



# LGAT

Local Government Association Tasmania

# NEWS

September 2015

P.P. No. 100003422

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# Inside this issue



Local Government Association Tasmania



9



10



33



44

Acting President's Report .....	2
Chief Executive Officer's Report .....	3
Faces of Local Government .....	4
News and Reviews .....	10
People and Performance .....	29
Health and Wellbeing .....	32
Environment .....	37
Business and Finance .....	44
Roads and Infrastructure .....	46

**Cover Photo:** The 2015 Community Satisfaction Survey has identified roads, footpaths and traffic as the areas where improvement is most needed.

**Photography by:** David Bellamy



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# Shortfall in Assets Funding Cannot be Ignored

MAYOR DARYL QUILLIAM, ACTING PRESIDENT  
Local Government Association of Tasmania

Most of you will be aware that last year the Federal Government decided to freeze the indexation of the Financial Assistance Grants to Local Government (FAGs). This has an ongoing and permanent effect on the level of general funding to Local Government despite injections of funding on a temporary basis into roads and other infrastructure.

By the Government's own estimates, this will cost Local Government \$925m over the period to 2017-18. Not only that, when the FAGs indexation is restored, the base of the FAGs will have been permanently reduced by around 13%. Within a few years, the cut to the base will exceed the value of the Roads to Recovery (R2R) program.

Local Government has enormous asset responsibilities – managing three times more assets than the Federal Government and more than half the assets of the State Government.

Local Government nationally spends \$32 billion annually but more and more spending is moving away from infrastructure towards human services. This is why untied funding is important. It allows Local Government to respond to changing needs in communities.

The main sources of revenue for Local Government are rates (around 38% nationally) and the sale of goods and services (28% nationally). Generally, councils are raising close to 90% of the theoretical maximum revenue and therefore funding contributions from the other spheres of Government are pivotal. Only 3% of the national tax base relates to Local Government and 82% is collected by the Federal Government.

Local Government's share of Commonwealth taxation is less than 0.7%, representing an ongoing downward trend since 1996. This fails to reflect rising costs of infrastructure renewal, rising statutory responsibilities thrust down from State and Federal Government, and rising community expectations.

The LGAT CEO and I recently met with the Local Government Minister, Peter Gutwein MP, to talk about our concerns around funding and were assured that the Tasmanian Government also intended to advocate on the issue of restoring the level of FAGs funding.

Tasmanian councils clearly understand the importance of restoring FAGs funding, with around 70% of councils already having passed resolutions acknowledging their importance. I encourage those who have not yet done so, to consider the matter at their next council meeting. I also encourage all councils to actively flag when and how this important funding is spent in their Municipal Area. We may have all come to take this funding for granted but we need to remind communities and the Federal Government how much it is valued.

With the President's election now complete, I congratulate Mayor Doug Chipman on being elected as President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania for the next two years. I am sure Doug will do a great job in this role and will be supported by all councils. I look forward to working with Doug on the ALGA Board and the General Management Committee, and will be continuing in the role of Acting President until Doug returns from his overseas trip in early October.





# Local Government Firmly Focused on Delivering Best Outcomes for the Community

DR KATRENA STEPHENSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Local Government Association of Tasmania

It is a great pleasure to be writing for this edition of *LGAT News* as Chief Executive Officer of the Association. Since formally taking up the position in late June, there has been a veritable whirlwind of activity. Not least of these was our Annual Conference. This year, we moved the event to Launceston and expanded the program to a whole week of Local Government events. I am sure that those who attended would agree that it was an enjoyable and informative week.

The General Meeting provided opportunity to both showcase some outcomes of LGAT's recent initiatives, as well as drive some new activity. Fifteen motions were carried around a variety of issues ranging from forestry, water testing and animal control, to training and national arts funding. There was clear direction on key matters to engage with the Legislative Council on with regard to Code of Conduct legislation. A number of issues were also raised which will be consolidated into an electoral reform discussion paper and consultation to be conducted early next year, including the General Manager's Roll and disclosure of political donations.

Members were able to hear the outcomes of our Community Satisfaction Survey, read the report from the Elected Member Census and understand the significant savings likely to be generated through LGAT's efforts on public street lighting electricity contracts.

It was a pleasure to again welcome Minister Peter Gutwein to the General Meeting which preceded the conference. The Minister provided an update on the Government's reform agenda and announced a targeted review of the *Local Government Act*. LGAT will be integrally involved in that process, including in setting the terms of reference.

Overall, the debate and discussion that occurred over the week reflected the growing maturity of the Local Government

sector, with the focus on doing new things, doing things better and doing things more transparently.

I believe the position of the Local Government sector in Tasmania with regard to council mergers and strategic resource-sharing is very clear. Councils want the best outcomes for their communities but are not prepared to gamble significant resources on change without a clear evidence base to suggest that improvements will follow. Councils are also clear that communities must not be led to believe that reform will lead to rates decreases. There is no evidence at all to suggest this is ever the case. Instead, there needs to be understanding that better outcomes might include reducing the need for rate increases, increasing the range and quality of services to ratepayers, and improving the ability for councils to successfully advocate on issues of concern to their communities.

A recent national survey undertaken by the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government<sup>1</sup> found that on a range of factors, including level of rates, representation and service levels, Australians overwhelmingly felt that council mergers would not make a positive difference (a clear majority felt there would be no change, or a worsening of outcomes). The *Why Local Government Matters* survey also demonstrated that Australians think that Local Government is the best level of government to make decisions about the local area and that it is important that Local Government deliver a diverse range of activities and plan for the future.

This suggests that our communities also want to be convinced with strong and clear evidence that changes will deliver more than political rhetoric. Change must deliver sustainable improvements to where we live and work.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.acelg.org.au/news/local-government-does-matter>



## New Era for LGAT

Dr Katrena Stephenson was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on 15 June, making her the first female CEO in the organisation's 102-year history.

Dr Stephenson acted in the position of CEO since the departure of Allan Garcia on 1 May and has been the Policy Director at the Association since late 2007. Prior to commencing employment at LGAT, Dr Stephenson held policy, advisor and evaluation roles in a number of Tasmanian State Government departments, and in the UK. She is an appointed observer to the Local Government Managers (Tasmania) Board and a member of the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government Research Advisory Committee.

LGAT Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam said the position of CEO was hotly contested, with 27 applicants from Tasmania and interstate. "Katrena's extensive experience in Local Government and the strong networks she has established, made her a unanimous choice," Mayor Quilliam said. "The General Management Committee of LGAT are looking forward to working with Katrena in moving the Association and the Local Government sector forward during a time of reflection and change."

Dr Stephenson is excited at the prospect of driving the Association and supporting its members, and looks forward to the challenges of working with Association members, the State Government and other stakeholders to further progress Local Government in the State to ensure that it remains responsive and committed to the communities it represents.



*Newly appointed LGAT CEO, Dr Katrena Stephenson speaking at the opening of the Annual Conference*

## LGAT Appoints New Policy Director

After a rigorous recruitment process that attracted around 30 applicants, the Local Government Association of Tasmania is pleased to welcome Dion Lester to the team as the new Policy Director.

In his previous role, Dion was the Team Leader for Pitt & Sherry's Planning and Environment Group, undertaking the dual role of strategic planning for Local and State Government, and managing the approval processes for most of Tasmania's large infrastructure projects. Having worked with most Tasmanian councils, Dion would be familiar to many of you. Prior to this position, Dion spent ten years working in program and project management in the health field, both in Tasmania and overseas. Dion undertook the Tasmanian Leaders Program in 2009 and was a Churchill Fellow in 2010, studying food systems planning.

"After the last ten years working in the consulting sector, often for Local Government, I am looking forward to devoting 100% of my effort to working with and for Local Government in Tasmania," Dion said. "With the various reform processes occurring at a national, state and local level, it's an exciting time to be in Local Government and I am very excited about the challenges my new role will entail."



*LGAT's new Policy Director, Dion Lester*

## ALGWA Tasmania under New Leadership

A refreshing new team for the Australian Local Government Women's Association of Tasmania (ALGWA) was elected at their Annual General Meeting, held in Launceston on 22 July, in conjunction with the LGAT Annual Conference.

Newly elected President, Ald Kay McFarlane replaces Ald Heather Chong, both from the City of Clarence, and Clr Annie Willock from Kentish Council has been appointed as the new Secretary. Ald Annette Rockliff from Devonport City Council remains as Treasurer.

Outgoing President, Ald Heather Chong will be focusing her energies on staging the 2017 Australian Local Government Women's Association National Conference in Launceston. The autumn event will attract approximately 150 delegates from other states and territories, providing a tourism boost for Tasmania.

In addition to providing positive support to women in Local Government, ALGWA's focus over the past few years has been on fostering gender equity. Tasmania stands proudly as being a leader in the field, with female elected representatives increasing from 23% to 31% over the last three election periods.

While gender equity will remain a focus, the issue of violence against women is increasingly an area that will provoke some energy by every group in the country because Local Government has the capacity to play a major role in community awareness and community connectivity.

Ald Kay McFarlane has been elected to the City of Clarence for ten years and ALGWA Tasmania for 15 years, previously serving as Vice Chair and Secretary. She is an active member of her local area, advocating for those issues that improve the environment and sustain community infrastructure to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents.

Incoming secretary, Clr Annie Willock is a practicing artist, a retired teacher and has served on Kentish Council for ten years. She is passionate about community advocacy, strategic planning and building community resilience by empowering people to actively engage in their local culture.



*Newly elected ALGWA President,  
Ald Kay McFarlane*

## King Island Council Appoints New General Manager

Mr David Laugher commenced as the new General Manager for King Island Council on 1 July for a contract term of five years. David and his wife, Anne are excited about the opportunities this position brings and, in particular, about the lifestyle afforded on King Island.

Previously, David worked as general manager and in chief executive officer roles in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. He was selected for the leadership position following an extensive recruitment process from among over 57 applicants.

Mayor Duncan McFie said David will bring to his King Island role a depth of experience in the community services and development arena, and in Local Government.

*King Island Council's new General Manager,  
Mr David Laugher*



# New General Manager for Derwent Valley

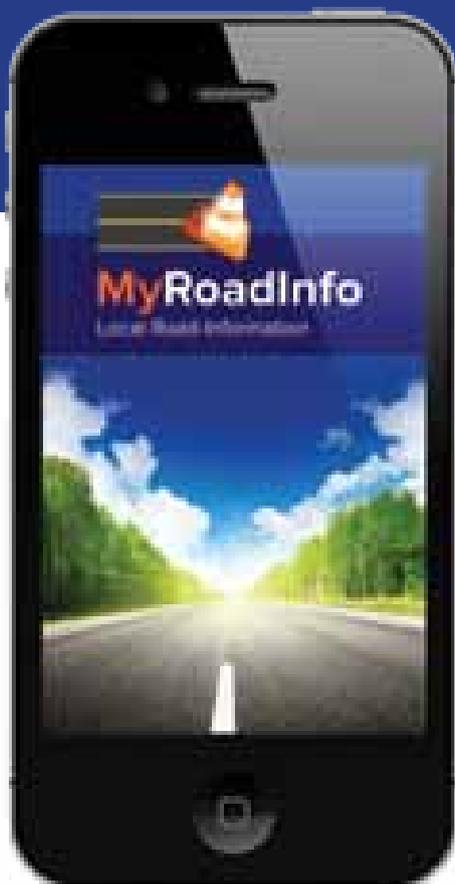
Following the resignation of Stephen Mackey, Derwent Valley Council's General Manager for the last 15 years, Mr Greg Winton has been appointed to the position.

Mr Winton has 30 years' Local Government experience and has spent much of that time working in regional areas both in Western Australia and Tasmania. Most recently, he was the interim General Manager at the West Coast Council, with previous appointments as General Manager for Circular Head Council and Waratah-Wynyard Council in North-West Tasmania.

Mayor Martyn Evans said Mr Winton's commitment and experience in strengthening communities by developing strategic partnerships will help Council pursue improvements in areas including local employment, education and health services for residents of the Derwent Valley.



*Mr Greg Winton, Derwent Valley Council's new General Manager*



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# Five Minutes with **Mayor Christina Holmdahl**

## West Tamar Council



*Mayor Christina Holmdahl enjoying some time out at home with her dog, Totti*

### How long have you resided in the West Tamar and what attracted you to the area?

I have lived in the West Tamar area since 2000 and the decision to settle here was somewhat serendipitous. When living in Adelaide, a Tasmanian colleague told me about a beautiful 5-hectare waterfront block of land on the banks of the Tamar River. The scenery, climate, pristine environment, genuine people and the famous Tamar Valley wines had a lot to do with me being here. All this, and just 24 hours from anywhere in the world!

### What motivates you?

"You must be the change you wish to see" – Mahatma Gandhi, is a quote that I write on the front of my diary every year and it pretty much sums up what motivates me.

### Name three qualities that you appreciate in people?

1. Loyalty
2. Honesty
3. A good sense of humour

### How do you spend your free time?

There's not a lot of that these days but I still enjoy reading,

music and walking regularly with my dog, Totti at Greens Beach.

### When you were a child you wanted to be....

A concert pianist

### Name three previous occupations you have held in the past.

1. Film and television producer
2. Television executive
3. Corporate public affairs executive

### What motivated you to become involved in Local Government?

I've always considered myself an activist and believe that if there's a problem and you do nothing about it, you're a part of the problem. My working life equipped me with skills that I believed could contribute to make where I lived a better place and Local Government was the obvious vehicle.

### How many years have you served as:

**Councillor** - 6 years, including as Deputy Mayor for 3 years  
**Mayor** - 1 year

### What do you enjoy most about your role as Mayor?

I enjoy getting out into the community and meeting the wonderfully diverse people that make our vibrant municipality the great place that it is.

### What kind of advances would you like to see in your region?

I'd like to see the youth of our region realising their full potential through education and opportunity. I'd like to see many more people choose to come and live in our municipality for the quality of life it offers, and to see the municipality prosper through appropriate and sustainable development.

### What has been the most memorable moment of your Local Government career?

My first citizenship ceremony.

### What is the best advice anyone has ever given you?

Carefully choose the fights you pick.

### What word best describes you?

Determined

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Conference Photography by  
Tony Lomas, Island26

# Highlights of the 2015 LGAT Annual Conference

Over two hundred delegates gathered at The Tramsheds in Launceston from 22-24 July for the 103rd LGAT Annual Conference.

The conference was part of a week of activities for Local Government including a workshop on 20 July about Building Healthy Communities, and the national 2015 Local Government Research Symposium, hosted by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government, on 21 July.

*BIG Thinking* was the focus of this year's conference which explored topics including: why Local Government matters; the challenges of leadership in Local Government; Local Government reform; adapting to change; transforming empty places into creative spaces; building a resilient workplace culture; facilitating private and social sector partnerships; redefining age friendly; communicating council services and achievements; and managing and reshaping organisational capacity.

The three-day event began with a General Meeting where Local Government and Planning Minister, the Hon Peter Gutwein MP took the opportunity to update delegates on initiatives in the 2015-16 budget that will benefit Local Government; the Local Government reform conversations that were underway, and progress on planning reform.

He announced a targeted review of the *Local Government Act*, with a focus on the roles and responsibilities of mayors, deputy mayors and elected members; the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Local Government and the Local Government Board; and the administration of councils. The Terms of Reference for the review will be developed in consultation with the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT).

At the meeting, Sam Paske from EMRS presented the findings from the 5th Statewide Community Satisfaction Survey which are highlighted on page 14, and councils voted on over 20 different matters. Resolutions passed included support for disclosure of political donations, an amendment to the General Manager's roll, and requests for LGAT to advocate for rates payments on commercial development in exempt areas and the re-instatement of the trails and bikeways funding.

Later that afternoon, delegates gathered at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery for the JLT Night at the Museum where they took the opportunity to explore the Phenomena Factory, walk among the dinosaurs,





view ancient rocks and fascinating artefacts. Drinks and canapés followed as guests heard from LGAT's new CEO, Katrena Stephenson, Mayor Albert van Zetten of the City of Launceston, Andrew Ralph of Jardine Lloyd Thompson and Richard Mulvaney of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Afterwards, the ALGWA raffle winners were announced and delegates made the most of the valuable networking opportunity.

On 23 July, delegates heard from an array of learned and thought provoking plenary and workshop speakers including: Ecological Sustainability Practitioner - Ian McBurney; the Director of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government - Assoc Prof Roberta Ryan; ALGA Vice President - Clr Bill McArthur; governance professional - Jacinthe Galpin; the Founder and Creative Director of Renew Newcastle - Marcus Westbury; and CEO of the Performing with Purpose Network - Phil Preston. The panel discussion, facilitated by Tim Cox, was joined by TCCI CEO - Michael Bailey, TasCOSS CEO - Kym Goodes, Government Whip - Roger Jaensch MP, and Brighton City Council Mayor - Clr Tony Foster who shared their insights on the topic of *Who's Community is it Anyway?*

A highlight of the day was the presentation of the Local Government Awards for Excellence, where Dorset Council and Meander Valley Council were announced the winners. The award winners were announced by Clr Bill McArthur representing Platinum Sponsor, MAV Insurance. Full details about the awards are located on page 13

Conference delegates made the most of the extensive trade exhibition during the meal breaks, which featured displays from 25 exhibitors representing a diverse range

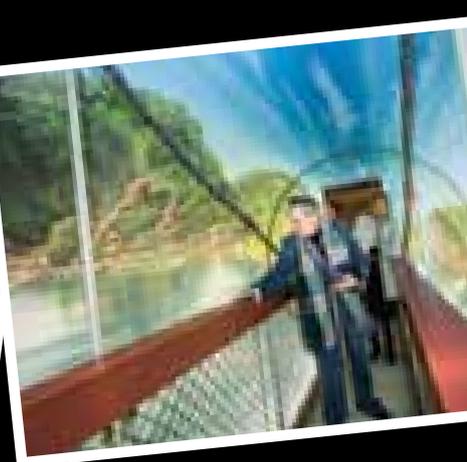
of industries from community health to insurance, park supplies to office supplies, and from workplace drug testing to heritage. There was certainly plenty to see and do!

After a full day of conferencing, delegates mingled at the Commonwealth Bank Happy Hour and entered in the raffle to help raise funds for Down Syndrome Tasmania's dance troupe, the BrightStars. Quadrant Super CEO, Mr Wayne Davy was the lucky winner of a forest getaway for a family of four, donated by the Tahune Cabin and Tahune AirWalk. With combined donations from the raffle, the MAV Insurance Coffee Corner and the Local Government Association of Tasmania, a total of \$2,300 was raised for Down Syndrome Tasmania. The cheque was presented in August by LGAT Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam.

The MAV Insurance Conference Dinner, held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor Launceston, was attended by 230 guests. The evening kicked off with champagne on arrival, a rousing performance by the BrightStars under the direction of Ald Alison Jarman, and the announcement of the winners of a set of Bohemia crystal glasses kindly donated by Central Highlands Mayor Deirdre Flint, and a bottle of wine donated by Graham Marshall of Risk Comply. Congratulations to the recipients - Ald Jeff Briscoe and Clr Britt Steiner.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a Councillor Exemplary Service Award for former LGAT President, Barry Jarvis who passed away on 3 June, for distinguished service to the whole of Local Government. The award was presented by Acting LGAT President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam and accepted by Barry's wife, Terri Reynolds.

*Continued Page 12 >*



During the evening, guests enjoyed a sumptuous three course dinner, and fine wine provided by the Glen Shian Vineyard. After dinner, guests were treated to an acoustic duo and danced into the night to some great dance music by the talented members of Everburn.

On 24 July, the final day of conference, the day began with workshops conducted by: communications specialist - Mark Wells; leadership capability specialist - Dan Casey; and City of Clarence Community Planning and Development Officer - Julie Andersson.

The workshops were followed by thought provoking presentations by former Mayor of Christchurch City Council - Sir Bob Parker who took us through the personal challenges of leading a community through New Zealand's greatest natural disaster; and the Mayor of the City of Fremantle - Mayor Brad Pettitt who revealed the lessons learnt from the fraught council reform process in Western Australia. Between plenary sessions, delegates had the opportunity to stretch during a Moving Moment conducted by Fitness Instructor, Mel Illingworth.

LGAT would sincerely like to thank all the delegates in attendance, along with the speakers, sponsors, trade exhibitors and contractors who contributed to the success of this year's event. We would also like to acknowledge our wonderful MC, Tim Cox and spruiker, Damien Brown who both did a wonderful job. Thank you also to the staff at The Tramsheds, QVMAG and Hotel Grand Chancellor Launceston for the wonderful food and service which helped to make this conference one of most memorable.

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# 2015 Local Government Awards for Excellence

**Dorset Council and Meander Valley Council took out the top awards at the 2015 Local Government Awards for Excellence, announced on 23 July at the 2015 LGAT Annual Conference, held in Launceston.**

The 2015 Local Government Awards for Excellence, sponsored by MAV Insurance, were presented by MAV President, Cllr Bill McArthur.



*(L-R) LGAT Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam, Dorset Council Mayor Greg Howard and Owen Harvey-Beavis representing awards sponsor, MAV Insurance*

In the **Delivering Excellence - Smaller Councils (populations under 15,000)** category, Dorset Council was recognised for its role in the development of the *Blue Derby Trails* project, the single largest mountain bike project in Australia. Developed as a result of a partnership between Dorset and Break O'Day Councils, when fully completed, *Blue Derby Trails* will encompass 80 kilometres of trails, representing an investment of around \$2.9 million.

Working to transition their regional economy from a heavy reliance on resource commodity production, the council partnership has set its sights on demonstrating how the region is well-placed to become a prominent national and international mountain bike destination, capitalising on the diversity of environment and terrain which offers a high quality tourism asset with strong appeal to mountain bikers.

Currently, 33 kilometres of trails has been completed and the area has hosted two rounds of the National Mountain Bike Championships. New businesses are developing in the local area and the project has been supported by a strongly engaged community. Derby is now being hailed as the nation's new capital for mountain biking.

In the **Delivering Excellence - Larger Councils (populations more than 15,000)** category, Meander Valley Council took out the award for its *Energy Efficiency Upgrades* project. Since 2012, Council has upgraded three buildings under the Community Energy Efficiency Program, saving energy, money and improving comfort. Working closely with stakeholders, the project focused on how the outcomes



*(L-R) LGAT Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam, Craig Plaisted and Mayor Craig Perkins of Meander Valley Council, and Owen Harvey-Beavis of MAV Insurance*

could be shared to improve energy management practices within the organisation and the community. Extensive communications channels throughout the community were used to communicate the objectives of the project, including community workshops and site tours.

As a result of the project, significant energy reductions have been achieved in the improved buildings. The improvements are being used to engage the community in education programs, informing ratepayers on how they too can achieve savings. Importantly, the savings generated each year are committed to an efficiency fund that will support future sustainability projects to benefit the community. Council aims to lead the transition towards sustainability and build capacity in the Meander Valley by widely adopting similar measures in local homes and businesses.

Dorset and Meander Valley Councils each received a trophy and \$1,000 to invest in staff development activities.

Congratulations also to the Local Government Awards for Excellence finalists:

## **Delivering Excellence – Smaller Councils**

**George Town Council** - *The Rover: Inspecting Underground Pipe Infrastructure*

**Central Coast Council** - *Come Together*

## **Delivering Excellence – Larger Councils**

**Clarence City Council** - *Food Connections Clarence*

**Glenorchy City Council** - *Upgrade of Moonah Arts Centre*

# Community Satisfaction with Local Government Remains High

**An independent Statewide survey has found overall levels of satisfaction with local councils around Tasmania remains high.**

Since 2001, a Statewide Community Satisfaction Survey has been regularly conducted to measure the satisfaction local residents have with local councils across Tasmania. Results in the recently completed 2015 survey, conducted by EMRS, show that overall levels of satisfaction have remained constant since surveying first began.

The average satisfaction score across nine categories of council services which included such elements as council staff; waste management; recreation and cultural facilities and business; roads, footpaths and traffic; and planning and

development was 70%, a marginal increase on the 2013 figure of 69%.

In 2015, the highest average satisfaction score for an individual service area related to residents' satisfaction with 'council staff', where a statewide satisfaction score of 82% was recorded - an increase of 5 percentage points since the last survey in 2013 and the only service area where significant movement had occurred since 2013.

The service area that received the lowest satisfaction score was 'planning and development' at 58%, as was the case in all previous surveys.

As with all six previous rounds of research, 'roads, footpaths and traffic' were seen as the area where improvement was most needed, with almost one fifth of residents (18%) nominating this area. However, residents in the State's North-West expressed significantly higher levels of satisfaction with this service area than residents elsewhere.

Residents in the North-West also expressed significantly higher levels of satisfaction with 'waste management'; 'appearance of public areas in general' and 'tourism and visitor information services'.

The average satisfaction score relating to how satisfied residents were in terms of value for money with their council was 62%, up two percentage points from the result gained through the 2011 and 2013 surveys.

39% of those surveyed had been in direct contact with their local council within the last 6 months, a decrease of 9 percentage points since 2013, while a further 15% had done so within the last 12 months.

Key methods of contact were in person; by telephone and in writing. Very few residents contacted council through social media, or mechanisms such as council websites.

The average importance score when residents were asked how important it is that council is involved in reform discussions, was 88%.

The Statewide Community Satisfaction Survey is funded by LGAT members. In 2015, EMRS were engaged to conduct the survey of 1,240 randomly selected residents across Tasmania.

**The full report is available on the LGAT website at [www.lgat.tas.gov.au](http://www.lgat.tas.gov.au).**



Photography by David Bellamy

*Among the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct, if an elected member is suspended three times within a two-year period, the Standards Panel may recommend their dismissal*

## Code of Conduct Changes to Enable a More Effective System to Deal with Complaints

The Local Government Association is pleased that after years of advocacy, the *Local Government (Code of Conduct) Amendment Bill* has passed the Legislative Council. A number of amendments have been made and the Bill now has to be returned to the Lower House.

While the Association is disappointed that not all the changes advocated by the Local Government sector were agreed upon by the Legislative Council, we are confident that the revised legislation will deliver a more robust Code of Conduct process. The legislative changes around Councillor Codes of Conduct have been driven by the Local Government sector, developed through extensive consultation over a period of years, and subject to formal consideration at council meetings and at the LGAT General Meeting.

The Local Government Association believes the Bill addresses the issues the sector has raised including: the difficulties faced by local Code of Conduct Panels; the limited sanctions and enforcement powers; the inability for the Standards Panel to dismiss frivolous and vexatious complaints; and the difficulties faced by LGAT, as a member body, in administering the Standards Panel that deals with complaints and applies sanctions. Further, the amendments represent a range of improvements to the workability and strength of the Code of Conduct provisions in the *Local Government Act*, as well as embedding voluntary improvements undertaken by the sector, such as the adoption of a Model Code of Conduct.

The changes to current practice, reflecting the Legislative Council's amendments include:

- Abolition of local Code of Conduct Panels and the establishment of a single statewide panel.
- The State Code of Conduct Panel to be supported by an executive officer, initially to be within the Local Government Division of State Government.
- General Managers will be the first point of contact for receipt of a complaint.
- Sanctions have been strengthened, with the most serious being suspension without allowances for a period of up to 3 months.

- If a Councillor/Alderman has three suspensions within a two-year term, the Standards Panel may recommend to the Minister the dismissal of that offender.
- There is now a penalty related to non-compliance with a sanction of the Panel.
- Councils will work to a regulated Code which is supported by local policy schedules.

A move to make the holding of council Annual General Meetings optional was not supported by the Legislative Council.



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Newly-crowned LGMA Management Challenge National Champions, Kingborough celebrate the announcement in Melbourne. (L-R) Lauren Oakey - CEO, LGMA National with Kingborough Council team members - Rowan Dix, Robbie Shafe, Angela Jenni, Trent Henderson, Julie Alderfox and Laura Eaton, with Dr Shayne Silcox - President, LGMA National, and Tony Simmons of Civica  
Photography by LGMA

## Kingborough comes up Trumps in 2015 LGMA Australasian Management Challenge

Kingborough Council won first place at this year's LGMA Australasian Management Challenge finals and it's the first time a Tasmanian council has won the title. Despite being up against some of the toughest contenders in an all-star line up, the *My Kingborough Rules* team impressed judges with their good humour and creativity, collegiate work ethic and well-rounded skills.

The annual event attracts Local Government professionals from around Australia and New Zealand who are shortlisted after completing a range of projects and activities throughout the year focused on problem solving, teamwork, leadership and how to apply these skills in a practical setting. The event enables collaboration with Local Government colleagues and allows participants to hone their presentation skills by pitching their ideas to a panel of judges from the sector.

The ecstatic team members had much to say about their involvement. Team Leader, Angela Jenni said, "I had a great time, the challenge was fabulous, and the whole lead-up to the challenge was a great learning process."

A delighted Rowan Dix said, "You make friends, you learn a heck of a lot, you improve your skill set and above all, it's a chance to put your talents forward - often talents that you didn't know you had..."

Robbie Shafe suggested that every council should aim to put a team in at least every couple of years. "It's a great professional development opportunity for individuals," he said.

"We've got a real sense of team bonding now that I don't think will ever be broken," added Laura Eaton.

"I'd definitely recommend it," said Trent Henderson.

"It has given me greater confidence about what I'm doing and in my ideas because in that setting, you are tested a little bit and you have to rise to the occasion," said Julie Alderfox.

Team Mentor, Daniel Smee confessed that while it was challenging at times to keep the team on track, it was a really enjoyable experience. "This process really helps to sharpen your thinking and forces you to work in a way that is efficient and effective," he said.

# Designing our Future – City of Glenorchy *Community Plan*

Glenorchy residents have expressed their aspirations and hopes for the future of their municipality, with their vision being captured in the newly released *City of Glenorchy Community Plan 2015-2040*. Glenorchy City Council will now begin work on its 10-year Strategic Plan in line with the Community Plan, creating partnerships, advocating and facilitating external projects to bring the plan to life.

Glenorchy Mayor, Ald Kristie Johnston said the consultation conducted for the Community Plan was the largest

community goals were identified: building image and pride; making lives better; valuing our environment; open for business; and leading our community.

The community's most important priorities for the future are: creating a strong economy and more local jobs; encouraging investment and revitalising the CBD areas; becoming the creative arts and culture hub for Tasmania and forging a national and international reputation as a leading destination for arts tourism; supporting and celebrating diversity; building



community engagement project ever undertaken by Council. "Nearly 2,000 people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and locations in Glenorchy provided over 7,500 ideas and thoughts about the future of our city," she said.

Over a period of months, community members, businesses, schools and community organisations were asked what they liked most and least about Glenorchy, what really mattered to them about Glenorchy's future, and what their wishes were for the City in 2040. Many different methods were used to consult as widely as possible. Stakeholders and community members were engaged at meetings and forums, conversations at public events and in local shopping centres, facilitated sessions with non-government organisations and local service providers, one-on-one interviews and surveys. Council also trialled the use of online engagement platform 'Bang the Table' using the survey and forum functions.

A draft plan was developed and widely distributed, with over 2,400 copies and web links sent out, as well as copies being made available at Council and community houses. Comments received during the second round of consultation were used to develop the final Community Plan. Five key

*(L-R) Ald Steven King, Madeleine Ogilvie MP, Ald David Pearce, Ald Kristie Johnston, Cassy O'Connor MP, Andrew Wilkie MP, Adriana Taylor MLC, Ald Jenny Branch-Allen with granddaughter Nina and Ald Christine Lucas at the launch of the City of Glenorchy Community Plan*

city pride, appearance and reputation; and providing a safe city with quality open spaces and community and recreation facilities and services for all age groups.

All Council staff members were involved in the consultation phase of the project, and have recently attended workshops to review the final plan and see how it links to their day-to-day work. "The Community Plan is Council's key strategic document that will guide all our decisions going forward," Ald Johnston said. "Specific measures will be detailed in our Strategic and Annual Plans, which will be used to track progress and will be reported regularly to Council and the community".

**For further information about the *City of Glenorchy Community Plan*, go to [www.designingourfutureglenorchy.com.au](http://www.designingourfutureglenorchy.com.au).**

# PROJECT PROVIDES HERITAGE SKILLS TRAINING *for Unemployed Youth*

A Brighton Council project, co-funded by a grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund, is ensuring young people are learning important skills in heritage restoration and repair.

Conceived by the Centre for Heritage at Oatlands – The Heritage and Skills Centre – and called the *5x5x5 Project* (five projects, five regions and five skills streams), the three-year funded program is aimed at five Tasmanian councils that have important community heritage assets located in areas of higher than average youth unemployment.

The first project already commenced in the Brighton municipality is the repair and refurbishment of the Brighton Army Hospital with the trainees already onsite. The hospital was built in 1943 and is the only remaining building on the site of what was the former major army training facility in Tasmania. The council-owned hospital has been the subject of vandalism over the years.

Brighton Council's Manager of Development and Environmental Services, James Dryburgh said the Brighton Army Hospital provided an excellent challenge for the trainees. "Council wants to use the hospital building for community purposes as it is located within a large key residential growth area which will require community services as it develops over the coming years," Mr Dryburgh said. "We believe the project will give our young trainees, who would otherwise have difficulty finding work, important and lasting practical skills as well as an appreciation and understanding of our heritage."

The six trainees involved in the first phase of the seven-week project are learning occupational health and safety, plaster repairs, carpentry, cladding, floor repairs/sanding and framing/

joinery repairs, glazing and window repairs, and painting including surface preparation, colour sampling and application.

The *5x5x5 Project* Manager, Brad Williams said the response of the trainees has been fantastic. "They are so keen and enthusiastic, they want to work even longer on the project, but we also want to ensure we can give a second group an opportunity to learn similar skills," Mr Williams said.



*"An industry survey of 5000 people travelling around Australia found the recreational facility they valued most was .... the communal BBQ!"*



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The current group is from Gagebrook, Bridgewater and Brighton, and participants are aged between 16 and 25. They have been recruited through Workskills and have been chosen because they are at some disadvantage to obtain work, either straight out of school or after having been unemployed for some time.

“They are under the constant supervision and guidance of an education officer and a tradie all the time they are participating in the skills training. We seek to give them a high level of support in order to meet learning objectives as well as to assure that a good quality of work is undertaken given the heritage value of the buildings,” Mr Williams said.

“At the end of the training, we put them in touch with others who can assist in their future employment pathways. For example, trainers from TasTAFE are brought in to guide them with their next steps and to transition them into other areas. At the end of the project, each participant will be given a statement of attainment outlining the skills learned in the project,” he said.

*Participants are gaining valuable skills in heritage restoration and repair as part of the 5x5x5 project*



## SOME FACTS ABOUT COUNCIL AMALGAMATIONS



- History shows that Council amalgamations **DO NOT** result in lower rates.
- Rates in some municipalities could rise by up to 40 percent\* if mooted mergers go ahead.
- Amalgamations in Queensland cost \$8 million per Council and resulted in substantial rate increases.
- The TasWater experience demonstrates that larger authorities do not bring lower prices.
- The Tasmanian Auditor-General reports that on average, the greater number of rateable properties in a municipality, the higher the rates.
- The average population of Tasmanian Municipalities is large by international standards – Tasmania 17,700, United States 8000, Europe 5700.
- Council amalgamations will see political power and decision-making concentrated in the city centres.
- Amalgamations will result in a reduction in regional employment and loss of easy access to local councillors.
- Councils involved in strategic resource sharing are already achieving significant savings and providing improved services for ratepayers.

**Let's get the facts straight and have an honest debate about local government reform**

\* example based on averaging of household rates in Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Kingborough and Brighton to form a greater Hobart council.



**Brighton**  
going places

Authorised by Brighton Council, 1 Tivoli Road, Old Beach.



*TacoTaco, one of the eleven mobile food vendors participating in the City of Hobart's 12-month trial*

## MOBILE FOOD VANS HIT THE STREETS OF HOBART

Hobart's streets are set to see a smorgasbord of delicious offerings as 11 mobile food vendors roll into town as the City of Hobart launches a 12-month trial mobile food vendor program.

The program is one of the recommended actions from Council's *Inner City Action Plan*, which highlighted the community and economic benefit of encouraging activities such as this to flourish within the city.

Eleven mobile food vendors have joined the trial, following calls for applications earlier this year, and commenced trading on 31 July. The vans participating in the program include: Taco Taco; Bentwood Coffee; Big Henry's Food Truck; Dos Trucos; Eat Street Van; Funky Cactus; Hometown Taste; Mr Burger; Sip & Spoon; Van Demons Cafe de Wheels;

and Wingseed. The vendors can trade at 21 sites located in and around the city, in Lower Sandy Bay, the Queens Domain and North Hobart.

The Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman Sue Hickey said the key driver for the trial program was city activation. "Research from other cities in Australia and overseas indicates that mobile food activity stimulates the local economy, increases community safety and community connection, as well as increasing visitor satisfaction," said Ald Hickey.

**A map detailing the 21 trading sites and vendors can be found on the City of Hobart website at [www.hobartcity.com.au/Community/Mobile\\_Food\\_Vendor\\_Program](http://www.hobartcity.com.au/Community/Mobile_Food_Vendor_Program).**



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# A Birds-Eye View of Flagship Project

Kingborough residents can now get a birds-eye view of the region's most transformational project in a generation with Kingborough Council's virtual tour of the eventual former Kingston High School redevelopment, which will take shape over the next decade.

The redeveloped site will feature a Town Square and promenade, village green, and several new places to both live and do business. More than a third of the 11-hectare site will be public open space for residents to enjoy and the former school gym building will be retained as a community hub.

An independent report has found the project will help create 600 new jobs and inject more than \$80 million a year into the local economy once completed. During its 10-year construction period, it will generate \$90 million of onsite development and create an additional 70 jobs each year.

**The virtual tour can be viewed via Council's website at [www.kingborough.tas.gov.au](http://www.kingborough.tas.gov.au), or on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/myiAu83Jwfy>.**



## Building Social Cohesion in our Communities

A new online resource developed by the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) provides Local Government with a practical approach to develop strong, socially cohesive communities. Developed for the Australian Human Rights Commission under the National Anti-Racism Strategy, *Building Social Cohesion in our Communities*, it will help local governments to build social cohesion by taking effective local-level actions aligned with long-term strategic directions to prevent and respond to conflict which may arise between communities. The online resource is highly interactive and is structured around five elements of building social cohesion, based on international and Australian best practice. It features case studies from Local Government, tips and templates for implementing good practice at the local level and links to further resources. **This free resource is available at [www.ancelg.org.au/socialcohesion](http://www.ancelg.org.au/socialcohesion).**

# Trumpets, Saxophones and all that *Jazz*

Wild, wet and windy weather didn't deter crowds from this year's Devonport Jazz festival, held from 23-26 July. Crowds stayed cosy and warm as they danced, wined and dined at the 25 venues across the region, enjoying some of the best jazz and blues around.

With high-profile names including Grace Knight, Wendy Matthews and Rhonda Burchmore in the program presenting mainly jazz tunes, these songstresses didn't miss the chance to throw in some of the music that made them so well known in the Australian music industry. However, jazz stalwarts like George Washington, with his band Feel the Manouche, TNT featuring Tony Gould, Nichaud Fitzgibbon and Ingrid James kept true jazz aficionados more than satisfied.

Melbourne dance band, Shirazz, kept pumping out hot jazz from the 1920s and 1930s at the Forth Community Hall and Devonport Football Club. This young and energetic band, with their good humour and swinging beats won audiences over immediately and kept them on the dance floor. Members of Cradle Coast Swing also popped up all over the festival adding an exciting energy everywhere they went.

Tasmanian artists were well represented with the duo of Mia Palencia and Kelly Ottaway performing to three sell-out performances, local pair G&T offered a laid-back program at the Devonport Tennis Club, the Cygnet Jazz Collective and The Jive Dogs gathered new audiences and St Joe's Big Band knocked it out of the park at Musos in the Mall.



*Feel the Manouche performing at the Devonport Regional Gallery as part of the 14th Devonport Jazz Festival*

Photography by Kelly Slater

A highlight of the festival was the international band, HERD, from Finland, who began their Australian tour here in Tasmania. As well as performing in a feature concert, they also had separate concerts with special guest artists Gianni Marinucci on trumpet and Danny Healy on saxophone. Each of the three concerts presented very different experiences for audiences and it was great to see some beautiful collaboration between the Finnish trio and the Australian soloists.

Blues audiences certainly weren't disappointed when they heard Lloyd Spiegel's driving guitar and raw vocals at two concerts over the weekend as part of his 25th Anniversary Tour. Boogie Woogie was also covered by Jan Preston's Boogie Circus, with Jan sharing some of her technique and expertise in a sold out workshop.

From the first concert on Thursday night, the traditional community concert, Gospel Song, to the final concert on Sunday night of the Great American Songbook at The Wharf, Devonport Jazz had toes tapping, hearts racing and melodies soaring. Now it's back to the drawing board for Devonport City Council staff to create an equally magnificent Devonport Jazz 2016.

# How Accessible is the Information on **Your Council's Website?**

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)*, councils must ensure that people with disabilities have the same level of access to information and services as others in the community. Further to this, in 2008, the Australian Government ratified the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* which specifically recognises (under Articles 9 and 21) that access to information, communications and services, including the Internet, is a human right.

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international organisation where member organisations, staff and the public work together to develop web standards, has developed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.

Following these guidelines will make content accessible to a wider range of people with disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities, photosensitivity and combinations of these. Following the guidelines will also often make your web content more usable to visitors in general.



Photography supplied by Oak Tasmania

While complying with the WCAG 2.0 guidelines should be every council's objective, here are some practical actions your Council could take to help improve access to information on its website:

- Conduct a compliance audit to determine the extent of your Council's website compliance;
- Encourage communications staff and those with responsibility for preparing web content to undertake training courses to enhance their ability to deliver accessible information;
- Provide publications in accessible formats including Easy Read;
- Develop a new structure for web content accessibility reporting based on WCAG 2.0 compliance; and
- Provide public information, including safety information during emergency situations, in a range of accessible formats, modes and technologies that are appropriate to the diverse communication needs of people with disability.

**To access the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA, visit [www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/). For further information, contact the Local Government Division on (03) 6232 7022, or email [lgd@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lgd@dpac.tas.gov.au).**

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# Why Local Government Matters

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) has released Australia's first and most comprehensive national study into community attitudes to Local Government. Lead researcher and ACELG Director, Assoc Prof Roberta Ryan highlights some key aspects about this major piece of social research which demonstrates how and why communities value the activities and role of local governments, and what this means for Local Government reform in Tasmania.

In 2014-15, ACELG asked over 2,000 Australians a variety of questions about why Local Government matters. We surveyed people from all corners of the country including those in urban capital cities, urban regional, urban fringe and rural and remote areas. We asked about the place where they live and what makes them feel good about their suburb or locality - what makes their place 'tick' and feel like home. The research also investigated the role of government through a range of questions such as - How do people want their services delivered? How do people want to be involved in government? What do people think about Local Government? How do people feel about amalgamation?

## Key findings for Tasmania

**Tasmanians want local governments to deliver services that are important to them in their local area.**

All Australians want their local area to be safe, have affordable housing and access to quality healthcare. For people from rural areas – including those in Tasmania – being close to family, having access to good aged care and a positive economic outlook are particularly important. People living in rural areas also placed a higher level of importance on good quality roads and bridges.

Overwhelmingly, people from the majority of Local Government Areas in Tasmania want local governments to deliver these services. However, they are also more likely to be dissatisfied with the services they value, including the quality of roads and bridges, economic outlook and job opportunities.

These findings strongly support the need for councils in Tasmania to ensure they can deliver the services that are important to residents. This will no doubt contribute to the discussions currently underway in Tasmania about Local Government service delivery, scale of council size and other matters currently on the reform agenda.

**All Australians are connected to their local area and want to be involved in decision-making - rural and remote residents more so.**

An astounding 88% of Australians strongly or moderately agree they feel at home in the place where they live. Over 50% of rural and remote residents strongly agree that the area



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## Creative Councils Best Placed for Change

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government has released a new discussion paper entitled *Creative Councils for Creative Communities*, which explores the role of creativity as a prerequisite to innovation in Local Government.

The paper was developed following a series of creativity workshops and explores current thinking about creativity in communities, organisations and the public sector. It discusses an approach taken within Marrickville Council about explicitly adding creativity to its council function which could be considered by other councils. The study demonstrates that a council can fruitfully draw on the community to support its approach to working for that community. ***Creative Councils for Creative Communities* is available at [www.acelg.org.au/news/creative-councils-discussion-paper](http://www.acelg.org.au/news/creative-councils-discussion-paper).**

in which they live has the qualities they value and that there is something in the landscape that makes them feel good about themselves. They also strongly feel a part of the history of the place and surrounded by important memories and stories. It is not surprising then that citizens want to be involved in decision-making in their local area. Australians in general (63.7%) disagree that people who work in government have enough knowledge to decide what services are needed in their area, and agree (78.9%) that communities know enough to make good decisions about what services they need.

#### Shared service delivery warrants further consideration as a reform option for Tasmania.

ACELG's research strongly supports the need for reform to help local governments deliver services in Tasmania. This is particularly the case for rural and remote residents that make up 19 of the 29 Local Government Areas in

Tasmania. However, respondents were not optimistic about amalgamation as an option. Respondents did not think amalgamation would improve the cost (79.1%) or quality of service delivery (78%), with rural and remote residents more pessimistic about the impact of amalgamation on services delivery than other Australians.

People from rural and remote areas were also more concerned that amalgamation would have a negative impact on their connection to the local area. They were more likely to think that the representation of their interests by councillors, feelings of belonging to the area and sense of belonging to the local areas would get much worse compared to the national average.

*Why Local Government Matters*, can be downloaded from <http://acelg.org.au/wlgm>.



## New Investment in Regions Needed to Curb **Income Inequality**

Reducing the inequality of income distribution within and between Australian regions through new investment will be pivotal to strengthening Australia's economy and bridging the employment fallout from the subsiding mining boom in low-income regions, according to a report launched recently.

The report, *State of the Regions: Inequality between and within regions*, prepared by National Economics for the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), confirmed trends presented in recent research papers showing the link between income inequality at a regional level and economic growth on a national level.

Dr Peter Brain, leading economist and co-author of the report said the report identifies a need for policies and

investments to be implemented on a region-by-region basis to decrease the existing inequality across Australian regions, which was expedited by the mining boom. "Local Government is strategically placed to coordinate job creation policies at the local level to improve Australia's economic performance and hence make an important contribution to national economic growth," Dr Bain said.

ALGA President, Mayor Troy Pickard welcomed the report's recommendation for a stronger partnership between the Australian Government and Local Government to improve the country's economic performance, particularly through targeted investment in Local Government services such as local infrastructure maintenance and provision.

To access the report, visit <http://alga.asn.au/?ID=13360>.

# TasWater Progressing Well on Identified Goals

MIKE BREWSTER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
TasWater

As we enter our third year, I am genuinely pleased to say I can identify real achievement in progress towards the goals we have set.

In forming TasWater, our priorities included improving our safety performance, building a statewide organisation, engaging with the community and making savings by delivering water and sewerage services through one organisation. On all of these fronts, we are making gains.

As we strive towards Zero Harm, our lost time injury frequency rate has improved by 53% - from 12.9% last year down to 6.1%.

Progress is being made on water quality improvement. The last twelve months have seen new water treatment plants opened, a long-standing boil water notice lifted and numerous projects underway which will see 18 more towns receive water that meets Australian Drinking Water Guidelines by 2018.

On the sewerage front, the number of dry weather spills has reduced over the last year by 42%. While this result is pleasing, there are still too many spills and considerable work is needed to upgrade treatment plants and reduce inflow and stormwater infiltration during high rainfall events. A reduction in sewage spills impacting on the shellfish industry also remains a key target.

While it was pleasing to see our merger savings target of \$5 million exceeded by 20%, it is essential that we continue to increase the efficiency of our operations. To that end, we are launching a productivity improvement program later in the year targeting a further \$3 million in annual recurrent savings.

As our third year of operation begins, I want to take the opportunity to acknowledge our owner councils for their support. The overwhelming backing received for our Corporate Plan (2015-18) indicates a high degree of alignment between the corporation and its owners on the issues that really matter such as infrastructure improvement, affordability and customer service enhancements.



*Community Engagement Officer, Miriam Rule and Department Manager Design and Engineering Services, Brad Davie at a recent community engagement session in Glenora*

In line with the OTTER determination, TasWater will commit \$330 million over the next three years on capital spending programs. This investment can be expected to deliver significant improvements in water and sewerage treatment quality, increased employment opportunities and drive a range of economic benefits for the State.

We are also in the midst of finalising our long-term financial plan with a view to putting in a place a strategy to address the extensive backlog of overdue infrastructure renewals (currently estimated at over \$600 million). Additionally, we are looking to significantly lift our compliance with public health and environmental standards and build fit for purpose, affordable infrastructure and services that will ultimately meet the needs of future generations of Tasmanians. In this sense, TasWater is intent on looking to Tasmania's future and are keen to work with key stakeholders to deliver long-term, sustainable outcomes for Tasmania.

In closing, I want to join the Local Government community in honouring the work of former Dorset Mayor, Barry Jarvis. His passion, vision and commitment to his community never waned and in recent times, as the Scottsdale area faced significant challenges to its traditional economic and social structure, Barry not only fought hard for his constituents but optimistically embraced projects, offering new opportunities. He will be sadly missed but hopefully his legacy of commitment will inspire others to become advocates for our regional communities.

# The Importance of *Community Engagement* Gains Recognition

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia is delighted that the National General Assembly of Local Government has passed a significant motion in relation to Public Participation.

The motion, which was put forward by the City of Melville in Western Australia and was passed unanimously, read as follows:

"That the National General Assembly acknowledges the seven core values of public participation as leading positive practice for involving citizens in democratic decision-making and request the Australian Government demonstrate the use of these principles in the development of public policy."

The IAP2 core values were listed in reference to this motion. They include:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process;
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision;

- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision-makers;
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by, or interested in a decision;
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate;
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way; and
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

IAP2 Australasia is seeking Local Government's support to continue advancing the practice of public participation by adopting a similar resolution for the betterment of decision-making processes and our local communities.

**For more information about community and stakeholder engagement and its importance, visit [www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au).**



*Government engaging towards  
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# Garage Sale Trail

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# Making **Audits** Count: How audit panels can support the ethical operation of councils

DIANE MERRYFULL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Integrity Commission

**A community expects, and has a right to expect, that its local council will be not only be efficient in its operations, but ethical as well. A council's audit panel plays a key role here – through assessing and providing feedback on the compliance programs a council has in place.**

Audits are important to an organisation. An audit can provide assurance that processes have been properly followed and that resources are being appropriately directed. However, an audit that is not thoroughly conducted can actually be detrimental to an organisation. At the Integrity Commission, we have seen cases where an inadequate audit has failed to pick up evidence of misconduct. In such cases, people have been assured that everything is in order when a thorough audit would have revealed that there were serious issues to be addressed.

Councils' audit panels have both legal obligations (under the *Local Government Act*) and ethical responsibilities. To be effective, members of an audit panel need to be clear about their role and aware of the key ethical risk areas that can affect both the council and the panel itself. After all, if the panel is not operating ethically, it won't be able to ensure the ethical operation of the council.

Some of the risk areas that the Commission has identified for audit panels include: conflict of interest; use of confidential information and use of power and authority. In addition,



there is the risk that, if an audit panel does not work within its scope, or gets bogged down in operational matters, it will lose the important strategic and independent perspective that it can uniquely bring to a council's governance framework.

So what can audit panels do to ensure that they are taking appropriate account of ethical issues? As a starting point, a code of conduct for the panel that addresses key risk areas, including mechanisms for managing risk, will provide useful guidance. The Integrity Commission is working with both the Local Government Division of Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Local Government Association of Tasmania to produce a model code of conduct that audit panels can adopt. I encourage panels to also make use of the resources available from the Local Government Division, and training on ethics and integrity available from the Commission. It is also critical that all panel members understand the scope of their role, including the focus on ethical behaviour. Strong leadership from the chair will be a key factor here.

It is early days for some of the newer audit panels and there's no denying that the panels have a significant job to do. However, the response of audit panels to the recent forums in Hobart and Launceston shows that there is real interest and commitment to ensuring that panels across the State are both effective and ethical. As part of its ongoing work supporting Local Government, the Integrity Commission is available to provide assistance to audit panels.

**Audit panel chairs can contact the Integrity Commission by email at [mper@integrity.tas.gov.au](mailto:mper@integrity.tas.gov.au), or phone 1300 720289.**

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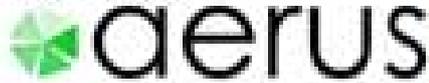




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## Good Governance, Keeping Pace with Change

MARYELLEN SALTER, DIRECTOR  
Wise Lord & Ferguson

As Tasmania starts to look at the role of Local Government, it should consider the level of successful change being delivered elsewhere. In the United Kingdom, faced with the challenge of reducing spending by 37% in real terms nationally, Local Government were the hardest hit but they stood up and delivered despite being faced with demand pressures and uneven growth across their communities.

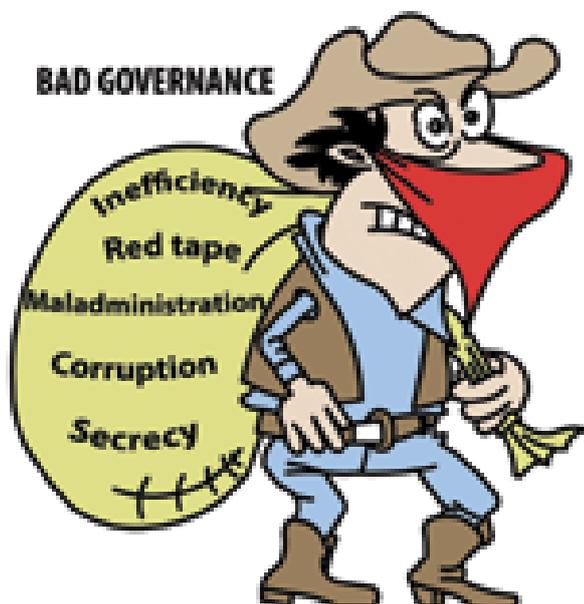
In the UK, many local authorities started to review how they delivered services and whether they were the most efficient and effective means. This resulted in a number of councils considering different models of service delivery, either through shared service arrangements, outsourcing and sharing key leadership roles.

What we can learn from the experience in the UK is that the role of elected members is a very important one for ensuring that the services to ratepayers is maintained within different models of delivery, and that there is robust scrutiny and challenge to the process of change. However, that is often a heavy burden to wear. What provides elected members with assurances that the decisions they are making are the 'right' ones? The answer points to effective governance arrangements.

Wise Lord & Ferguson most recently published its research paper into governance in Tasmanian Local Government. Within this paper we discussed, amongst other matters, councils considering the following:

- Assessing the adequacy of their governance arrangements on an annual basis;
- Making governance structures for decision-making transparent to the public, thereby promoting their inclusion and involvement;
- Publishing information relevant to residents in their annual report, focusing on where the money goes and what were the outcomes achieved for their local community;
- Publishing areas of weakness and actions being undertaken to address them;
- Gaining buy-in and support for change from the community, accepting that it takes time to achieve but requires resilience and focus;
- Providing support and guidance for the behaviours that are valued within the council at councillor/alderman level that then transcends to officers;
- Improving the audit committee's effectiveness through promoting a flexible approach to dealing with changing risks and agendas; and
- Making informed and appropriate decisions through embedding risk management into day-to-day operations.

Overall we recognise that good governance underpins the achievement of strategic objectives. Ratepayers expect at a minimum that any model of governance includes being accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable and inclusive. Get the governance right and the change agenda may not feel as difficult as once thought.





# Growing Tasmania's Emerging Local Food Economy

**Tasmania has a reputation for growing the best quality food in the world, supported by increased investment into both on farm and off farm infrastructure to support the enhancement of the agricultural sector. Whilst this investment is a boost for the food export economy, there are real opportunities to capitalise on this scenario and to further develop Tasmania's local food economy.**

There are compelling reasons why investment into growing Tasmania's emerging local food economy is good for Tasmania and why this investment would be timely. Research has shown greater investment into local food economies can help fuel more local jobs, increase wages and proprietor incomes, and stimulate further business activity locally.

The foundation for a strong and vibrant local food economy is to have sustainable local food systems that benefit both the grower and consumer. Local food systems could play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy and at the same time, improve community access to healthy food, thereby improving community health and wellbeing.

A UTAS research team in partnership with the Heart Foundation, with funding from Tasmania Medicare Local, have completed the Local Food Supply Project which examines factors that influence the operation and viability of Tasmania's local food systems in three regional areas. Sixty-four people were interviewed from across the State from fruit and vegetable producers through to processors and community groups. The researchers looked at opportunities and challenges for strengthening new and existing local food systems which are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and contribute towards health outcomes because they make fruit and vegetables more available for Tasmanians.

A local food system refers to the short supply chains in which food has been grown and processed within a local regional area. Research investigator, Sandy Murray said often state-grown food is not enjoyed by Tasmanians due to the lack of connection between the food grown in a region and the food available in local shops.

By moving a share of economic activity into local, smaller-sized businesses, the local food economy benefits with increases in local jobs and also increases in wages and proprietor incomes across local supply chains. It would also allow for a greater percentage of sales to be retained locally and help stimulate additional business activity such as the development of value adding or niche markets, and encourage further consumer spending at local businesses.

Local knowledge about what food is grown and where, together with an understanding of local community values and norms, is pivotal to successful local food systems. On that premise, Local Government was identified as having an important role to play in developing and supporting policies that strengthen local food initiatives and build the local food economy. Importantly, councils have a vested interest in the health of their community.

The research emphasised the benefits from working in formal and informal relationships between growers, and between growers and their customers. It also highlighted the potential to further bolster local food systems through increasing grower's income from second-grade produce and pursuing food tourism ventures. There was also clearly a potential link between food tourism activities in Tasmania and local food systems which need further research.

Regardless of the stakeholder group, the findings consistently suggested that a successful Tasmanian local food system included the following themes:

1. Existing systems need to be strengthened;
2. Local Government can play a pivotal role in supporting local food systems;
3. The broader social determinants of health need to be addressed;
4. Don't take a one-size-fits-all approach;
5. Consumers need to be engaged to meet the needs of the market;
6. Changes need to be made incrementally; and
7. Smaller growers and community groups need to be involved.

**The Tasmanian Local Food Supply report is available at [www.tasmedicarelocal.com.au/resources/tasmanian-local-food-supply-project-final-report](http://www.tasmedicarelocal.com.au/resources/tasmanian-local-food-supply-project-final-report). For more information, contact Stuart Auckland at the UTAS Centre for Rural Health Tasmania at [stuart.auckland@utas.edu.au](mailto:stuart.auckland@utas.edu.au).**

# New Case Study on Local Government Innovation and Collaboration

Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA), as consortium partner of the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) at UTS, recently released *Community Chef: A Case Study in Local Government Innovation*. The written and complementary case study tells the story of Community Chef, how it came about and what lessons were learned along the way.

Community Chef is a Local Government-owned social enterprise with a state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable, commercial kitchen facility in Melbourne's south-western suburbs. It is a collaborative joint venture between councils in Victoria but operates as a separate arm's-length business, and contracts to member councils and other clients to deliver cook-chill or snap-frozen, high quality, nutritious meals ready for use by elderly, frail and disabled community members.

The Community Chef project has been widely acclaimed as an outstanding example of Local Government collaboration and resource-sharing, with councils working together to deliver quality service outcomes under an innovative social enterprise structure. Whilst the focus of the Community Chef project is on the delivered meals function, the key lesson to be taken from this case study is that, as an example of best practice, its potential is far greater.

The core message from the case study is that the Community Chef model can be adapted

and applied in any number of other government service areas and functions, both within Local Government and beyond, such as aged care, child care, housing, and youth services. One of the intentions of the case study is to inspire and encourage those involved in the Local Government sector to consider and pursue different, innovative and collaborative

solutions to the complex challenges they face.

Today, Community Chef prepares over 12,000 meal items daily, or just over one-third of Victoria's total requirements for Meals on Wheels. From the outset, it was built with social, economic, cultural and environmental outcomes in mind. It came about as a result of an identified local problem, became a reality because an innovative solution was found, and became a success because the participating councils worked together to drive the project and bring it to fruition, with the passion and dedicated, long-term commitment necessary to overcome the obstacles they encountered along the way.



*The Community Chef project has been widely acclaimed as an outstanding example of Local Government collaboration and resource-sharing*

Photography supplied by Local Government Managers Australia

The written and video formats of the case study can be downloaded from: [www.acelg.org.au/news/local-government-innovation-and-collaboration-case-study](http://www.acelg.org.au/news/local-government-innovation-and-collaboration-case-study). For more information, contact Angela Zivkovic or Alex Kats on (03) 9682 9222.

## **SUPPORT WORKERS** Available to Help in Times of Need

**Personal support workers with training in psychological first aid and with an understanding of people's needs in crises or emergencies are available to councils should the need arise.**

**These volunteer chaplains are trained by the Emergencies Ministry (EM) program of the Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC) and are sourced from 18 Tasmanian faith communities.**



available to councils for smaller-scale situations such as fatal car accidents, hailstorms, or criminal violence.

The provision of personal support workers is a service that the TCC and representatives of Tasmania's faith communities offer to Tasmanian communities free of charge. The TCC would like to develop and strengthen its relationship with Tasmanian councils, ideally by having an EM representative on each council's Emergency Management or Social Recovery Committee.

**For further information on the EM program, visit the TCC website at [www.tcctas.org.au](http://www.tcctas.org.au), contact Gus Yearsley on 0432 620 253, or email [emprojects@tcctas.org.au](mailto:emprojects@tcctas.org.au). To request deployment of personal support workers, please contact the relevant EM regional coordinator:**

**South - Paul Hueston on 0400 422 009; North - Craig Arnold on 0408 148 545; and North-West - Mike Delaney on 0417 279 437.**

While many EM volunteers have other qualifications and experience in counselling, chaplaincy and/or pastoral care, their role with the EM program is to provide a calm and compassionate presence in times of distress and crisis. They provide personal support by helping people find information and complete forms if need be, and they provide psychological first aid by listening to people's stories, showing empathy and communicating safety and compassion. The EM volunteers create calm and quiet spaces within what can be stressful and chaotic situations.

Tasmania has about 130 trained and accredited EM volunteers who have all completed a two-day training course and ongoing refresher courses. In addition to their initial and ongoing training, all volunteers are required to hold a current Working with Vulnerable People card. Tasmania's EM volunteers represent 21 of Tasmania's 29 Local Government Areas and are increasing in number and geographic scope each year. About 20 have undergone additional training to become team leaders, and volunteers are deployed in teams of up to five, with a team leader.

The EM volunteers are deployed only when called upon by state or local governments. In Tasmania's *Social Recovery Plan*, the Department of Health and Human Services acknowledges the support of the Tasmanian Council of Churches in the delivery of pastoral care. This might be in the case of significant bushfires or floods where people have been displaced and where properties and lives have been threatened or lost. In such cases, personal support workers might be deployed to emergency relief centres or on community outreach visits. The EM volunteers are also



## Is Your Council Meeting its **First Aid Obligations?**

Legislation, regulations and the *First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice* set out the minimum requirements for first aid in Tasmania. Under the *Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act*, councils have a legal requirement to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that adequate facilities are provided for the welfare of their workers. Adequate facilities include first aid arrangements.

The WHS regulations place specific obligations on a person conducting a business in relation to first aid including requirements to:

- Provide first aid equipment and ensure each worker at the workplace has access to the equipment;
- Ensure access to facilities for the administration of first aid; and
- Ensure that an adequate number of workers are trained to administer first aid at the workplace, or that workers have access to an adequate number of other people who have been trained to administer first aid.

From recent risk assessments of Local Government compliance with the requirements, Mr Robert Moreton from Moreton Group Training advised that councils and senior management need to identify the gaps in their training and access to first aid equipment to ensure they are not exposed. "Each and every worker needs to have access to first aid equipment and trained first aiders at all times," he said.

"We have many remote areas in our State and council staff often work alone. Local Governments must look seriously at all workers and assess if they are complying with the act," he said. WHS act compliance, when it comes to first aid, can be achieved relatively easily.

Moreton Group Training provide first aid resources along with quality, affordable and flexible first aid training statewide, and are only too happy to help councils meet their obligations. For enquiries, phone (03) 6278 3029 or email [www.mgtraining.com.au](http://www.mgtraining.com.au).





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(L-R) Tasmanian representatives of the Australian Coastal Councils Association - Clr Jennifer Crawford from Glamorgan-Spring Bay and Ald Sharyn von Bertouch of Clarence City Council

Photography by David Bellamy

## New Association to Represent Australia's Coastal Councils

The Australian Coastal Councils Association, a new body representing Australia's coastal councils, is calling for a coordinated, national approach to managing the country's coastline.

The Association is seeking members from across Australia in order to develop a strong and united Local Government coastal policy agenda which pursues a collaborative, national approach to coastal management involving the three tiers of government, and includes the establishment of an intergovernmental agreement on the coast. This agreement would define the roles and responsibilities of each tier, and form the basis for a National Coastal Policy which sets out the principles, objectives and actions to be undertaken.

Ald Sharyn von Bertouch of Clarence City Council, one of two Tasmanian representatives on the Association's Committee of Management, said the management of the nation's 36,000 km of coastline is left almost entirely to local councils which do not have sufficient resources to tackle the enormous challenges involved. "It is about time the nation as a whole contributed to the cost of maintaining our beaches and other coastal assets,

which are enjoyed by all Australians, rather than leaving it to coastal councils and their ratepayers," she said.

"One of the reasons councils find it so difficult to address these issues is because of the vertical fiscal imbalance that exists between the three levels of government in Australia," Ald von Bertouch said. "Local councils receive only 3.4% of Australia's taxation revenue, while the Federal Government receives 81% and the states and territories receive 15%. As a result, coastal councils are struggling to deal with a growing range of coastal issues in addition to increasing demand for facilities for tourists and other visitors."

Current challenges facing Australia's coastal councils include extensive coastal erosion, beach maintenance and restoration, clean up and recovery from severe weather events and restoration of coastal habitat. "Many coastal councils have to find tens of millions of dollars to cover the cost of these works in addition to funding

the full range of Local Government infrastructure and services," Ald Von Bertoch said.

To find out more about the Australian Coastal Councils Association, visit <http://coastalcouncils.org.au/>.



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# Upgraded Bushfire Monitoring Capability to Keep Communities Safer

A new and improved bushfire monitoring system will be in place for the 2016 disaster season, transforming an existing delayed monitoring service into a more responsive emergency management tool for firefighters.

Geoscience Australia's Sentinel Hotspots system will receive a major upgrade as a recipient of the 2015-16 National Emergency Management Projects (NEMP) grants announced in August by the Minister for Justice, the Hon Michael Keenan MP.

The Sentinel Hotspot monitoring system currently provides information about potential bushfire hotspots to emergency service managers and the general public across Australia through the use of satellite imagery.

Geoscience Australia CEO, Dr Chris Pigram explained how the upgrade to the Sentinel Hotspots capability will provide Australia with observations 144 times a day, opening up opportunities to monitor change as it happens. "The increase in frequency from 6-hour updates to 10-minute updates will enable emergency services to monitor fire development in near real-time," Dr Pigram said.

When natural disasters occur, timely and accurate decisions need to be made by emergency management authorities to ensure the safety of individuals and to minimise impacts on property and infrastructure.

"Emergency services will be able to draw upon Sentinel when deciding where and how to prioritise resources when they are in most demand," Dr Pigram said. "This is particularly important where there are multiple fire fronts, or large scale incidents across state and territory borders,"

The new Sentinel capability, which is due to be operational by June 2016, is made possible by the Japanese Government's A\$927 million investment and Japanese industry's technical excellence in developing the Himawari-8 satellite.

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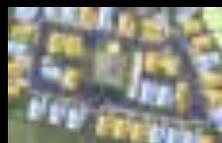
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# VIEW FROM THE SHOP FLOOR

## - ENERGY EFFICIENCY LEGACIES

**Effectively implementing energy efficiency initiatives for smaller councils often presents different challenges than what confronts larger energy users but how can smaller councils leave a lasting energy efficiency legacy?**

Much has been written about the drivers that motivate managers and senior executives in the energy efficiency decision-making process. The International Energy Agency, the Australian Industry Greenhouse Network and others offer reviews and advice that so often apply to the big end of town, large businesses and large energy users.

Implicit in their advice is the assumption that, beyond the implementation decision, there are staff who may be dedicated to running an energy efficiency change, that there are energy champions in the business who will support them, and that there will be long-term contracted external parties involved in operation and maintenance contracts. In other words, there will be staff members who understand the equipment, its interactions with other processes and the importance of those interactions in achieving an outcome.

But what if you're not big business? While the energy efficiency investment may be lower for smaller organisations, it is likely to be a similar or higher percentage of its net worth. Yet there are fewer staff around and most of them are multi-skilling. The project is too small to engage a contractor and still preserve the economic benefits. Therefore, the people on the shop floor become all-important in seeing your energy efficiency measures through to the end.

Even the Energy Efficiency Exchange website, with a similar focus to above, lists four of its six best-practice steps as occurring after the feasibility study: commitment; integration

into company systems; effective communication and appropriate resourcing.

Pitt & Sherry's recent experiences in energy efficiency projects at aquatic centres have outlined how the best laid plans can go astray in these later stages. For nearly all smaller local councils, aquatic centres are their top energy user and a major focus of savings outcomes.

So what goes wrong and what is missing? It seems to start at the commissioning phase and continue from there. Skimping on commissioning will result in the quickest solution but not the best solution. Yet, after builds have run over time and costs, the quickest solution is often seen as the way to repair some of the damage. This is compounded by the absence of understanding of staff members on the shop floor.

Air flows that are too high, suboptimal tuning of energy recovery equipment, cogeneration engines that run in the wrong tariff brackets and small-scale futile cycling are all examples of items that go astray. For items that were fully set up, there is often limited understanding of the integration with other systems, or even simple things like the effect on an otherwise valuable measure of leaving a door open between heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) zones. This may be compounded by hierarchical structures that leave shop floor staff several steps removed from the running of the systems that create the environment they operate in.



Correcting some issues involves specialist knowledge and much of the solution lies in placing more emphasis on the commissioning and documentation stages. Documentation should be provided that informs shop floor staff of the most important performance factors and why – to give them an understanding of what the systems are meant to achieve. This way, the people who work in that environment can understand and question the changes they see on a day-to-day basis.

Recent research by Washington State University noted similar issues and called for increased training of the building occupants. From Pitt and Sherry's experience, this would

address an important symptom but not the cause. The gap between specifications and performance starts earlier in the project life cycle, with the expectation the machines will always look after themselves.

**Pitt & Sherry, a multi-specialist infrastructure consultancy, has been delivering intelligent and sustainable solutions to industry, government and communities for over 50 years. For enquiries about effectively implementing energy efficiency initiatives at your Council, visit [www.pittsh.com.au](http://www.pittsh.com.au), or call (03) 6210 1400.**

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pitt&sherry can assist councils with the assessment of complex environmental aspects of Level 1 activities, including monitoring, audits, compliance assessments and review of permit conditions, as well as more specialised services such as noise, air/odour, heritage values, land contamination and potential impacts on vegetation.

Potentially contaminated land is a common issue, and we can provide assistance to councils for their own facilities (e.g. works depots, quarries,

landfills), including existing sites, due diligence for site selection or at closure and rehabilitation.

Impacts on vegetation and threatened vegetation communities often occur when activities require land clearing. The environmental legislation surrounding approvals for land clearing is complex and can involve many levels of state and federal government. We can assist councils to identify their legislative requirements and how they can be met through mitigation offset options or strategies.

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A photograph showing three individuals in a natural, grassy field. On the left, a man in a bright green jacket and brown pants is looking at a document. In the center, a woman with red hair in a dark jacket is also looking at a document. On the right, a woman in a dark jacket and blue jeans is looking at a document. They appear to be conducting a field assessment.

*(L-R) Grant Daniels, UTAS PhD candidate and Environmental Planner Nikki den Exter, and Kingborough Council NRM Coordinator Liz Quinn*

# Balancing Development and Conservation Outcomes

**Over the past 12 months, UTAS PhD candidate, Environmental Planner, Nikki den Exter and Kingborough Council NRM Coordinator, Liz Quinn have been using the Tasmanian Vegetation Condition Assessment (TasVeg VCA) methodology to make a small but important contribution to our understanding of Kingborough's natural values.**

Using the rapid site-based assessment method, that compares the condition of a given vegetation community to a 'benchmark' or average patch of the same vegetation that has not been disturbed for a long time, Council have established the relative condition of diverse vegetation communities across the Municipal Area.

TasVeg VCA provides Nikki and Liz with an evidence-based approach to assessing development applications that require offsets to mitigate impacts on Kingborough's existing natural values and enables them to compare vegetation condition across different sites, even if those sites support different vegetation communities.

The team has been applying the method across the Municipal Area to monitor the current extent and quality of biodiversity values protected under Part 5 Agreements. The Part 5 Agreements, which are attached to property titles, enable Council to stipulate certain requirements in perpetuity for the establishment and protection of conservation zones, as well as specifying management requirements such as weed

control or rehabilitation works to ensure a positive outcome for natural values.

The consistent and repeatable method allows assessment of vegetation condition at paired sites (proposed development/potential biodiversity offset) for the presence and quality of the structural components of vegetation (e.g. trees, understorey, weeds, logs and litter) as well as landscape-scale factors like patch size and connectivity. This helps council staff make informed decisions in the difficult process of assessing whether a proposed offset represents a good conservation outcome when compared to the values likely to be impacted by a proposed development.

Whilst the decision to offset is inevitably a challenging one, Nikki sees merit in the approach. "The TasVeg VCA method provides an established and transparent framework that ensures a consistent evaluation of the condition of the area to be impacted, relative to the area proposed as an offset. This is critical as it ensures that values which are in good condition are not being traded for values in poorer condition."

In addition to supporting improved decision-making at the site, the TasVeg VCA method also has broader implications, as each VCA conducted adds to a growing resource of baseline information on vegetation condition across Tasmania. Over time, this will provide invaluable insight into the health and diversity of native vegetation, as well as the impacts of threatening processes and weeds.

**DPIPWE's Tasmanian Vegetation Monitoring and Mapping Program and Natural Values Atlas teams, and NRM South are working with Kingborough to improve and build capacity for use of the method. For more information, contact NRM South on (03) 6221 6111, or email [admin@nrmsouth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmsouth.org.au).**

# Climate Resilient Water Sources Data Now Available

Diversifying Australia's water supply is important to our long-term water security which is why the Bureau of Meteorology has developed a Climate Resilient Water Sources web portal to provide comprehensive mapping and information of desalinated and recycled water sources for over 350 sites across Australia, both publically and privately-owned and operated.

Users can search information on capacity, production, location and use of these alternative water sources in their area. This information will inform the Australian community, government and the water industry of the contribution that these sources make to secure water supplies for current and future residential, industrial, mining, commercial and agricultural needs.

Climate Resilient Water Sources is jointly developed by the Bureau of Meteorology, the Australian Water Recycling Centre of Excellence, the National Centre for Excellence in Desalination and CSIRO.

Climate resilient water sources will play an important role in increasing water security, lessening climate variability impacts on water availability. Either as part of large, centralised supply systems or small, decentralised schemes, they're increasingly relied upon to supply or secure Australia's water demands.

Access the portal at [www.bom.gov.au/water/crews](http://www.bom.gov.au/water/crews).



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# Government Plan for Single Tassie Super Fund

Tasplan Super wholeheartedly supports the Tasmanian government announcement that it endorses the creation of a single Tasmanian super fund. The Treasurer has given in principle backing for a merger between Tasplan, Quadrant and the RBF Tasmanian Accumulation Scheme.

The Government will undertake a tender process for a new provider for the RBF defined benefits services. The merged fund will be able to participate in the tender process for RBF's defined benefits services. Tasplan expects that the earliest the merged fund would be up and running is the end of 2016.

"This is great news for Tasplan members, Tasplan staff and Tasmania," says Tasplan Chair, Naomi Edwards. "If we merge with RBF, the fund will be larger and stronger, with around 165,000 members, managing around \$6.5 billion and delivering significant economies of scale and value for money for its members," she says. "The merger would consolidate both organisations into an even more secure and sustainable Tasmanian super fund."

If the merger goes ahead, the merged fund will:

- Maintain a solid presence in the Tasmanian community;
- Be competitive in the Australian super industry, long-term;
- Help grow the financial services industry in Tasmania;
- Promote job growth to boost the Tasmanian economy; and
- Provide opportunities for Tasmanian businesses through local investments.

"Tasplan and Quadrant announced their merger late last year and will merge, as planned, on 30 November 2015," says CEO of Tasplan and Quadrant, Wayne Davy.

"The RBF merger is a huge step for super in Tasmania and an extremely positive move for Tasplan and for the State,"



he says. "Until we progress the merger, we won't know exactly what the merged fund will look like. For example, what fees, insurance and investment options the merged fund will offer. However, the law says we can't merge unless we can show that the merger is in the best interests of our members."

In the meantime, all three funds will start a process to think about what the merged fund might look like and check that a merger is a good idea. They will make sure members are not disadvantaged by the merger (that they have 'equivalent rights'), make sure each fund is up to scratch and draw up the legal documents.

**More information about the merger is available on Tasplan's website at [www.tasplan.com.au/merger-info](http://www.tasplan.com.au/merger-info). This will be updated as new details emerge.**

## Advertiser's index Advertiser's index Advertiser's index

ABS Sports Fields Pty Ltd .....	37
Analytical Services Tasmania .....	43
Andrew Walter Constructions .....	8
Aerus Technologies .....	30
Brighton Council .....	19
Cambron .....	7
Case Construction .....	39
Christie Parksafe .....	18
Clennetts Mitre 10 .....	23
Commonwealth Bank .....	45
Complete Office Supplies - COS .....	12
Dial Before You Dig.....	8
Garage Sale Trail .....	28
Goanna Energy .....	24
HM Bamford Engineering .....	48

Johnstone McGee & Gandy .....	39
Landmark .....	38
MAV Insurance .....	Inside Back Cover
MyRoadInfo .....	6
Pitt & Sherry.....	41
Relevant Drug Testing Solutions .....	30
SRA Logistics .....	20
Staples .....	29
St Lukes .....	36
Stornoway .....	43
Tasmanian Mountain Waters .....	34
Tasplan Super .....	Back Cover
Tenderlink .....	15
Travelodge Hobart Airport .....	36
Vision Super .....	Inside Front Cover

# MyPost Digital Mailbox set to Streamline Bill Payments and Reduce Mail Costs

MyPost Digital Mailbox is a free consumer service that is secure and easy-to-use, which allows users to conveniently manage the business of everyday life.

Unlike email, a digital mailbox helps users manage bill payments and mail. They can:

- Connect with service providers they have a relationship with – such as their local council, utility company and government entities. National providers are also available and include Telstra, AMP, Westpac and more;
- Receive statements, bills and correspondence from select providers;
- Choose their payment options – pay immediately or schedule payments and set reminders so they never miss a bill;
- Conveniently handle mail and bills – with everything coming to one online location;
- Securely store documents and bills in a private 'in the Cloud' service hosted in Australia; and
- Receive digital receipts for Australia Post purchases.

A digital mailbox is highly secure and can provide users with peace of mind when it comes to safely managing bills,

statements and other transactions online. Accredited by the Australian Government, you can rest assured that information is safe.

MyPost Digital Mailbox is a cost effective option for organisations to service their audience. Aside from a reduction in print and mail costs, it provides a convenient and mobile alternative for document delivery and helps achieve digital targets that many organisations are faced with today.

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# What did the **Romans ever do for us?**

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Mark Wells Public Affairs

Infrastructure is designed and built to improve the lives of the communities it serves. Bridges link townships and reduce travel times. Hospitals improve our health and wellbeing. Freeways make the transport of goods and services more economic. Rail infrastructure delivers natural resources to ports and people from outer suburbs into our cities. Water infrastructure allows us to live relatively disease-free lives by delivering hot water and wastewater disposal to and from our buildings. Energy facilities give us the ability to heat our homes, cook our food and to enjoy watching our footy team playing on TV from the comfort of our sofas. Without any of this infrastructure, society as we know it would cease to exist.

Providing the infrastructure is fit for purpose, the greater community don't care if the road is made of bitumen or concrete, if the waste-water treatment plant has blue or yellow pipes, or if the rail infrastructure is standard gauge or narrow gauge. They just want it to be efficient and improve their lives. The thing is, people are not going to know that it improves their lives unless an organisation is proactive in telling them.

When it comes to infrastructure, the formula is simple – promote the sizzle, not the steak; the benefits, not the product. Any number of sizzling selling points exist including:

- It will cut travel time down from point A to point B;
- A particularly bad black-spot has been eliminated;
- Heavy goods traffic is no longer thundering through residential areas throughout the night;
- Quicker commutes result in less greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Investment in the infrastructure created local jobs, stimulated the economy and linked lifestyle to facilities.

These are strong and legitimate reasons why communities are interested and should be informed about existing and planned infrastructure programs.

Local Government should also consider the value of having a legitimate reason to communicate with ratepayers. Every new infrastructure project has at least six communications touch points:

- Planning – what are you intending to build and why?
- Funding – where is the money coming from and

what does this mean in terms of investment, jobs and stimulating the economy?

- Progress reports – is the project on time, ahead of schedule, or delayed? If so, what is the impact?
- Completion – announce the opening and reinforce the benefits.
- Economic and/or lifestyle benefits – get business, environment and community groups to endorse the project from their perspectives.
- Long-term projections and/or achievements – follow up 12-months out with outcomes and empirical evidence of the success of the infrastructure.

The usual excuses organisations use for not implementing an infrastructure communications plan are that there is no budget for it and it is deemed to be unnecessary. The response to both these excuses is quite simple: not communicating is always more damaging to an organisation than having a structured and well-executed communications plan; and the cost of the communication plan should be included in the budget for the infrastructure project and it represents an extremely small amount of money.

Very few organisations have a communications plan in place to promote their infrastructure programs but don't despair. If Monty Python's *Life of Brian* is to be believed, this is a problem of over 2,000 years in the making as it seems the Romans were not good at communicating their successes either.

As Reg said in a now famous line from the 1979 movie, "All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?"

We are a cynical society – one in which the benchmark of belief is one of our governments wasting our rates and tax dollars on a gargantuan scale. This is the primary reason why promoting the building and completion of infrastructure projects is so important.

Governments at local, state and federal level are the new Romans, and unless they regularly promote their successes and announce the benefits they deliver to their communities every day, ratepayers and taxpayers will be quite within their rights to ask "What did the Romans ever do for us?"

**For enquiries about how your Council can turn your community's perceptions around with a well-executed communications plan, please contact Mark Wells on 1300 933 220, or email [mark.wells@mwpa.cc](mailto:mark.wells@mwpa.cc).**



*The new Pages Road Bridge under construction*

## Councils Capitalise on Resource-Sharing Arrangement

Thanks to a resource-sharing initiative between Waratah-Wynyard Council and Circular Head Council in Tasmania's North-West, Pages Road residents now have a new, dual lane bridge. The old, timber bridge had reached the end of its economic life and was scheduled for urgent replacement due to its deteriorating condition. Construction commenced on 17 August and the new bridge and associated roadworks was scheduled for reopening on 18 September.

Waratah-Wynyard Mayor Robby Walsh said that with rising costs of infrastructure, it was essential that councils worked together. "The replacement of the Pages Road Bridge has fortunately become due with a number of bridges in Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head, which means that we have been able to leverage this with contractors," Mayor Walsh said. "The collective bargaining power of both councils has seen us gain more competitive prices for works at Lowries and Margetts Road, and works planned for Pages Road and across at Circular Head at Dallas, Linnanes, Hardys and Barkers Roads."

Council's Executive Manager of Engineering Services Mr Daniel Summers said that the Pages Road Bridge replacement had been budgeted for \$750,000 in 2015/16 for a single lane replacement, as per the existing bridge. "However, Council was able to secure a contract for a dual lane bridge, with 7.5 metres between guardrail barriers and approaches widened to suit," Mr Summers said. "The ability to provide a wider replacement for Pages Road Bridge to dual lane but still remain within the same budget has been enabled through the resource-sharing arrangements between Waratah-Wynyard Council and Circular Head Council."



*Discussing the works at the old Pages Road Bridge are (from L-R) Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard Manager Engineering and Projects - Bilal Akhtar, Waratah-Wynyard Mayor Robby Walsh and General Manager - Michael Stretton, and Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard Executive Manager Engineering Services - Daniel Summers.*

Mr Summers said both councils were working with limited financial resources and have been able to leverage our collective bargaining power to achieve timely replacement of a number of bridges at more competitive prices. "Bridges provide an important service in linking the transport network over rivers and other crossings" Mr Summers said. "This approach, in addition to the increase in Roads to Recovery funding from the Federal Government, has assisted the replacement of bridges in line with Council's long-term strategic asset planning."



*The Cities Safer by Design report provides helpful guidelines for urban planners to improve traffic safety*

## Can Urban Redesign Cut Road Fatalities?

A new report, *Cities Safer by Design*, offers practical guidance for urban planners to help create safer streets and communities, to reduce traffic fatalities and improve people's lives. The report from the World Resources Institute (WRI) Ross Center for Sustainable Cities includes more than 30 specific urban design recommendations for urban planners and policymakers.

The report emphasises two ways to improve traffic safety in cities. First, by building and retrofitting urban environments to reduce the need for individual vehicle trips. Second, by reducing vehicle speeds in areas where cars, pedestrians and cyclists mix. The report focuses on improving infrastructure for pedestrians, cycling, and mass transport.

The report includes illustrated recommendations for specific design elements proven to improve traffic safety including:

- Urban design that includes smaller block sizes, frequent street connections, narrower streets and access to destinations in compact urban environments that alleviate the need for vehicle travel;
- Traffic calming measures such as speed humps, chicanes, curb extensions, raised pedestrian crossings and other elements;
- Arterials and intersections that reduce conflicts between road users by providing clear crossings, medians and refuge islands;
- Pedestrian facilities ranging from pedestrian-only areas to basic, consistent sidewalks;
- Bicycling networks that feature protected bicycle lanes and special attention to design at intersections; and
- Safety improvements around mass transport stations and corridors.

Download a copy of the report at [www.wri.org/publication/cities-safer-design](http://www.wri.org/publication/cities-safer-design).

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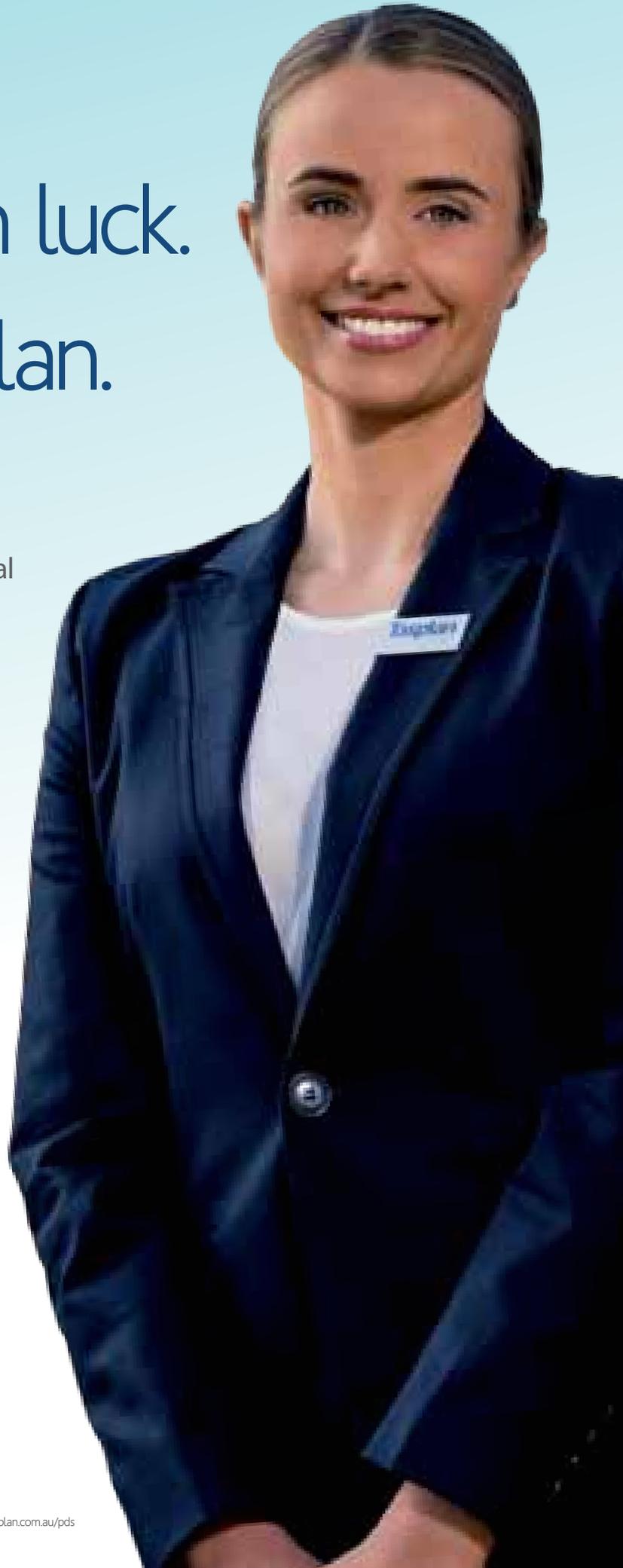
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