

APOLOGIES:

Mayor Cathy Edwards Clarence City Council

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Allan Garcia LGAT
Mrs Liz Gillam LGAT
Ms Christine Agostinelli LGAT
Index

1. GENERAL BUSINESS ........................................................................................................... 4
   1.1 SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES * 4
   1.2 SUBJECT: BUSINESS ARISING * 4
   1.3 SUBJECT: PRESIDENT’S REPORT 5
   1.4 SUBJECT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT MAY-AUGUST 2004 6

2. POLICY ................................................................................................................................. 8
   Policy Items for Discussion & Decision.................................................................................. 8
   2.1 SUBJECT: LGAT POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DOCUMENTATION ** 8
   2.2 SUBJECT: CAT CONTROL * 9
   2.3 SUBJECT: LEGISLATION COMMITTEE * 10
   2.4 SUBJECT: PREMIER’S LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL 11
   2.5 SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENT POLICY MATTERS 12
   2.6 SUBJECT: SEX INDUSTRY REGULATION 15
   2.7 SUBJECT: ADDRESSING SKILLS SHORTAGES AND TRAINING NEEDS IN TASMANIAN LOCAL
       GOVERNMENT * 16
   2.8 SUBJECT: GENERAL POLICY DISCUSSION 17

3. PROJECTS & SERVICES ....................................................................................................... 18
   Projects & Services Items for Comment and Decision.......................................................... 18
   3.1 SUBJECT: 2004 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE 18
   3.2 SUBJECT: LG PERFORMANCE TASMANIA 19
   3.3 SUBJECT: COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM 20
   3.4 SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK 22
   3.5 SUBJECT: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION KIT – FORGING LINKS 23
   3.6 SUBJECT: LOGONS UPDATE 24
   3.7 SUBJECT: NRM UPDATE 26
   3.8 SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES 27

4. ADMINISTRATION ............................................................................................................... 29
   Administration Items for Discussion & Decision.................................................................... 29
   4.1 SUBJECT: PROFIT & LOSS REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2004 * 29
   4.2 SUBJECT: BUILDING INVESTMENT 29
   4.3 SUBJECT: LGAT WELFARE FUND – CHANGE OF NAME 31
   4.4 SUBJECT: LGAT WELFARE FUND INTEREST RATE 2004/2005 31
   4.5 SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP PLEDGE 32
   4.6 SUBJECT: DATE OF NEXT MEETING & MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2005 * 33
   4.7 SUBJECT: OTHER BUSINESS & CLOSE 33

* Denotes Attachment
1. GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES *

Lord Mayor Rob Valentine/Cllr Robert Legge

That the Minutes of the morning and afternoon meetings held 12 May 2004, as circulated, be confirmed.

Carried

Minutes of the meetings of 12 May 2004 (morning and afternoon sessions) are at Attachment to Item 1.1.

1.2 SUBJECT: BUSINESS ARISING *

Lord Mayor Rob Valentine/Mayor Ross Hine

That the Committee receive the report on business arising from the previous meeting.

Carried

Update of Policy items from the last meeting - not covered in this Agenda are at Attachment to Item 1.2.
1.3 SUBJECT: PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Lord Mayor Rob Valentine/Mayor Deirdre Flint

The President’s report was received.

Carried

The President reported on her activities as follows:

May 21  Quadrant Board Meeting
May 24  Minister Cox re LG Act review
June 3   Cities and Towns conference, Canberra
June 10  Federal/State/Local Government Roundtable in Canberra re CSI
June 15  Meeting Procedures workshops, Launceston (x2)
June 24  Quadrant Strategic Planning meeting
          State Funeral, Jim Bacon
June 25  Quadrant Board Meeting
July 10/11/12 Roads Congress, South Australia
July 14  Quadrant briefing, Melbourne
Aug 5/6  Quadrant investment meetings
Aug 17  West Tamar Council meeting
         Kentish Council meeting
Aug 18  General Meeting
1.4 **SUBJECT:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT MAY-AUGUST 2004

Lord Mayor Rob Valentine/Mayor Deirdre Flint

That the Chief Executive Officer’s report be received.

Carried

Notable occurrences over the period since the last GMC Meeting in May 2004 are reported in the following comments.

**Intergovernmental Relations Activity**

During the reporting period LGAT was involved with a number of intergovernmental committees, working groups and meetings. These included:

- Steering Committee and Project Team for Tripartite Agreement on Positive Ageing;
- Tasmania Together Employment Coalition;
- Local Government Forestry Consultative Committee;
- Year of the Built Environment Steering Committee;
- Natural Resource Management Council;
- Premier’s Physical Activity Council;
- Affordable Housing Reference Group;
- Valuation Steering Committee and Working Group;
- Premier’s Local Government Council Officials Group – Strategic review of relationship and forward agenda;
- Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs;
- Tasmanian Hazardous Materials Waste Management Committee;
- Steering Committee for Statutory Review of EMPCA;
- Meeting with Deputy Commissioner of Police to resolve responsibilities for after hours noise complaints; and
- Meeting with Deputy Secretary, Department of Education, to discuss insurance implications/indemnities for shared facilities.

At the national level the Association also attended the following:

- ALGA Executive, Canberra
- Chief Officers’ Group, Canberra
- Roads and Transport Advisory Council, Sydney
- ALGA Roads Congress, Tanunda
- NTN Board of Management, Sydney
- Cost Shifting Roundtable hosted by Minister Campbell, Canberra
- Local Government Roundtable hosted by Minister Campbell, Canberra
- Development Assessment Forum consultation, Hobart
- National Packaging Covenant consultation, Hobart
External Organisations

- Tasmania Together, Partnerships to Jobs coalition
- Attended RACT Intelligent Transport System (ITS) forum
- Addressed Region North, George Town
- Defence Reserve State Council Lunch – guest speaker
- Attended normal and special meeting of CMP Board.
- Represented Local Government on University of Tasmania Advisory Board for Environmental Planning Courses
- Met with Hobart Water to discuss implications of review of bulk water pricing
- Discussions with Quadrant Superannuation regarding user choice and impacts on Municipal awards
- Separate meetings with IPWEA, Pitt and Sherry and GHD re Asset Management

Major Activities

Implementation issues associated with the package of financial reform legislation continues to be a big call on Association resources. Constant liaison with Treasury, councils and the State Revenue Office has been necessary in respect of issues arising with many officers in councils being faced with the policy issues for the first time.

The Local Government Act review continues to require significant resourcing with the Code of Conduct now being the major focus.

The lead up to the introduction of the Building Act involved significant consultation and resources with higher than expected effort being required subsequent to its coming into effect.

The ageing partnership has involved much time and effort of senior officers of the Association, particularly in respect of the planning provisions associated with the work program.

Coastal policy has become the significant issue for the media with much attention being given by the CEO to educating and informing media representatives of the current and proposed processes associated with the policy and its review.

At the national level the DAF review and National Packaging Covenant have required considerable effort on the part of the Association in terms of organization, submissions and attendance at meetings

Major Submissions Prepared

- Development Assessment Forum Review
- Review of Elected Members’ Allowances
2. POLICY

Policy Items for Discussion & Decision.

2.1 SUBJECT: LGAT POLICY FRAMEWORK AND DOCUMENTATION **

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Barry Easther

That the Committee endorse the proposed LGAT Policy Framework and format for developing policy documentation.

Carried

Background

By comparison to other Local Government Associations, LGAT has little in the way of a substantive policy framework or policy documentation in place. Currently the Association’s Policy Document, which is publicly available on the website, comprises a running list of motions in various policy areas carried at General Meetings, many of which are outdated or have been superseded. Nowhere is there a clearly stated broad overview of the Association’s current policy preoccupations and activities.

It is recognised that Tasmanian Local Government Policy decisions are made and priorities set at General Meetings of Councils. However, much of the Association’s policy and project work arises in response to State and National Government proposals and initiatives. For instance, elected members, Council officers and LGAT staff represent Local Government on many committees, panels and working groups. The Association also presents submissions to State Government reviews and enquiries; provides input into the review of legislation; and liaises with relevant State agencies, Ministers and staff, in consultation with Councils. Currently this is not reflected in any existing, consolidated and publicly available document.

In order to address this deficiency, the Association has developed a draft policy framework for consideration by the GMC which is at Attachment to Item 2.1. It has also developed draft (partial) Environment Policy documentation, at Attachment to Item 2.1, as a guide to the proposed format and nature of the content. It is intended to make this material publicly available in an accessible format on the Association’s refurbished website and to update it regularly.

The Committee is asked to endorse the proposed Policy framework and documentation format.

Budget Implications

Does not apply.

Current Policy

There is currently no substantive, consolidated framework or documentation that sets out the Association’s policy priorities and current activities.
2.2 SUBJECT: CAT CONTROL *

Mayor Mike Downie/Mayor Deirdre Flint

That the Committee note the report and determine that no further action be taken on this matter, at this time.

Carried

Background
At the GMC meeting in May, it was reported that no response had been received to a letter to the State Government in relation to the issue of control of feral cats.

A response has since been received from Minister Jackson and is at Attachment to Item 2.2.

Clearly the Government is not intending to support a broad-based program of feral cat control. The Government has previously indicated that it is not interested in legislating for cat control.

In her letter, the Minister refers to the project being trialled by Latrobe Council. Advice from that Council indicates that the State Government’s support is marginal and certainly not financial.

It is suggested that either:
• The issue of cat control is not pursued further at this time, or
• The matter is referred to the Legislation Committee for consideration.

Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
That the State Government support the development of a model by-law which councils may adopt, at their discretion, to control domestic and feral cats.
2.3 \textbf{SUBJECT: LEGISLATION COMMITTEE *}

\begin{tabular}{|p{1.1\textwidth}|}
\hline
\textbf{Mayor Barry Easther/Clr Robert Legge} \\
That the Officers on the Legislation Committee be Mathew Grimsey, Nick Heath and David Jones. \\
Carried \\
\hline
\textbf{Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Ross Hine} \\
That the General Management Committee representatives on the Legislation Committee be President Lynn Mason, Clr Robert Legge, Lord Mayor Rob Valentine and Mayor Cathy Edwards with all remaining members of GMC to be proxies. \\
Carried \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\textbf{Background} \\
At the General Management Committee meeting in August 2002 the following motion was carried:

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{That GMC appoint a seven-member legislation committee.}
\item \textit{That the Committee comprise four members of GMC and three additional members.}
\item \textit{That the additional members comprise professional officers with skills, expertise, knowledge and understanding in formulation of legislation and public policy.}
\item \textit{That expressions of interest be sought from interested officers for decision by GMC by circular resolution out of session.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{That the General Management Committee representatives be Mayor Martin, Mayor Mason, Mayor Dickenson and Mayor Hine.}
\item \textit{That the LGAT put forward names of officers to serve on the committee.}
\item \textit{That the term of office of the Legislation Committee be until the Annual General Meeting in 2004.}
\end{enumerate}

Subsequently, Paul Ranson, Nick Heath and David Jones were approved by GMC as the officer members. Nick Heath and David Jones have indicated their interest in continuing this role. Expressions of interest have been sought from Councils to fill the third officer position.

At the time of preparation of the agenda, two written expressions of interest have been received from John Martin, Corporate Services Manager, Dorset Council and Alex van der Hek, Secretary, Clarence City Council. One other officer has indicated that he will probably submit an expression of interest.

In relation to elected members, Mayor Martin and Mayor Dickenson are no longer members of GMC, so at least two new GMC representatives need to be appointed. It is clearly a significant advantage that the President is a member to ensure she is aware of legislative issues in her ongoing dealings with the State Government.
In terms of the operation of the Committee, meetings have normally been held in Launceston and run for some three hours. Although the intention was to hold meetings approximately bi-monthly, in reality this has not transpired with about three meetings being held each year. However, feedback is often sought from members out-of-session by email. It is therefore important the members of the Committee are readily available to respond and also in a position to attend meetings.

The Terms of Reference are at Attachment to Item 2.3 coloured mauve.

**Budget Implications**

Secretarial support for the Legislation Committee is provided from existing staff resources within the Association.

**Current Policy**

At the General Meeting in May 2002 it was resolved that:

‘The Terms of Reference for the Legislation Committee be endorsed and that membership of the Legislation Committee be drawn from the membership of the General Management Committee with authority to co-opt additional members as required.’

---

**2.4 SUBJECT: PREMIER’S LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL**

The Committee noted the recent discussions with senior State Government officials in relation to potential focus for the PLGC agenda.

**Background**

As a result of discussions between the LGAT CEO and the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet it was decided to conduct a facilitated workshop involving key senior officials from State and Local Government to consider potential areas for cooperative effort at the statewide level. Heads and Deputy Heads of agencies from the Departments of Premier and Cabinet, Justice, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Education and Treasury were in attendance as well as a number of council General Managers.

A review of the current Partnership Agreement was undertaken in terms of the objectives, participation and processes with suggestions for change to be presented to the next PLGC meeting. A key issue arising during the discussions related to the actual role of the body and it was felt that it could perhaps be a more formative policy group. This was not intended to deny any processes that the Association goes through with its member councils presently, but rather looking at a range of issues that relate to processes associated with Tasmania Together and broader policy matters confronting both State and Local Government.

It was felt that rather than adopting a pure project approach to many of the items being considered by the PLGC a more strategic approach would be appropriate. Some of the areas identified as presenting potential opportunities for collaboration included...
infrastructure planning and integration, economic and regional development, school retention rates, health facilities provision, vegetation management, export promotion and affordable housing.

Not all of the above would necessarily result in actions under the PLGC but it was felt that some key areas could be worked upon to achieve significant outcomes for the state.

A detailed proposal will be put to the next PLGC meeting.

**Budget Implications**
Does not apply.

**Current Policy**
The PLGC is the key forum for the negotiation and discussion of policy and service delivery issues impacting on both State and Local Government.

---

**2.5 Subject: Update on Environment Policy Matters**

The Committee noted the report.

**Background**

1. **Statutory Review of the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994 (EMPCA)**
Section 108 of EMPCA requires a review of the legislation within 10 years of its commencement.

The review process has commenced and is being overseen by a Steering Committee comprising representatives from DPIWE and Local Government. The role of the Committee is to broadly oversee and guide the review process. A Reference Group, comprising EMPCA practitioners has been established to complement the Steering Committee and Local Government is represented on this.

The main output from the review process will be a Review Report to be delivered in March/April 2005, with recommendations that may include amendments to EMPCA. It is anticipated that the Minister will table the Review Report in Parliament and that any legislative changes considered necessary after debate on the Report will be undertaken as a separate project.

Because Local Government plays a critical role in administering EMPCA it is recognised that consultation with Councils is fundamental to the review process. Two stages of consultation are planned: input into a preliminary Options and Issues Paper and regional consultation forums.
As part of the first stage a detailed questionnaire has been circulated to Councils, which seeks to elicit their experience in administering EMPCA over the past 10 years and invites suggestions for ways to reform or improve the functioning of the legislation. The results of this survey are intended to inform the content of the Options and Issues Paper which will be developed through the Practitioner’s Reference Group and approved by the Steering Committee. This will then be made available to Councils for comment and regional consultation forums will be held thereafter.

To date there have been about 18 responses to the survey from Councils which range significantly in the quality of their contribution. While some are detailed and constructive others are cursory and have obviously been completed by junior officers.

Nevertheless, this material will be used to develop a draft Options paper with input from the Reference Group. It should be noted, however, that the Project Manager for the Review has been experiencing great difficulty in gaining commitment to the Reference Group and the Steering Committee is keeping this matter under close scrutiny.

2. Review of the National Packaging Covenant

The National Packaging Covenant (NPC) is a self-regulatory agreement between industries in the packaging chain and all spheres of government, based on the principles of shared responsibility throughout the packaging chain for consumer packaging and household paper (not newspapers) including its ultimate disposal. The NPC was due to expire in August 2004 but has been extended until April 2005 to allow the National Packaging Covenant Council (NPCC) to develop a detailed proposal for future arrangements. It is expected that Australian and New Zealand Environment and Conservation Council Ministers (ANZECC) will consider a negotiated draft proposal at their October meeting with a final decision on the Covenant’s future to be reached by April 2005.

The NPCC has commissioned a general review of the Covenant, inviting input from all stakeholders. It has prepared a proposal for strengthening the Covenant, which is currently being considered at consultative forums around the country. The LGAT, along with ALGA and most other associations, were originally opposed to the Covenant based on a broad Local Government view that in its current form, it failed to require the packaging industry to take enough downstream responsibility for its packaging waste.

However, once the outcome of the Review is known the Association will be better placed to formulate a future position for Tasmanian Local Government in relation to the Covenant. Given the proposals to strengthen it, there could be significant benefits to Councils in terms of accessing program funds without necessarily being required to be signatories.

A more detailed report is included at Item 13 of the General Meeting Agenda.
3. Disposal of Green Waste
The May 2004 General Meeting passed a motion, put by the Northern Midlands and Southern Midlands Councils, suggesting that State and Local Government jointly investigate cost effective options for effectively managing the disposal of green waste.

This motion arose as a result of DPIWEs advice to some (but not all) Councils that the Government’s preferred option for dealing with green waste is by shredding for mulching and composting rather than by burning or establishing new waste disposal sites.

The Association wrote to DPIWE about the matter and has since met with departmental officers where it was made clear that the costs associated with the Government’s preferred option were prohibitive for some Councils. Prior to that meeting, however, and in response to representations made by various Councils, DPIWE has provided them with written responses strongly reinforcing its earlier advice suggesting that Councils could be prosecuted under EMPCA (Waste Management) Regulations 2000 if they burn waste at waste management facilities without the approval of the Director of Environment. It was further suggested, and clarified at the officer’s meeting, that such approval would not be given unless an emergency situation, such as a flood or hurricane, occurred.

While DPIWE acknowledges the economic and logistical problems facing some Councils in disposing of green waste in the preferred manner, it is adamant that burning will no longer be a generally acceptable solution and that Councils should be encouraged to investigate and develop alternative sustainable management options. Residential composting and/or centralised drop off with periodic chipping are the preferred options.

It is the Association’s view that although DPIWE has not handled the situation well by providing ad hoc advice directly to Councils, without sector-wide consultation, it is clearly vital that we now seek to work with the State Government to bring about a constructive outcome. To this end, it is proposed that a joint consultative workshop be held between DPIWE and Councils, possibly with participation from relevant private sector organizations. The Association is currently consulting with DPIWE to bring this about.

Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
As above.
2.6 SUBJECT: SEX INDUSTRY REGULATION

The Committee noted the following report.

**Background**

Earlier this year, the Association made a formal response to the Sex Industry Regulation Bill. The major thrusts of the submission were:

- the lack of a link between registration as a sex service business and Council planning approval; and
- that, as councils have to review and in many cases amend their planning schemes, there is potential for a significant delay before such planning approval can be given.

This could result in a sexual service business being registered under the sex industry legislation but not have planning approval, either because there has been no application or because a business may be a prohibited use in the zone in which it is located.

Informal discussions were held with staff of the Department of Justice to clarify these issues. In response, a process for transitional approval was proposed. This involved a Council considering an application under the general provisions of Section 20 and Schedule 1 of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, if a Council’s Planning Scheme does not deal with sexual services businesses. The applicant (and presumably any other party) could appeal to the Resources Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal.

The Association has responded that it has serious concerns with this proposal:

> Although reference is made to Section 20 and Schedule 1 of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act*, it is difficult to see how these alone would provide a useful basis on which a Planning Authority could consider such an application.

> The suggestion that Councils could decide what, if any, community consultation is required is strongly questioned. Both applicants, Councils and any other party would need to comply with the provisions of LUPAA in relation to applications and representations.

> This approach may be seen at some future time as a precedent to deal with other situations.

The Association has suggested that joint discussions be held with relevant staff of the Department of Primary Industry, Water and the Environment to try and find a more satisfactory way to deal with the planning aspects of the legislation.

At the time of preparing this item, no response had been received.
Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
Through its responses through the development process of this legislation, Local Government has indicated, that while it agrees with the philosophy behind this legislation ie. decriminalisation of the sexual services businesses, it has serious concerns with the legislative scheme as proposed.

2.7 SUBJECT: ADDRESSING SKILLS SHORTAGES AND TRAINING NEEDS IN TASMANIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT *

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Clr Robert Legge

That the Committee received the attached report relating to skills shortages and training needs in Tasmanian Local Government and determined that the Committee should receive further reports as work on addressing these issues proceeds.

Carried

Background
The May 2004 General Meeting passed a motion suggesting that the Association initiate a training pool of municipal planners and other Local Government professionals.

The General Management Committee earlier agreed to establish a working group to address the problems of skills shortages in many Local Government professions, which is perceived to be exacerbated by the ageing workforce and limited training opportunities in Tasmania.

Prior to this occurring, it was considered necessary to have accurate information on the immediate and longer-term skills needs of Tasmanian Councils and to assess whether existing training opportunities adequately meet these needs.

The Report at Attachment to Item 2.7 addresses these and other related matters and provides a starting point for discussions.

Budget Implications
At this stage support for this project would be picked up within the Association’s ongoing budget. However, the Association may wish to consider seeking outside support for any future initiatives. Funding for skills development and training initiatives is available through various State and Australian Government programs.

Current Policy
Does not apply.
2.8 SUBJECT: GENERAL POLICY DISCUSSION

Committee members noted and supported the intent of this item.

Issues raised

| Waste Management |
| Council Meeting Procedures |
| Tasmanian Rail Crossings |
| The importance of Local Government Representatives on panels |

Noted

Background

This item on the agenda is proposed to be a standing item to allow the Committee to raise matters of a strategic policy nature that might either inform the Association on particular directions or provide the opportunity to raise concerns about specific policy issues. It is not intended to be a grievance session but rather a strategic session focussing on key Local Government policy items.

The initial discussion will be relatively informal but future sessions may involve a workshop or facilitated environment.
3. PROJECTS & SERVICES

Projects & Services Items for Comment and Decision.

3.1 SUBJECT: 2004 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Mayor Barry Easther/Clr Robert Legge

That the Committee note the following report.

Carried

Background
The Annual Conference this year was the same in structure as in 2003 with the addition of an ALWGA leadership breakfast on Wednesday May 12.

The Association claimed a modest administration fee in return for providing administration support to the ALWGA for the breakfast. The LGAT was also able to retain a commission on accommodation bookings.

Attendance numbers were again solid with excellent representation from around the State.

Sponsorship was up 56% from 2003 to $97,050 or 51% of total income.

After deducting LGAT administration costs, the conference achieved a surplus of $19,500 which was evenly divided between the three event partners, IPWEA, LGMA and LGAT.

All figures reflect GST adjustments.

Discussions are now being held with the two major conference venues in order to determine the venue and dates for 2005. The Hotel Grand Chancellor is holding the dates June 15-17, 2005.

Budget Implications
At current sponsorship and attendance levels, the conference is able to cover the cost of event administration and still deliver a surplus to event partners.

Current Policy
Does not apply.
**3.2 SUBJECT:  LG PERFORMANCE TASMANIA**

**Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Ross Hine**

That the Committee note the following report.

**Carried**

**Background**
There has been a favourable response to the availability of officer training through LGPerformance Tasmania with initial interest encouraging, but bookings sluggish. This is in part due to the ‘newness’ of this service and the timing of the launch of the training, which took place at the intersection of financial years.

Feedback from attendees is consistently positive and at least four councils are actively embracing the full training program with their employees.

Specifically:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 1 Launceston</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>5 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term 2 Launceston**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>3 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term 3 - Launceston**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management 1</td>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term 2 - Hobart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working as a Team</td>
<td>Term 2</td>
<td>3 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Term 3 - Hobart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Attendee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Term 3</td>
<td>1 person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LGPerformance Tasmania is offered through a strategic alliance between the LGAT and High Performance Management and Sales. The program offers training designed specifically to meet the needs of Local Government.

At present, courses are being run at below ideal participation rates and are either breaking-even or offering up a modest surplus which is able to cover LGAT administration costs.

Rather than cancel courses, it has been decided to run them with only small attendance numbers so that councils can experience the training.

Marketing of the program will continue through meetings with individual councils, publicity through the *LGAT News* magazine and updates in the newsletter.

**Budget Implications**
The LGAT manages administration of venues, bookings and accounts on a cost recovery basis and will retain a portion of the training fee. It is expected that there will be a slight positive impact on the budget.

**Current Policy**
Does not apply.
3.3 Subject: Councillor Development Program

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Clr Robert Legge

That the Committee note the following report.

Carried

Background
Planning has progressed in the establishment of a councillor development program for 2005 and onwards.

Three key elements have been designed, which together with the annual conference and annual mayor’s workshop, will make up the program.

Bits & Bites
The first element ‘Bits & Bites’ has been designed around the conference ‘speaker’s corner’ concept. Bits & Bites is an opportunity for elected members to hear presentations from State and Australian Government agencies and from the non-government sector. Bits & Bites will be offered throughout the year in each of the three regions in Tasmania. Essentially, an information service exclusively for elected members, its purpose is to enable elected members to become aware of programs and services that could have benefit to their local community, which may enhance council planning and service delivery, or which provide a wider context for Local Government interests. Bits & Bites will be structured to offer weeknight presentations from 4.30 to 6.00pm and will conclude with refreshments and networking from 6.00pm - therefore, bits of information followed by bites. It is anticipated each Bits & Bites will be themed, thereby encouraging interaction between the presenter and an audience of elected members with an interest in the topic – making for a more meaningful networking experience.

Expressions of interest have been called and the Bits & Bites program will be structured once EOIs have been collated.

Bits & Bites is substantiated by the 2003 survey where an average of 62% of survey recipients stated a definite interest in hearing from non-Local Government speakers, with another 26% stating a possible interest. The survey also asked recipients to rank the level of importance placed on meeting up with colleagues from other councils. An average of 77% rated this as very important and important.

Saturday Series
It is clear from the 2003 councillor survey that elected members value further information on a diverse range of topics, varying from personal skill development to increased understanding of Local Government roles and responsibilities.

The Association has run single topic day-length seminars in the past. These were offered on weekdays and in the regions. However, while a lot of effort went into organising the seminars, overall they didn’t consistently attract strong attendances and some ran at a financial loss or were cancelled.
In an effort to respond to what elected members are saying they want and knowing how poorly previous training seminars have performed, a new concept has been designed which, it is hoped, will attract more interest.

The Saturday Series will comprise three broadly themed seminars, made up of a number of shorter presentations (45min – 1 hour), that together will offer elected members exposure to high quality and relevant information. The three broad themes include individual performance/leadership; management/strategy; and regulation. Each of the series will be offered at a central location to encourage attendance from the three regions and will be timed to allow for travel, for example, commencing at 10am and concluding at 3.30pm. Pre-promotion of the series as part of the annual calendar will enable elected members to schedule the series into their commitments and it is believed that weekends are more flexible than weekdays.

The 2003 councillor survey found that an average 60% of elected members work full-time or 15-20 hours. Further, an average 70% of councillors devote over 10 hours per week to council related activity.

Weekend Workshops
A weekend workshop will be held once a year and this will be designed as a ‘mini’ conference offering up speakers and workshops that are topical and that can fill any information gaps not addressed through Bits & Bites and the Saturday Series.

Adult Learning
The general principles of adult learning will be incorporated as program content is determined.

Conclusion
There are no guarantees that elected members will embrace the learning opportunities that are being offered by the LGAT.

A reward mechanism, a means by which participation in councillor development is recognised and rewarded, is being considered, but it is highly conceptual at this point.

The program, as it is being proposed, is not a ‘training’ program. The program offers learning opportunities which, when combined, aim to assist and support the Local Government elected member in terms of their personal skills and their capacity in their role.

Every councillor development event will offer scope for feedback and the LGAT may need to adjust its programming in response to feedback received.

Budget Implications
The Government programs are conducted on a cost recovery basis with a small additional charge to meet administration costs incurred by the Association.

Current Policy
The Association is committed to the provision of a comprehensive and meaningful elected member development program.
3.4 SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Mike Downie

That the Committee note the following report.

Carried

Background
Late in 2002, the then communications manager, Glenwyn Dolan, made moves to establish a communications network of Local Government officers and prior to her departure from the Association, one meeting was held in the north of the state.

The current communications manager, Iris Goetzki, has re-established the network with 17 councils expressing an interest in having officers involved.

The idea for a communications network arose out of the understanding that most councils in Tasmania do not have the resources to employ dedicated communications professionals (recognising that some councils contract this service). The purpose of a Local Government communications network is to provide an opportunity for those officers with the responsibility for communications such as speeches, media releases, council brochures, newsletters, marketing and community events, internal policy and community engagement, or, the responsibility of briefing external consultants, to address the specific, and often unique, communications requirements of Local Government with a view to sharing information and improving skills.

It is proposed that the network is largely self-determining – responding to current issues and challenges being experienced by local councils. In addition, as the facilitator, the LGAT Communications Manager will arrange for presentations by professionals as required.

In terms of being a service by the LGAT, the network has the potential to increase the capacity of Local Government and therefore, the effectiveness and quality of service delivery. In turn, such a network is able to inform existing or future services delivered by the Association.

The first network meeting is due to be held in September.

Budget Implications
The network is required to determine the most cost-effective way to manage its meetings and requirements. It is envisaged that the LGAT will contribute a small sum towards catering and incidentals. It is not proposed that the LGAT pay for professional presentations.

Current Policy
Does not apply.
The Committee noted the following report.

Background
The LGAT, in cooperation with the State Emergency Service (SES), has provided oversight to the development of an emergency management information kit to enhance Local Government emergency management capability. The funding for the kit was sourced through Emergency Management Australia and the Australian Local Government Association.

After 10 months, during which time a number of local councils have provided extensive input into the content and design of the information kit, the final document is now complete.

The concluding stages of the project involve determining production of the kit (the original funds only covered the development of the content and design), responsibilities and processes for ensuring the information kit remains current, circulation and promotion.

The kit is the first of its kind in Australia and it provides a template for adoption by the other States. It has been designed using reader-friendly language, an accessible design style and to minimise the costs of future updates.

Councils will be asked to ensure the information kit *Forging Links* is included in any councillor induction. The kit will also be available on the LGAT website for download.

Budget Implications
The kit has been designed to minimise the expense associated with keeping the information up-to-date.

Current Policy
Does not apply.
3.6 SUBJECT: LOGONS UPDATE

The Committee noted the following report.

Background

Funding
Funding received under the NTN project was $754,772.73 for the initial ten projects and $3,076,333 for the remaining projects. There was still some $820,000 to be received. Funds expended to 31 July 2004 were $3,149,421.22.

Change of Project Manager
With the return to Education by Andrew Koerbin, the Project Manager role was given to Brian Oliver who has served as the project’s Technical Consultant for the past two years. Andrew handed over the role on the 30th of June 2004.

Progress
The contract has been signed with the Dytech Consortium to undertake the third and final round of development of CouncilConnect. This round of development will incorporate further interoperability between CouncilConnect and the Councils’ Content Management Systems as well as deliver the final 24 services.

To date, 14,604 unique users accessing a total of 373,990 pages have used the CouncilConnect site.

Of the initial 10 services the most commonly accessed services are Employment (20,806 visits) and Dog Info (11,286 visits). The council that has been interacted with the most is Glenorchy City Council with 6,277 interactions.

The most commonly used search term with 65 requests is still "excess water meter charges policy".

It would appear that the utilisation of the CouncilConnect web site has stabilized and users are now interacting with the services rather than merely browsing or surfing.


The Dog Registration Renewal e-Payment service has been completed.

The Council Conveyancing Certificates service has undergone a review with the result that the service will continue to be offered in the existing format, with minor upgrades.
Content Management System Tasmanian User Group
Following the successful implementation of the UnityDCW Content Management System (CMS) by 24 of 29 councils, it has been proposed that Tasmanian Councils form a User Group as a forum for the ongoing peer support, development and management of the CMS into the future. Such User Groups allow the user community to save on development costs through the sharing of such costs over a broader basis and ensuring that the changes to be implemented within the system have a maximum benefit to the user community through the community’s participation in defining the scope of such changes. Several councils have nominated representatives for this User Group.

It has been suggested that councils participate in the User Group on a subscription basis to fund minor development works of the CMS that are of benefit to all or most councils.

LGAT ICT Role beyond December 2004.
With the completion of the final round of projects under the LOGONS project, LGAT has identified that there will be a role within LGAT for providing ongoing management of the assets developed by the LOGONS project. This role will be principally responsible for the management of the CouncilConnect (LGEP), Councils at Work (PMO) and Planning Applications (LanDA) web assets and will also be responsible for providing technical strategy and policy information for Tasmanian Councils.

Budget Implications
The project costs are met from Australian Government grant funds.

Current Policy
The Association is committed to the provision of an aggregated, customer focussed suite of online services that can be accessed by all Tasmanian rate payers.
3.7 SUBJECT: NRM UPDATE

The Committee noted the following report.

Background
Draft NRM strategies have been released by NRM South and NRM North. The draft Strategy from Cradle Coast NRM is expected in mid-September. The regional bodies have also commenced work on the Regional Investment Proposals. Investment Proposals are essential and are developed to attract external investment in priority actions in a Regional NRM Strategy. An investment proposal outlines the funding required to implement an accredited strategy and identifies the returns for the investment of the respective contributors. The primary investor in the Regional NRM Strategies will be the Australian Government through National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and Natural Heritage Trust funding.

The Local Government NRM Facilitator has been working with the three regions to establish and deliver engagement processes for Local Government. The experience in the Southern Region with the Southern Tasmanian Council’s Board (STCB) NRM Working Group has shown that regional dialogue within local government is essential if the sector is to minimise risk and maximise benefits associated with the regional NRM process. The Local Government NRM Facilitator will be working with Councils in the North and Cradle Coast NRM Regions to establish regional forums for discussion of regional NRM issues, and specifically in the short term develop regional responses and submissions to the draft NRM Strategies.

Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
Does not apply.
3.8 SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Lord Mayor Rob Valentine/Mayor Deirdre Flint

That the Committee note the following Local Government Representative appointments.

That LGAT write to all Committee and Board representatives outlining their role and responsibilities and provide guidelines/advice in relation to the necessity to contact/liaise with the Association on matters where broad Local Government input may be required or where individual councils may be affected by particular decisions.

Carried

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Elected Member/Officer</th>
<th>Coordinating Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Board</td>
<td>Mrs Mary Binks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>LG Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Board</td>
<td>Mr Roger Howlett (substitute)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>LG Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Angela Pate, Glenorchy City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Governance Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Trish Males, Hobart City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Governance Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Simon Duffy, Hobart City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Education Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Danielle Walker, Hobart City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Community Safety Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Ross Park, Glenorchy City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Community Safety Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Trish Males, Hobart City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Healthy Lifestyles Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Agreement for Young Tasmanians</td>
<td>Cath McFaul, Glenorchy City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>DPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Healthy Lifestyles Subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Black Spot Consultative Panel</td>
<td>Mayor Ian Braid, Kentish Council</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>DIER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Black Spot Consultative Panel (Proxy)</td>
<td>Clr. Gary Bramich</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>DIER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter Agency Working Group on Drugs Reference Group</td>
<td>Danielle Walker, Hobart City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td>Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premier’s Physical Activity Council</td>
<td>Mayor Peter Partridge, Dorset Council</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>PPAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayor Kim Polley, Northen Midlands Council</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lucy Marshall, Launceston City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Smee, Huon Valley Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kristine Ancher, Glenorchy City Council</td>
<td>Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. ADMINISTRATION

Administration Items for Discussion & Decision.

4.1 SUBJECT: PROFIT & LOSS REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2004 *

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Barry Easther

That the Profit & Loss Report to 30 June 2004 be received.

That if necessary, the final accounts be referred to Committee members for approval out of session.

Carried

Background
A Profit and Loss Report to 30 June 2004 is at Attachment to Item 4.1 for consideration.

The report is only preliminary and does not include the balance day adjustments, which will be undertaken over the next few weeks.

When completed, the final accounts will be referred to Committee members for formal approval and signing. This may have to occur by circular resolution to meet the Auditor General’s requirements.

4.2 SUBJECT: BUILDING INVESTMENT

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Barry Easther

The Committee noted the following report and requested further information relating to the Associations taxation obligations in relation to such matters as negative gearing/capital gains tax etc, be provided prior to future investments being considered.

Carried

Background
At the time of sale of the property situated at 34 Patrick Street the decision was taken to set aside the payment received from the sale for the purposes of purchasing a new property at some future date if that need/opportunity arose.
As part of the sale process the Association entered into a 5 year lease with the option for a further five years. The Association is presently in the third year of its first five year term.

The accommodation presently occupied meets all the current requirements of the organization. There is sufficient office space, a good sized conference facility and sufficient overflow to allow for the addition or hosting of project staff as required. The accommodation is comfortable, in good condition and is wired to meet information technology and telecommunication needs. There is also ample parking for staff and visitors and the accommodation is ideally located in terms of proximity to the CBD.

The Association presently has $675,129.00 invested with its bank receiving a return of in the vicinity of 5%. The price of residential and commercial property in Hobart has increased sharply in the past few years and continues to rise steadily. The availability of good accommodation is scarce with the pricing of quality property at the higher end of the market.

While there is presently no pressing need to seek new accommodation the fact does remain that the Association is paying in excess of $50,000 rent per annum and is receiving approximately $30,000 return on our investment. While we don’t have the responsibilities of being landowners we are still responsible for major outgoings including a share of rates, land tax and hydro electricity usage.

Discussions have been held with estate agents in the Hobart area about potential properties for consideration however there has been very little that could be considered suitable. Another issue is likely to be cost. A recent stand alone property that was within reasonable distance to the CBD with reasonable parking and could meet the Association’s requirements was recently on the market for $800,000. The property had been converted to use as consulting rooms and would have required significant modification to achieve an appropriate level of amenity. It would have also required significant investment in wiring for telecommunications with a likely all up cost approaching $950,000. The building did provide capacity for income with 2 tenanted apartments that would have provided an offset to any borrowings.

The reason for raising this matter is to alert the Committee to the fact that suitable property for the Association’s needs in the recent market is reasonably limited. The cost is likely to be greater than the provision presently set aside. If it is preferred that the Association should own its own premises then it is considered that borrowings will be necessary. Without wishing to seek formal approval at this stage, it is considered it would be useful for the Committee to consider a direction on this matter.

### Budget Implications
See above.

### Current Policy
That the proceeds of the funds from the sale of 34 Patrick Street be set aside for the purposes of purchasing accommodation for use by the Association.
4.3 SUBJECT: LGAT WELFARE FUND – CHANGE OF NAME

Mayor Deirdre Flint/Mayor Mike Downie

That the Committee endorse the resolution of the LGAT Welfare Fund Board that the name of the LGAT Welfare Fund be changed to LGAT Assist.

Carried

Background
It has been discussed on previous occasions that the word “welfare” does not accurately reflect the purpose and functions of the fund. Several suggestions were received from council employees and “LGAT Employee Assist” or “LGAT Assistance Fund” have been chosen by the Board members.

Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
Does not apply.

4.4 SUBJECT: LGAT WELFARE FUND INTEREST RATE 2004/2005

Mayor Mike Downie/Mayor Deirdre Flint

That the Committee endorse the resolution of the LGAT Welfare Fund Board that the annual percentage interest rates for Welfare Loans be set at 6.6% and for General Purpose Loans be set at 7.6%.

Carried

Background
As funds are currently under utilised the interest rate has been decreased appreciably from last year.

Under the Loans Policy the LGAT Welfare Fund Board set the interest rate for loans annually. The policy reads –

“Section 1.8 Interest Rate
The reference interest rate is the Statutory Fringe Benefits Tax Interest Rate. This will be set annually at the first GMC meeting after the LGAT Annual Conference.
The loan rates will be set by the Board from time to time to reflect market conditions provided the rate is not less than the “reference interest rate”. The loan rates will be offered on the basis of them being per annum, compounding daily on the reducing balance with interest being applied at the end of the month on a retrospective basis.”
The loan rates, as set, will be published in the first LGAT newsletter after any amendment”.

The Statutory Fringe Benefits Tax Rate for 2003/2004 was set at 6.55%.

**Budget Implications**
Does not apply.

**Current Policy**
Does not apply.

### 4.5 SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP PLEDGE

**Mayor Ross Hine/Cllr Robert Legge**

That the Committee considered the proposal to incorporate the reference to traditional owners into the oath and affirmation of the Australian citizenship pledge but did not support its inclusion.

Carried

**Background**
Correspondence has been received by the ALGA from the Local Government Association of NSW requesting ALGA to consider lobbying the Australian Government to incorporate a reference to traditional owners into the oath and affirmation of the Australian citizenship pledge.

The LGANSW Conference resolution called on the Australian Government to incorporate the words “I recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land on which we stand” into the affirmation and oath of the Australian citizenship pledge, after the words “from this time forward under God” in the oath.

The full wording of the pledge and oath is detailed below.

**Australian Citizenship Pledge No 1 (Oath)**
From this time forward, under God,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.

**Australian Citizenship Pledge No 2 (Affirmation)**
From this time forward,
I pledge my loyalty to Australia and its people,
whose democratic beliefs I share,
whose rights and liberties I respect, and
whose laws I will uphold and obey.
Budget Implications
Does not apply.

Current Policy
Does not apply.

4.6 SUBJECT: DATE OF NEXT MEETING & MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2005 *

That the Committee meet on Monday 29 November, following the General Meeting in Launceston.

Resolved

Background:
The Committee may review the meeting policy and dates at any time, along with any changes on the distribution, nature or extent of information provided to members and meetings of the Committee.

29 November 2004 GMC Meeting
General Meeting

At Attachment to Item 4.5 is a proposed Calendar of Events for 2005.

Dates for GMC and General Meetings for 2005 are as follows:

16 February GMC Meeting
9 March General Meeting
6 April GMC Meeting
15 - 17 June LGAT Annual Conference
GMC Meeting, AGM, General Meeting
17 August GMC Meeting
General Meeting
19 October GMC Meeting
2 November General Meeting
8 December GMC Meeting

4.7 SUBJECT: OTHER BUSINESS & CLOSE

It was resolved that when nominations are called for future General Management Committee elections, Councils should be advised that nominees will receive advice from the Electoral Office that their nomination has been received.

There being no further business the President declared the meeting closed at 5.37pm.