President's Message

It is pleasing to see that numbers for the 95th LGAT conference are sound, particularly in light of the recent LGMA national conference, which was held in Hobart just a few weeks ago. The program for the conference is excellent and the organising committee has been working diligently to ensure a successful event.

The ‘Art of Survival’ is definitely sounding more relevant as each day passes. Some of our elected members and staff have expressed the view that Local Government in Tasmania is getting ‘sick and tired’ of being treated in a disrespectful manner by State Government officials. Others have highlighted to me that there have been examples in recent times where our sphere of government and our opinions have been totally disregarded.

Whilst visiting councils and discussing issues it was reinforced that the water and sewerage taskforce debacle is a contemptible situation where continual Local Government requests for representation regarding the options for a solution have been completely ignored. However, it appears that the Treasurer is forging ahead with his plan to reform water and sewerage even though Local Government is the owner of the infrastructure and assets.

And finally whilst we acknowledge support for the Fire Service is very important some members are suggesting that, "as Councils are having to collect an extra 10% fire levy this year on top of a 12.5% rise last year perhaps it’s time for the State Government to collect its own funds as it does with land tax."

No doubt the conference will be an opportunity for elected members and staff to share knowledge, experiences and discuss ideas. It is also important to appreciate the current situation and the impacts these issues may have on individual councils and to acknowledge that there are times when consensus is not possible. Nevertheless, we must passionately represent our communities and be respectful of opposing viewpoint. Indeed, this realisation underpins the strength of Local Government in Tasmania.

As a ‘survivor’ Local Government should continue to impress on individuals and other agencies that as representatives of our communities we are a force to be reckoned with and we will remain positive. We must not forget the achievements and capacities of our communities, regardless of their size, to address challenges and to innovatively tackle problems, we just need to be included and respected for the roles and responsibilities we undertake.

In closing…Go Swansea…what a great result!

Councils Denounce Fire Service Levy Increase

The 10% increase in the fire service levy represents another cost shift by the State Government to Local Government.

Local Government is extremely supportive of the Tasmanian Fire Commission and its personnel but considers that funding for these services should be met from the appropriate source and not through a levy on ratepayers. While the contribution to the operations of the Tasmanian Fire Service by the State Government has remained constant, the impost on ratepayers through council rate collections continues to rise. A 12% increase last year followed by a 10% increase this year is unreasonable and unacceptable. Wages represent a significant portion of the operating costs of the fire commission and while the Government negotiated a parity arrangement for Tasmanian fire fighters with their interstate counterparts it has not backed up that commitment with an increased fund in contributions. Indeed, in recent years that contribution has reduced significantly.

Councils are accountable to the community for their own costs and it is unreasonable that they should have to defend those costs over which they have no control.

Swansea named Australia’s tidiest town

Congratulations to Swansea on winning the title of Australia’s Tidiest Town for 2007. In winning this prestigious community award, Swansea triumphed over 1,000 entries in the competition. The town was particularly praised for its heritage values, well-kept residential gardens, progressive waste management initiatives and strong community spirit. Well done Swansea and Glamorgan Spring Bay Council.
Rural Health Week 2007: Award Nominations and Seeding Grants

Rural Health Week, which will occur from 3-9 September 2007, is the first statewide rural health event of its kind to be staged in Tasmania. It aims to promote and celebrate rural health, increase awareness within local communities of the importance of preventative approaches to health and wellness and showcase rural health programs and activities. A key activity of RHW will be the presentation of the inaugural Tasmanian Rural Health Awards and nominations are now being sought in two categories: the Rural Health Community Award and the Rural Health Professional Award. Seeding grants of up to $2,000 are also available to assist regional planning groups in conducting activities during the week. Further information on the awards and grants is available at www.rhwtas.com.au or by calling Karla Peek on 6324 4012.

New guide to help councils ensure affordable local housing

A step-by-step guide to assist councils across Australia to assess current and future housing needs has been released by the New South Wales Government. The Local Government Housing Kit outlines ways councils can develop affordable housing strategies and includes extensive data about housing levels and demographics within each municipality. The Local Government Housing Kit is available at www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Centre+for+Affordable+Housing/NSW+Local+Government+Housing+Kit.

The Latest on Learning Cities and Towns

Hook into the latest thinking on Learning Cities, Towns and Regions by logging on to www.longlearn.org.uk, an invaluable new web resource for Local Government leaders, managers and professionals. The site features stakeholder roles and contributions in learning cities and regions; books, articles and papers; dynamic interactive learning materials; forward-looking projects and practical outcomes; useful products and services.

Resource Recovery Grants

Funding is available, as part of the State Government’s Living Environment Program, for local government, educational institutions, not-for-profit organisations and community groups to develop projects aimed at increasing resource recovery and raising awareness. Applications close on 15 June 2007. For further information and application forms are available at www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/CDAT-7333BL?open or by phoning 6233 6518.

National Community Crime Prevention Grants

Applications are invited for Round 5 of the Australian Government’s National Community Crime Prevention Program. The program aims to assist local communities with projects that improve safety and prevent crime and is open to non-profit community organizations and local government bodies. The closing date for applications is 28 June 2007. Further information and application forms can be obtained at www.crimeprevention.gov.au or by telephoning (02) 6250 6711.

Clever Networks Program Grants

Applications are invited for Round 2 of the Australian Government’s Clever Networks Program. The program offers financial grants for innovative solutions that provide for the use of broadband in the delivery of services in regional, rural and remote Australia. There is a particular focus on the delivery of health, education, government and emergency services. The closing date for applications is Monday 9 July 2007. Further details can be obtained from http://www.dcita.gov.au/communications_for_business/funding_programs_and_support/clever_networks or by telephoning (02) 6271 1023.

TCCI College of Management: June Training Sessions

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry’s College of Management is running a series of training sessions throughout June specifically designed to address the most common professional development challenges encountered by new and emerging managers. For further information on the program contact Judy Phair on 6235 3666 or email judy.phair@tcci.com.au.

Boss the Boss Fight Prostate Cancer

Running from mid-June to mid-July, Boss the Boss is about raising awareness of prostate cancer. Every work week, at least eight men get prostate cancer in Tasmania - over 400 each year. The Cancer Council Tasmania is encouraging workers and their bosses to help raise money for prostate cancer by participating in the Boss the Boss campaign. For further information, contact Lisa Burstall on 6233 2172 or www.cancertas.org or by calling 1300 65 65 85.

Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual General Meeting/General Meeting</td>
<td>Hobart, 30 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Conference</td>
<td>Hobart, 31 May - 1 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>