

LGAT

Local Government Association Tasmania

NEWS

December 2015

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North West Tasmania**

Joint Venture Producing Significant Savings

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Growing Visitor Numbers**

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Photography by: Tourism Tasmania and Alistair Bett



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Up, Up and Away: Taking Flight as LGAT President

MAYOR DOUG CHIPMAN, PRESIDENT
Local Government Association of Tasmania

I was overseas on a trip of a lifetime when the elections for LGAT President took place, so I have certainly hit the ground running since my return and already have a strong appreciation of President's past, and the staff at LGAT.

I am grateful for Mayor Daryl Quilliam who acted as President for five months after the untimely death of Mayor Barry Jarvis. Daryl provided a strong and stable hand during a tumultuous time which included the departure and appointment of the LGAT CEO. I look forward to working with Daryl as Vice President.

My first formal activity in the President's seat was to co-sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Association and Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) Tasmania¹ to solidify our cooperative relationship and look to collectively deliver strong outcomes for the Tasmanian Local Government sector. From that event, I moved quickly to three regional breakfast forums looking at Tourism in Tasmania (see the CEO's article in this issue); a meeting of the General Management Committee; a Premier's Local Government Council Meeting; a General Meeting, a Mayor's Workshop and a briefing of the Legislative Council on the Land Use Planning Amendment Bill. I have started joining the LGAT CEO on council visits and participated with staff and the General Management Committee in our annual planning.

Of course, it is not just a busy time for me, but for our entire sector as we consider reform from many angles. At a Federal level, there are still conversations about how taxation might look in future, as well as the roles of the various tiers of Government.

At a State level, we are considering strategic resource-sharing and amalgamations in some detail; heavily engaged in planning reform and working to implement national heavy vehicle reform. We are about to embark on a review of the *Local Government Act*, largely focused on improving governance.

At a sectoral level, there is much collaboration to ensure best practice and LGAT is leading and heavily engaged in a number of improvement projects through the Role of Local Government Project.

At LGAT too, we are looking at improvement. For example, the team have commenced a process to look strategically at communications and ICT to both improve the operational efficiency of the organisation and position LGAT to be able to provide new services to members in future (for example online training). A key goal of the strategic communications review is to look at how to improve the profile of Local Government. We all know how hard councillors and staff work for their municipalities, the diverse array of infrastructure, services and support that councils provide and the importance of Local Government to safe, healthy and vibrant and thriving communities. We just need to share that more effectively.

There is a lot on but rather than being daunting, I think it is exciting for Local Government. My key role as President is to provide a voice to the sector as we progress change.

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Local Government to Play a Key Role in Growing Visitor Numbers

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

"Over the past year, more visitors have travelled to our State than ever before – 1.15 million – that's more than double our population."

"We are on the verge of welcoming one million domestic visitors a year for the first time and we've seen a massive 38% increase in Chinese visitors since 2014" (Will Hodgman MP, Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events, 1 November 2015).

Towards the end of October, the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) hosted three regional breakfast forums focusing on tourism in Tasmania and how Local Government can contribute. The timing could not have been more fortuitous as the Government and tourism industry were preparing for the November launch of the Tourism 21 (T21) Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy and partnership.

With an ambitious target of 1.5 million visitors annually by 2020, T21 outlines how Government, including Local Government and industry, will work together on four tourism priorities:

1. Growing demand for travel to Tasmania;
2. Expanding air and sea access;
3. Investing in quality tourism infrastructure; and
4. Building capability, capacity and community.

The concept of a visitor economy is new to many of those outside the tourism sector but we all play a role. The visitor economy concept accepts that visitors spend money throughout the State regardless of the purpose of their visit (whether it be for pleasure, business, family and friends), increasing demand for services, goods, capital investments and labour. And these benefits flow well beyond the tourism sector.

The statistics are impressive. Currently tourism contributes around \$2.3 billion a year to the Tasmanian economy; provides 15,000 direct jobs and a further 22,500 indirect jobs across a diverse range of industry sectors¹. Most visitors to

Tasmania are Australians but, with a predicted growth in international tourism Australia-wide, Tasmania needs to be poised to leverage the opportunities.

In the T21 strategy, Local Government is seen as a key player in meeting the priority areas of quality visitor infrastructure and in building capability, capacity and community. This aligns with what research in other states is finding out about Local Government and tourism. Not only is Local Government often at the coalface of tourism delivery but it is the anchor for other spheres of government, industry and the community in many tourism spaces.

While there is not a direct statutory role for Local Government related to tourism, increasingly councils are seeing this as a high priority area of business and are becoming more strategic in their considerations of this emerging role. Councils are already working collaboratively with their neighbours, their regions and with other stakeholders in building capability and outcomes in the tourism space. However, we know more can be done. In going forward, there will be a role for State Government, LGAT and the regional Local Government authorities related to improving collaboration and strategies; developing private investment opportunities; assisting with marketing and events development; education and training; and appropriate funding. A key focus will be on ensuring tourism is a sustainable industry, limiting the negative social and environmental impacts.

As the Western Australian Local Government Association states, "To make the most of its potential, managing the challenges in the dynamic context in which tourism exists is imperative. This can only happen with true collaboration between all spheres of government, industry, stakeholders and the community – a sentiment mentioned very often and much less often followed through. It takes planning, time and dedication towards a common purpose."

Photography courtesy of Tourism Tasmania and Alastair Bett

¹ From T21 Website <http://www.t21.net.au/>





Planning Reform Progressing

DION LESTER, POLICY DIRECTOR
Local Government Association of Tasmania

A key election commitment of the State Government was further reform of the planning system to make it “fairer, faster, cheaper and simpler”. The reform process includes:

- One single, statewide planning scheme prepared by an expert Planning Reform Taskforce;
- Shorter assessment timeframes and streamlined approvals via one set of approval documents;
- Overhaul of major projects approvals, including in-principle approvals;
- Ministerial call-in powers for projects that make a significant economic contribution;
- More State policies; and
- Cracking down on third party appeals via limitations on who can appeal, changes to the fees to appeals and also how costs are awarded.

The legislation to reform the planning system has been introduced in two parts. The first stage involved amendments in late 2014 to the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) that provided a faster process for declaring the Interim Planning Schemes, consistency for amending planning schemes and the introduction of shorter assessment timeframes for permitted applications (from 42 days to 28 days).

The second stage involves an amendment Bill, currently before Parliament, to provide the framework for the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, which will be implemented by the development of statewide planning scheme provisions currently being drafted by the Planning Reform Taskforce.

The proposed changes include new parts for the making and amending of State Planning Provisions and Local Provisions Schedules, which collectively will form the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. In many respects, the State Planning Provisions reflect what is currently in LUPAA for Planning Directives but with improvements, such as a requirement for a public exhibition process of the draft provisions and a

formal review by the Minister every five years. Likewise, the Local Provisions Schedules are very similar in process to what currently exists in the *Act* for the preparation of a planning scheme.

Additional proposed changes include: reducing the timeframe for assessment of permitted use and development applications from 28 to 21 days (with the introduction of a 14-day ‘stop clock’ mechanism where there is a referral to TasWater); provision of clearer transitional arrangements for existing use rights where no permit was required under the previous scheme; and a mechanism for lapsing applications where additional information is not provided by the applicant within five years.

LGAT recognises the benefits to Local Government, offered by the proposed Tasmanian Planning Scheme, with the establishment of consistent statewide planning provisions alongside a mechanism to account for local variance. However, we do not support the reduction in timeframe for assessment of permitted applications and made representation to the Legislative Council accordingly. In response to feedback, the Legislative Council has made some minor amendments to the Bill. Importantly, these included removing the clauses that would reduce permitted development application timeframes to 21 days, so the current 28 days will remain.

The changes to LUPAA as a result of the current Bill are to enable drafting and approval of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. The impact on Local Government’s ability to provide good, local planning will ultimately depend on the content of the State provisions and the degree to which local provisions may deviate. This will not be known until the final content of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is resolved mid-2016. The remainder of the Government’s Planning Reform agenda is expected to be progressively rolled out over the next 12-18 months.

LGAT Welcomes New President

Mayor Doug Chipman of the Clarence City Council was announced the new President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on 8 September.

As one of four people contesting the position, Mayor Chipman was honoured and excited to receive the vote of support from his Local Government peers and praised those who had nominated for the role, highlighting the regard in which the position is held and the importance the sector places upon it.

Mayor Chipman paid tribute to Acting President, Mayor Daryl Quilliam who capably led the organisation following the sudden death of former President, Barry Jarvis. Mayor Quilliam will continue in the role of Vice President.

“This is a time of significant proposed reform to the sector and I intend to ensure the voice of Local Government is heard clearly by those in power,” Mayor Chipman said. “I would like to see LGAT on the front foot in regard to issues such as planning reform, amalgamations, shared services and financial reform.”

Mayor Chipman was elected as Alderman to Clarence City Council in 2000, as Deputy Mayor in 2007 and as Mayor in 2011. Mayor Chipman is a 7th generation Tasmanian who returned to the State after 36 years full-time service of his country in the Royal Australian Air Force, reaching the rank of Air Commodore.



Ministerial Appointment Welcomed



Newly appointed Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP

The September appointment of the Hon Paul Fletcher MP as Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects has been welcomed by the Australian Local Government sector.

ALGA President, Mayor Troy Pickard, said the appointment has elevated community priorities to the Federal level and illustrates the importance of preserving and strengthening the partnership between Federal and Local Government to ensure the sustainability of local communities. “We’re pleased to see the appointment of a Federal Minister to specifically oversee Local Government matters and look forward to building on the existing relationship between the Commonwealth and Local Government with Mr Fletcher,” Mayor Pickard said.

“As the third tier of government, and the level of government closest to the community, a strong partnership with the Australian Government ensures the continued and consistent coordination of national policies at the local level to deliver positive outcomes for Australian communities. “A Federal partnership with, and investment in Local Government will assist in generating improved economic outcomes for the nation by driving growth and opportunity at the local and regional level, improving productivity, and improving equity and resilience for individuals and communities.”

ALGA is seeking the support of the new Local Government Minister for its call to end the freeze to the indexation of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), the general purpose funding provided to councils by the Federal Government to strengthen Local Government’s capacity to provide communities with essential services.

TasWater Innovators Celebrate Success at WorkSafe Awards

The winners of the Tasmanian WorkSafe Awards were announced on 26 October, with TasWater taking out awards for three categories and the overall prize.

Haydn Charlton, Mathew Loone and Mark Richardson were recognised with the *Best Workplace Health and Safety Initiative Award*; Greg Slore received the *Workplace Health and Safety Leadership Award*; and TasWater's Health and Wellbeing Program won the *Beyond Compliance Award*.

The *Best Workplace Health and Safety Initiative Award* was presented for a new invention that makes it easier to clear blocked drains and guards against workplace injuries. When TasWater crew members are required to operate a vacuum hose in pits and wells, they find the work challenging and potentially dangerous.

In looking for a safer way to perform the task, a team of three water and sewerage staff in Launceston developed and designed a vac truck snorkel which uses a suction cleaner to empty sewer lines, eliminating the need for someone to enter the confined space. It is now operational in TasWater's Launceston works area and plans are underway to patent the snorkel and extend its use statewide.

TasWater CEO, Michael Brewster, said the development of the snorkel is a good example of how crews on the ground have the skills and insight into the work they do. "The team have identified an issue and developed a responsible solution," he said.



(L-R) Winners of the *Best Workplace Health and Safety Initiative Award* - Haydn Charlton, Mat Loone and Mark Richardson of TasWater, who developed and designed a vac truck snorkel which eliminates a potential serious health and safety issue when pumping out pits and pump wells

Tassie Councillor Honoured at Rural Women's Awards

Tasmanian hazelnut farmer and successful businesswoman, Cllr Carol Bracken of West Tamar Council, was announced as the Tasmanian winner and national runner-up for the RIRDC Rural Women's Award on 9 September.

Finalists in this year's awards included businesswomen, community leaders and farmers using innovative approaches to educate the Australian community about agriculture, or to develop emerging industries and markets.

The RIRDC Rural Women's Awards provide rural women leaders with financial and professional support and training, and access to a network of mentors and development opportunities. Cllr Bracken will use the \$10,000 bursary to continue to build her knowledge and skills in hazelnut production, and to develop and evaluate business models for marketing hazelnut products. She will also run a series of regional workshops and tutorials for women starting up businesses to help them develop project management and other business skills.

For full details of the RIRDC Rural Women's Awards, please visit <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/rural-women%27s-award>.

Cllr Carol Bracken of West Tamar Council - State Winner and National Runner-up of the RIRDC Rural Women's Award



Formalising Collaboration between Local Government Peak Bodies

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) has entered into a formal agreement with Local Government Managers Australia - Tasmania (LGMA) to ensure that the current, strongly collaborative approach is embedded, strengthened and secured for the future.

The President's and CEO's of LGMA and LGAT respectively - Karen Hampton, Pamela Crawford, Mayor Doug Chipman and Dr Katrena Stephenson, signed this first MOU at the LGMA Tasmania Conference Dinner on 15 October.

"The MOU allows us to formalise the relationship between the two organisations which support Local Government in Tasmania," said LGAT President, Mayor Doug Chipman. "We will still recognise and support the independent autonomy of each organisation but look at what things might be better tackled together."

"It will ensure shared understanding of issues, provide clarity about our organisational roles and strengthen the collective voice of Local Government," said LGMA Tas President, Karen Hampton. "Both LGAT and LGMA Tasmania are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for the Local Government sector and the stakeholders that make up that sector," she said.

Local Government Managers Australia is the leading professional association representing managers and aspiring managers working in the Local Government sector across Australia. Part of a federation making up the national organisation, LGMA Tasmania is an independent body representing over 230 members in the State. LGMA provides professional development opportunities and training to its members and conducts an annual conference for Local Government professionals and associates, as well as management excellence awards.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania has been the voice of Local Government to other governments, interested stakeholders and the wider community for over 100 years. The Association works to protect the interests

and rights of councils, to promote the efficient operation of Local Government, and to foster strategic and beneficial relationships. LGAT has a statutory role in: representing the interests and rights of councils in Tasmania on matters affecting the Local Government sector; promoting efficient and effective Local Government; and providing services to member councils, councillors and employees of council.



(L-R) LGMA President, Karen Hampton and LGAT President, Mayor Doug Chipman formalise the partnership between the two organisations

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View of the proposed multi-purpose building from Rooke Street, as part of Devonport's Living City project

Living City Project Set to Revitalise North West Tasmania

Devonport City Council's Living City - the largest urban renewal project ever undertaken in regional Tasmania - is set to transform the North West region through the creation of new tourism opportunities, food experiences and business prospects.

The long-anticipated project is expected to inject \$112 million into the North West economy annually, creating 830 new, on-going, full-time direct jobs and significantly more indirect jobs upon completion.

Since 2010, Living City has progressed through a number of phases, including research and scoping, community consultation around the key principles and finally, the adoption of the Living City Master Plan by Council in September 2014. Implementation of the Master Plan will occur in stages, with specific projects rolling out over the next 5-10 years.

Stage 1 of Living City involves the creation of a new multi-purpose civic building, a food pavilion, market square and a multi-storey car park, with a project value of approximately \$60-\$70 million. The multi-purpose building will feature an 800-seat conference centre along with LINC, Service Tasmania, Council and other community services.

In May, Council secured \$10 million in funding towards Stage 1 of Living City, through the Australian Government's National Stronger Regions Fund and since this time, Council has continued negotiations with the State Government, as well as the preferred conference centre operator and other commercial tenants. Community consultation has guided the project to-date, with the proposed plans for Stage 1 put on public exhibition in July and community feedback guiding the continued, detailed design work.

Devonport Mayor, Ald Steve Martin said the vision for the food pavilion is to showcase local and regional Tasmanian produce in a creative market environment and encourage visitors coming off the Spirit of Tasmania to visit the city centre and experience our region's local produce. "It is also about giving visitors a reason to stay longer in the Cradle Coast region, exploring our many wonderful attractions," Mayor Martin said.

With construction set to commence in early 2016, subject to finalising the funding model and securing all necessary approvals, it is anticipated the first stage will be operational by late 2017.

NEW FACILITIES AT PEMBROKE PARK A WINNER

Sorell Council held the official opening of Stage 1 developments at Pembroke Park on 30 September, with Senator David Bushy, Mayor Kerry Vincent and Craig Martin, Deputy Director of Communities Sport and Recreation on hand to officially open the newly finished project.

Local sporting clubs and community groups ran sports activities and games, and the Lions Club of Sorell ran a community BBQ. The event drew a large crowd who enjoyed the new facilities and activities on offer. Pembroke Park now provides high-demand sport and recreation facilities for locals and visitors alike.

The Stage 1 works at Pembroke Park included the:

- Construction of a soccer field and installation of training standard lighting;

- Construction of four netball courts, including fencing and match standard lighting;
- Installation of a one megalitre underground storage tank to help irrigate ovals and prevent stormwater run-off into nearby Orielson Lagoon;
- Construction of dedicated amenities building to house change rooms, toilets and umpire rooms; and
- Extension of Little Athletics facilities including upgrade of long jump pits, installation of irrigation, and tree screening.

Works at Pembroke Park were supported by funding from the Federal Government, Tasmanian Government and Sorell Council. Mayor Kerry Vincent said the opportunities these works has provided to the community are many, not to mention the positive economic flow-on effect for local businesses from increased visitor numbers on weekends.



Stage 1 works at Sorell's Pembroke Park are now complete

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.*



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going places

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Members of the Circular Head, King Island and Waratah-Wynyard Council Joint Audit Panel are (from left) Paul Arnold, Lisa Dixon, Paul McCormick and John Howard

Joint Audit Panel Reduces Duplication

Circular Head, King Island and Waratah-Wynyard Councils have established a joint Audit Panel, a move that is set to strengthen resource-sharing arrangements between the three councils, reduce costs and duplication, and enable the councils to continue benefiting and learning from each other.

The Audit Panel is made up of people with extensive experience in Local Government, financial management, strategic asset management, risk management, occupational health and safety and human resources management. Former General Manager of Burnie City and Circular Head Councils, Paul Arnold, has been appointed Chair of the Audit Panel. He is joined by Lisa Dixon - a CPA qualified accountant, John Howard - a nationally and internationally recognised expert in contemporary strategic asset management, and Paul McCormick who brings specialist skills in risk management, occupational health and safety and human resources management. Cllr Ashley Popowski will also join the Panel when it considers Circular Head matters.

Circular Head Council General Manager, Tony Smart said the Audit Panels' experience will ensure that their oversight into the three councils' Strategic Plans, Long-term Financial Plans, Strategic Asset Management Plans and Annual Financial Statements will be thorough, independent and help to offer reassurance to our communities.

Waratah-Wynyard General Manager, Michael Stretton, said the joint Audit Panel is an effective precursor to the work we will be undertaking with the three councils and West Coast Council as part of the Sustainable Murchison 2040 Community Plan.

The Audit Panel members have been appointed for a two-year period and are bound by an Audit Charter, staff Code of Conduct and council policies. Panel members are also required to comply with all legislative obligations that apply to Local Government.



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Volunteering Tasmania's EV CREW service provides a coordinated system to match volunteers' skills with the needs of organisations supporting emergency recovery efforts.

Photography by Vicki Campbell

Directing Volunteers when they're Needed Most

With summer upon us, government agencies and community organisations are preparing for the fire season ahead. For the first time, the Emergency Volunteering CREW (Community Response to Extreme Weather) service will be on standby in Tasmania.

Developed by Volunteering Queensland in 2007, the EV CREW service recognises the community goodwill that follows a disaster and provides a coordinated system to match volunteers' skills, availability and location with the needs of organisations supporting recovery efforts. Volunteers register through the EV CREW website (before, during, or after an emergency) and are then matched if, and when their help is needed.

Frequently activated in Queensland following floods and cyclones, the service channels goodwill and provides surge capacity. EV CREW directs spontaneous volunteers to organisations that deliver strategic support to affected communities.

Peak body, Volunteering Tasmania has received funding through the National Disaster Resilience Grant Program, Emergency Volunteering Fund to implement the system in the State.

"Volunteers play a vital role in disaster recovery but coordination is essential," said Volunteering Tasmania's CEO, Adrienne Picone. "EV CREW is a volunteer management service that supports organisations involved in the recovery, finds volunteers with the right skills, in the right place."

When the State Government makes a request for assistance, an EV CREW communications centre will be established by Volunteering Tasmania. Volunteers will be connected with organisations needing assistance to deliver disaster recovery

services. Tasks may include the removal of burned fence lines, sorting donations, preparing orders of food and relief supplies, and delivering fodder for stock or injured wildlife to carers.

Relief organisations may seek volunteers for specialised services including counsellors, social workers and health professionals. The expertise of qualified tradespeople may be directed to help a local community re-build. In the longer term, volunteers may be needed for local garden restoration initiatives, landscape re-vegetation projects and strategic environmental weed control. Specialised skills and knowledge can be listed during registration so volunteers' expertise and interests can be utilised.

The implementation of EV CREW in Tasmania follows Queensland and the ACT. Victoria is currently rolling out a pilot program in the region of Geelong.

Tasmania Fire Service (TFS), State Emergency Services (SES) and St John Ambulance will not be using volunteers through EV CREW as extensive training is required for roles with these organisations. Those interested in volunteering opportunities with emergency services should see 'Join, Learn, Be Ready' at www.emergencyvolunteers.tas.gov.au/.

For more information on EV CREW, visit www.emergencyvolunteering.com.au/ or contact Margie Jenkin at Volunteering Tasmania on (03) 6231 5550, or at MargieJ@volunteeringtas.org.au.



Presenting Federal Braddon Member of Parliament Brett Whiteley (centre) with the Certificate of Appreciation are (from left) Clr Trevor Spinks, Deputy Mayor Jan Bishop, Clr Ashley Popowski, Clr Betty Kay, Mayor Daryl Quilliam and Clr Nakore Popowski of Circular Head Council

Federal Government Assistance Recognised

Federal Braddon MP, Brett Whiteley, was presented a Certificate of Appreciation by Circular Head Mayor Daryl Quilliam in recognition of the assistance provided to the region by the Federal Government.

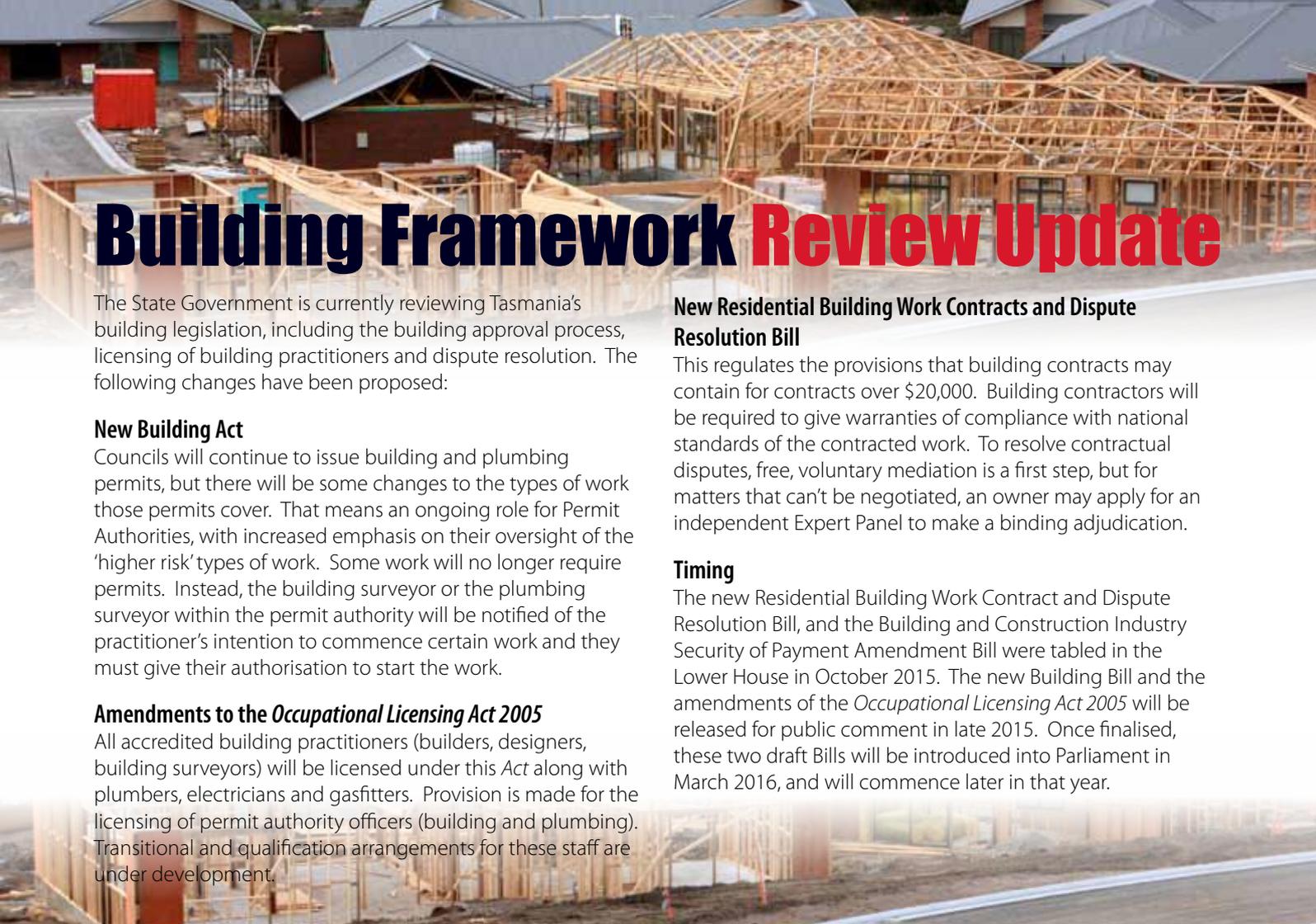
Mayor Quilliam said beyond the recent upgrades to the Smithton Recreation Ground and Smithton Turf, the Federal Government last year provided more than \$540,000 in Roads to Recovery funding which helped us deliver on rehabilitation and widening of West Montagu, Woolnorth and Irishtown

roads. "On top of this, Council also received more than \$4.46 million in Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), which goes a long way to helping us deliver a range of projects and services for the community," he said.

"With increasing costs, to deliver our services, it is vital that we continue to work in partnership with all levels of government to see projects come to fruition in our community," Mayor Quilliam said. "Funding from the Federal Government goes a long way to ensuring we can do great things in our region."

Survey Shows Urgent Need for Regional Innovation

The results of the Tasmanian Regional Innovation Survey are now available in a report which identifies how innovative each region is now, how well placed each region is to adapt to a globally competitive environment and how capable the region's stakeholders are to create positive, innovative change. The 2015 survey shows that up to 90% of people in the regions of Tasmania see a strong urgency for significant, positive change in the economy, society and government, but only 22% see any evidence of a regional innovation purpose/vision/goal. The results show tourism, agriculture/forestry/fishing, knowledge services, government services, arts/recreation and manufacturing as being the industries with the most economic potential. Innovators, the community and government are invited to use the free report as a way to build greater innovation in their region. To obtain a copy, contact owentilbury@bofa.com.au, or call 0407 501 287.



Building Framework Review Update

The State Government is currently reviewing Tasmania's building legislation, including the building approval process, licensing of building practitioners and dispute resolution. The following changes have been proposed:

New Building Act

Councils will continue to issue building and plumbing permits, but there will be some changes to the types of work those permits cover. That means an ongoing role for Permit Authorities, with increased emphasis on their oversight of the 'higher risk' types of work. Some work will no longer require permits. Instead, the building surveyor or the plumbing surveyor within the permit authority will be notified of the practitioner's intention to commence certain work and they must give their authorisation to start the work.

Amendments to the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005*

All accredited building practitioners (builders, designers, building surveyors) will be licensed under this Act along with plumbers, electricians and gasfitters. Provision is made for the licensing of permit authority officers (building and plumbing). Transitional and qualification arrangements for these staff are under development.

New Residential Building Work Contracts and Dispute Resolution Bill

This regulates the provisions that building contracts may contain for contracts over \$20,000. Building contractors will be required to give warranties of compliance with national standards of the contracted work. To resolve contractual disputes, free, voluntary mediation is a first step, but for matters that can't be negotiated, an owner may apply for an independent Expert Panel to make a binding adjudication.

Timing

The new Residential Building Work Contract and Dispute Resolution Bill, and the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Amendment Bill were tabled in the Lower House in October 2015. The new Building Bill and the amendments of the *Occupational Licensing Act 2005* will be released for public comment in late 2015. Once finalised, these two draft Bills will be introduced into Parliament in March 2016, and will commence later in that year.

North West Resource-Sharing Arrangements Under Review

Circular Head, Kentish, Latrobe and Waratah-Wynyard Councils will be undergoing a review of their current resource-sharing arrangements to help in growing, enhancing and refining the current arrangements as part of the current Local Government reform process. The councils have engaged the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) to undertake the review.

While Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard and Kentish and Latrobe Councils' resource-sharing arrangements are not eligible for funding under the State Government's reform process, the councils believe there are a number of benefits in conducting the study.

Kentish Mayor Don Thwaites said the review was about refining the processes in place to make arrangements at the councils more robust. "There have certainly been many successes for the councils in having resource-sharing in place," Mayor Thwaites said. "This review will allow all four councils to analyse what has worked and why, as well as take a strategic approach to areas for improvement."

Circular Head Mayor Daryl Quilliam said the study would also help all four councils to provide evidence of the real benefits

of resource-sharing. "The review will look at all four councils' current governance arrangements, including decision-making processes, and develop a framework for decision-making in the future, particularly in relation to how decisions are made for determining future areas for resource-sharing," Mayor Quilliam said.

Waratah-Wynyard Mayor Robby Walsh said the four councils believed that resource-sharing service arrangements are in the best interest of ratepayers. "In comparison to amalgamation, resource-sharing allows councils to improve levels of service, while maintaining local representation," Mayor Walsh said.

It is proposed that each of the four participating councils contribute \$10,000 (+ GST) each to fund the project and, given the national interest in a study of this nature, the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) has indicated it would cover additional costs. The project is to be completed by the end of February 2016.

Local Government Leadership for Recognition

Across Tasmania, local councils are getting behind the RECOGNISE movement and showing support for constitutional change.

In recent years Burnie, Devonport, Hobart and Launceston local councils have hosted community forums and discussions to consider how recognition of Australia's First Peoples can help forge a more united future, with fairness and respect at the heart of the nation's highest legal document.

In December 2014, Burnie City Council formally pledged its support by adopting the RECOGNISE Campaign Partners Network Group Charter. Burnie City Council Mayor Anita Dow said the City of Burnie is proud to lend its support to the RECOGNISE movement. "We want to see all Australians have a more inclusive founding document for the nation, and one that has no room for racial discrimination in it," she said.

In March 2015, the City of Hobart helped bring to life the participatory youth street art project - the RECOGNISE Paste Up - in collaboration with the University of Tasmania and the Tasmania University Union. Many councils have also expressed interest in the Journey to Recognition Relay and will host events when it reaches Tasmania in 2016.

Local councils are encouraged to support RECOGNISE by:

- Adopting the Campaign Partners Network Group Charter;
- Hosting events to raise awareness for constitutional change. Events could include office morning teas, workshops and community events;

- Displaying the RECOGNISE widget on your website and incorporating the RECOGNISE email signature to spread awareness;
- Promoting RECOGNISE through internal channels such as your intranet and newsletters;
- Actively participating in RECOGNISE social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) by liking, sharing and commenting on our content; and
- Encouraging staff members to attend Journey to Recognition events in their local area.

RECOGNISE can support your Council by:

- Providing briefings to your Board and senior management;
- Sending promotional materials such as flyers, posters, badges and stickers for your office and events;
- Providing RECOGNISE ambassadors to speak at your events;
- Supplying our widget, badge and email signature icon which can be tailored to include your organisation's logo; and
- Promoting local activities in support of RECOGNISE.

If your Council would like to get involved and support the RECOGNISE campaign, email info@recognise.org.au, or visit www.recognise.org.au.



Recognise Youth ambassadors at Hobart's Paste Up project

iplan - Tasmania's Digital Planning System

Tasmania's statewide digital planning system is fast becoming a reality. A joint State and Local Government project is bringing development information and services together on a single website at www.iplan.tas.gov.au.



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Currently you can use iplan to search online the State's new planning schemes, view property data and planning maps from the LIST, and access information and documents relating to planning scheme amendments.

Secure systems are now in place to manage, amend and publish the planning scheme data through the new iplan system hosted by the State Government, along with the upgraded LIST system.

The new planning enquiry service will translate the complexity of a planning scheme into a customised planning report. Each planning report is unique for a particular development and property address, and can be generated online anytime. The public will also be able to track the progress of development applications, building applications and planning scheme amendments using the online application tracking service.

The most significant outcomes of the project will come from the services and processes which can be built on the foundation of digital planning rules and dynamic planning maps. This is about the integration of information and services relating to planning and development across State and Local Government. The expansion of development related services through the iplan project provides a key opportunity for achieving resource-sharing and decreased administrative burden across councils, which will benefit ratepayers and the development community.

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Council takes the lead with Online Safety Induction Training

Recently George Town Council has taken the next step in its approach to training and development for contractor, volunteer and employee induction training, resulting in a best practice strategy for managing work health and safety for workers.

Based on a concept that was first developed in South Australia by the Northern Region Training Group, the induction training program aligned very closely with George Town

Council's safety objectives and its commitment to providing a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health and safety of all workers.

The online option/s which can be accessed through Council's website allow for a more consistent and standardised induction which can be done anywhere, anytime by the person via computer, iPod or smart phone. Results are instant and a uniquely numbered Certificate of Completion can be obtained to enable a quicker and easier induction process. The savings to Council have been positive and the convenience to contractors, volunteers and employees has been well received.

George Town Council has been very active in the space of work health and safety; therefore taking inductions online had to be the next logical step to continue to underpin ongoing safety initiatives to Council's safety objectives. Delivering the online approach ensures that all workers now have the same opportunity to undertake a training session, receiving the same information as all other workers in a consistent way.

Information from the inductions is captured into a database which enables Council to keep electronic records giving greater record-keeping capacity and providing a better overall safety management process.

The safety induction program has been a success and the new streamlined approach has improved productivity and consistency across Council's workforce and worksites.



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Councils' Code of Conduct: Forgettable or Valuable?

NIC D'ALESSANDRO, MANAGER, MISCONDUCT PREVENTION
Integrity Commission

As the sphere of government closest to the community, Local Government must balance the diverse interests of many stakeholders. This means navigating a range of complex issues, including ethical dilemmas and decisions.

Ethical issues are often 'grey' and are not simply matters where right and wrong are easy to determine. Without further guidance, councillors and staff are left to make ethical decisions using their personal judgement only. Decisions on any given ethical issue can vary widely between individuals and this can raise misconduct risks.

Councillors and staff need tools that provide guidance and this is where the value of a Code of Conduct becomes clear. Well-designed codes provide common standards on how councillors and staff should conduct themselves. This helps remove the guesswork from decisions and actions, and informs the community of what they should expect from individuals.

A Code of Conduct sets the standard by which a person's conduct can be judged. For example, when the Integrity Commission receives an allegation of misconduct, our investigators will first review the council's Code of Conduct to determine if there has been a potential breach.

Code/s of Conduct should therefore be among the most valuable documents that a council has. Councillors and staff should be able to access the code that applies to them and readily apply it in their roles.

But this is not always the case. We see situations where the code and associated policies may be hard to access and/or are unused. This happens because, for example, the code doesn't reflect the council's values; it has become excessively large, legalistic, or hard to read; it's been left to languish and isn't part of how the council works; or it's not seen as the 'yardstick' by which behaviour is actually judged.

So, what can a council do to change this? These basic strategies can make a difference:

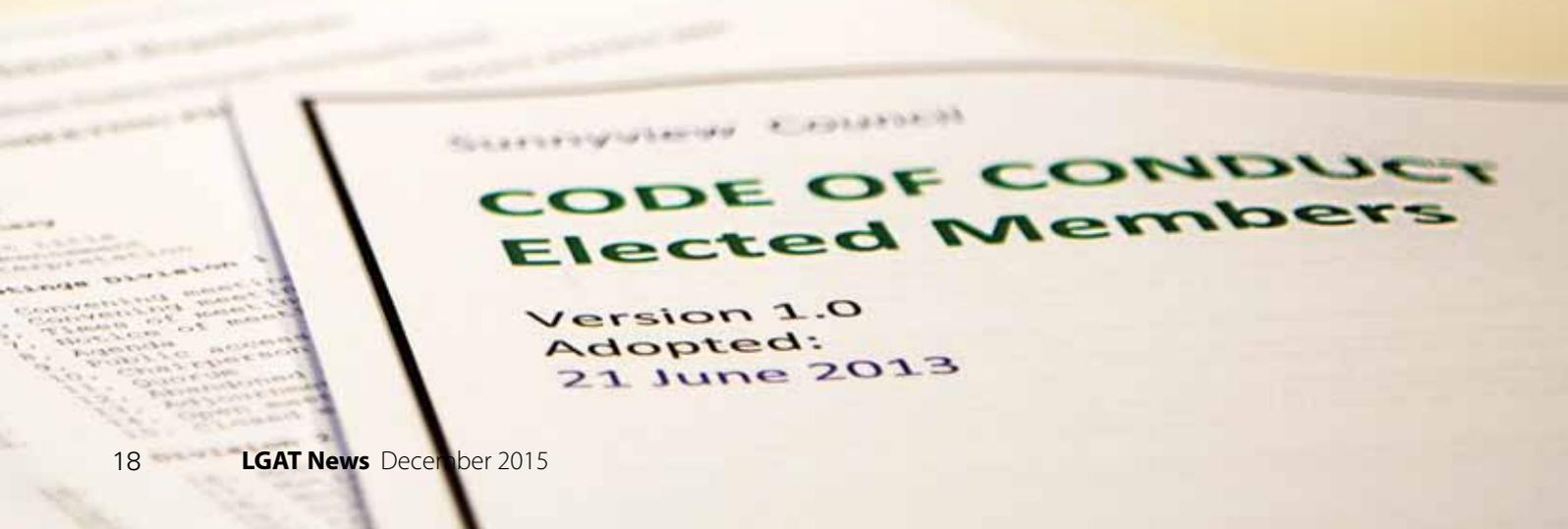
- Put the code where everyone will see it – e.g. on your website and intranet;
- Educate and communicate with your people about the code and the value of ethics and behaviour;
- Review the code and policies regularly;
- Streamline the code and policies so they are succinct and easy to understand;
- Keep references to the code (from handbooks, policies etc.) up-to-date.

Amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993*, which will come into force in 2016, include a new model Code of Conduct for councillors and stronger sanctions in relation to breaches. These changes provide a strategic opportunity for councils to review how their code and policies function.

Our work has clearly shown that it is not just councillors who deal with ethical issues. Council staff also must grapple with ethical decisions and consider how they behave and act. A Code of Conduct for council staff isn't mandatory, however we recommend that councils develop and implement a code to provide clear, ethical standards for staff, and to better manage ethical risks.

It's vital that councillors and staff are acting in line with their Code of Conduct and policies. By doing so, they protect both themselves and council, and can be confident that they are acting in the best interests of the community. These elements, although not easily calculated in dollar terms, are of high value to each council and community.

The Integrity Commission is available to assist councils with review, implementation and education on Codes of Conduct. For assistance, call 1300 720 289, or email mper@integrity.tas.gov.au.



Councils Recognised for Best Practice in Creating Healthier Communities

Two Tasmanian councils have been recognised with a 2015 Heart Foundation Local Government Award for initiatives that create healthy communities.

Kingborough Council was announced Tasmanian State Winner in the *Councils with populations greater than 25,000* category, having introduced a number of initiatives aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of their community. These include:

- Four Seasons in Kingborough – a multi-faceted program that provides events and activities that promote community health and social connections;
- Burwood Park Playground – a nature based playground development that stimulates agility development and exploration for children in a challenging and nurturing environment; and the
- Working Well Program – a package of talks, workshops and activities provided to staff to encourage health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Council has built its commitment to health and wellbeing into its Strategic Plan (2015-2025) which aims for Kingborough to enjoy a "safe, healthy and supportive community."

Northern Midlands Council was named Tasmanian State Winner in the *Councils with populations between 5,000 and 25,000* category. Council has introduced a number of health and wellbeing initiatives within the community including:

- Upgrading the Longford Cycling Track;
- Working in partnership with Health Revival Longford to rejuvenate the Community Sports Centre; and
- Creating the Longford Walk Through History Walk.

Northern Midlands Mayor David Downie said Council is proud to have worked with the Northern Midlands cycling community to restore the Longford velodrome to its former glory as a safe off-road riding option for cyclists of all abilities. "The amazing transformation of the Longford Community Sports Centre by Health Revival Longford was further recognised recently when the business owner Leah Coker-Williams was awarded the TCCI's Small Business Employer of the Year Award," Mayor Downie said.

Now in their 23rd year, the Heart Foundation Local Government Awards provide an opportunity for councils across Australia to celebrate their achievements and receive recognition for their commitment to creating healthier communities. Heart Foundation Tasmania CEO, Graeme Lynch, said Kingborough Council and Northern Midlands Council have shown exceptional commitment to this cause.



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Participants get moving at the launch of 'Live Clarence'

Photography by David Bellamy

LIVE CLARENCE: HELPING RESIDENTS GET ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Clarence City Council has launched a new website, *Live Clarence*, to help residents get healthy, active and involved in their community.

Live Clarence is a vibrant hub of health and wellbeing information, services, resources, events and activities found in and around Clarence. The website is enhanced by social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to connect people to information, tips, tools and activities.

Mayor of Clarence City Council, Alderman Doug Chipman said that *Live Clarence* will make it easier to find information on what is happening in Clarence. "We want the website to be the go-to health and wellbeing resource for Clarence," Mayor Chipman said.

The *Live Clarence* initiative was first identified in Council's Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2018. The working group involved representatives from Council, the Department of Health and Human Services and the community.

"Being active, involved and connected with others enhances our wellbeing. *Live Clarence* will make a positive difference in achieving these aims," Mayor Chipman said.

View the *Live Clarence* website at www.liveclarence.com.au

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Fire training at Queenstown Recreation Ground



A Focus on **Workplace Health and Safety**

West Coast Council employees embraced a month of activities during Worksafe Month, held in October, focusing on increasing safety awareness and encouraging healthy activities.

The activities kicked off with fire extinguisher training, conducted by volunteers from the Queenstown Fire Brigade at the Queenstown Recreation Ground, with the majority of staff participating. An early morning walk to the stunning Hogarth Falls in Strahan followed by a BBQ Breakfast in People's Park was a hit, and was the first time many staff had experienced this hidden West Coast gem. A BBQ lunch was also held at the Administration Office.

After staff identified increased safety risks for those dealing with animals, a number of employees undertook animal control training, covering appropriate handling and reporting procedures. Several staff also completed first aid training to ensure adequate numbers of staff were qualified across Council depots.

Council's Employee Assistance Program provider, Choose Life Services, gave a presentation to staff regarding the program and how to access assistance, and a fire drill was undertaken at the Council Administration Office - a good test for fire wardens and new staff to ensure induction processes and emergency procedures were to standard.

Encouraging active lifestyles, several staff also participated in the Burnie 10 event and two teams represented Council at the annual Beach to Bay Fun Run in Strahan, which Council proudly sponsored.

The month of activities wrapped up with staff receiving a gift bag which included Eating Well lunchtime recipes for work, safety sunglasses, Active Minute Exercise booklets, a Time for Break brochure and a Council branded cooler bag, hat and key ring.

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Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing for Building Contractors

The Australian Government has introduced amendments to the *Building Code 2013* that will require contractors on taxpayer-funded construction sites to have a comprehensive policy for mandatory drug and alcohol testing.

From 16 October, in addition to the requirements they already have under the *Building Code*, building contractors or building industry participants subject to the *Building Code 2013* must include in its Work Health Safety and Rehabilitation Management Plan a fitness for work policy to manage alcohol and other drugs in the workplace, which would apply to all persons engaged to perform building work on a project.

This would apply for building work that is:

- The value of the Commonwealth's contribution to the project that includes the building work is at least \$5,000,000 and represents at least 50% of the total construction project value; or
- The Commonwealth's contribution to the project that includes the building work is at least \$10,000,000 (irrespective of its proportion of the total construction project value).

Fair Work Building and Construction will be responsible for auditing contractors to ensure those subject to the Code have in place a fitness for work policy that is compliant with the *Building Code*.



More information about the changes is available online at www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=92afcb1f-a68c-4ae5-bbae-b161244b0946.



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Watch out for **Wildlife**

We've all been there. It's Friday evening and you're in a hurry to get home after a busy week. The sun is setting and you're sitting on the speed limit as you round a bend through a patch of bushland. You're thinking about the weekend when, in the failing light, a dark shape appears in your headlights on the road ahead. Possum? Wallaby? Wombat? No – it's a Tasmanian devil, a species endangered from a deadly facial tumour disease and a species struggling to survive.

You're travelling too fast to avoid it and the devil becomes another roadkill casualty. Dark fur on a dark road makes the devil the hardest of Tasmania's wildlife to see at night. In the 2014-15 financial year, 317 individual devils were reported to the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program (STDP) as roadkill but the actual number of devils killed on our roads is far higher. The sad fact is that this death may have been avoided if you had remembered to slow down and watch out for wildlife between dusk and dawn - especially when driving on rural roads and roads through bushland.

It's a simple message that West Tamar Council, Latrobe Council and the Parks and Wildlife Service have joined forces to promote in support of the STDP. Following the roadkill deaths of a number of healthy devils released at Narawntapu National Park in September, all acted swiftly to help the STDP install signs to remind drivers in the region that devils may be around and of the need to slow down and watch out between dusk and dawn. These are simple actions that might save a life; simple actions that might save a species.

The Save the Tasmanian Devil Program would like to thank the West Tamar and Latrobe Councils for their support in promoting this important message to road users.

For further information about how you can help protect devils and other wildlife on Tasmania's roads, visit www.tassiedevil.com.au. Please report all devil roadkill to 0427 733 511. Find us on Facebook to keep up-to-date with progress of the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program.



Slow down and watch out between dusk and dawn - simple actions that might save a species

Photography courtesy of Oliver Gales and DPIPWE





Moulting Lagoon, Tasmania's largest and most significant wetland area, is home to 80% of the State's black swans

Photography by Eric Woehler and Valeria Ruoppolo, BirdLife Tasmania

Cross-agency Collaboration to Achieve Positive Outcomes for Tasmania's Largest Wetland

Local Government can play a key role in facilitating the collaborations and partnerships critical to achieving positive outcomes for wetlands of international importance such as Moulting Lagoon. Moulting Lagoon at the northern end of Great Oyster Bay on Tasmania's East Coast is the largest and most significant wetland area in Tasmania. Many businesses and landholders depend upon the health of this wetland to sustain their livelihood.

Located in the Glamorgan Spring Bay Municipal Area, Moulting Lagoon is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service and is one of 64 wetlands in Australia that have been recognised as internationally important under the Ramsar Convention. Australia was the first country to become a signatory to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The Convention takes its name from the Iranian city of Ramsar where the treaty was adopted in 1971. Moulting Lagoon supports an array of rare, vulnerable and endangered species of plants and animals.

For many years Glamorgan Spring Bay Council and the Glamorgan Spring Bay Natural Resource Management Committee (a Special Committee of the Council) have been working with stakeholders including public and private land managers to raise awareness of this unique wetland. Two Weeds of National Significance, gorse and African boxthorn pose a threat to Moulting Lagoon. Council has been working in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service and private land managers to source funding to undertake weed control works around the perimeter of the wetland to aid in

regeneration of native vegetation. Thirteen threatened plant species are found around the lagoon.

Moulting Lagoon is home to about 80% of Tasmania's black swans. The lagoon was named after the piles of swan feathers that can be seen along the shoreline when the swans undergo their annual moult. At different times of the year, the lagoon is also home to many other birds such as ducks, herons and egrets, plovers, grebes, cormorants, oystercatchers, gulls and terns, waders and birds of prey.

In partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service, Glamorgan Spring Bay Council and the Natural Resource Management Committee will continue to seek funding to raise awareness and to build on and maintain weed control works done in the past. Weed control always requires follow-up and monitoring, but it becomes less onerous over time.

The success to date of the weed control works and awareness raising has been made possible with the support of the Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Land Services, the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, the Australian Government, Wildcare Friends of Freycinet, BirdLife Tasmania, NRM South, Landcare Tasmania, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, private land managers and the local community.

For further information, contact Mel Kelly, Manager Natural Resources at Glamorgan Spring Bay Council on (03) 6256 4777, or email mel@freycinet.tas.gov.au.

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Record Level of Participation for Garage Sale Trail in Tasmania

Hundreds of Tasmanians hit the streets on Saturday, 24 October for the fifth annual Garage Sale Trail - a day of simultaneous garage sales across the country which aims to promote reuse, reduce landfill, build community connections and enable fundraising in a fun and social way.

The event was supported by 21 Tasmanian councils and 174 councils nationally. Tasmania achieved a record level of participation this year, with 814 stalls registered statewide, and more than 1,822,146 items listed for sale at an estimated value of \$1,531,745. Around 20% of the sales were fundraising for a cause and 27,001 new community connections were made via the day.

Councils got into the spirit, providing areas for car boot sales or for locals to hold group sales, or hosted their own sales

such as Glenorchy City Council at the Royal Hobart Show, Huon Valley Council at the Reuse Shop in Huonville, and Meander Valley Council partnered with the Deloraine Folk Museum.

On a per capita basis, Derwent Valley Council, emerged as the number one Municipal Area in the State, based on the number of stalls held, and ranked fifth on the national leaderboard.

Delivered in partnership with Federal, State and Local Government, the Garage Sale Trail has grown to become the Country's largest community and waste education event.



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Local Government Needed in Statewide Fuel Reduction Program

Local Government has a significant role to play in Tasmania's new \$28.5 million statewide Fuel Reduction Program, said State Fire Management Council Chair, Ian Sauer.

Mr Sauer said Local Government was involved in both conducting fuel reduction burns in their own area and could also join the Fuel Reduction Unit's (FRU) program of council workshops and community forums to raise awareness of fuel reduction burning. "Tasmania has a high bushfire risk and we all need to be involved in mitigating that risk, either by doing fuel reduction burns on council land, or our own land as private landowners," he said.

The Fuel Reduction Unit hosts community forums throughout the State to raise awareness of the new Fuel Reduction Program. The FRU will also host council workshops to inform

the Local Government sector of bushfire risk in their area and how to reduce that risk.

The Fuel Reduction Program conducts fuel reduction burns throughout the State in autumn and spring each year. The program, launched in March, is a cross-tenure program which aims to reduce bushfire fuel in identified areas of high bushfire risk.

The program involves the Tasmanian Fire Service, the Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Tasmania, local councils and private landowners.

For enquiries about a council workshop or community forum, email fru@fire.tas.gov.au, or phone FRU Program Coordinator, Louise Mendel, on (03) 6225 8522.



The Fuel Reduction Program aims to reduce bushfire fuel in identified areas of high bushfire risk

Launch of New-look National Pest and Disease Website

Finding information about exotic pest and disease incursions across Australia and what is being done to eradicate them has just become easier with the launch of the Australian Government's new-look Outbreak website. The online resource plays an important role in keeping people informed about outbreaks that could have major impacts on agricultural production as well as domestic and international markets. It also has information on

how governments and industries respond to exotic pest incursions or disease outbreaks. The website is searchable by state or territory, or by a particular pest or disease and can link through to local information. It also features interactive maps and its new design means it can be easily used on mobile phones and tablets.

To access the Outbreak website, visit www.outbreak.gov.au.

Bushfire Safety Campaign

– Preparation is Key

Two years on and the images of the devastating 2013 Dunalley bushfires are imprinted in the minds of many Tasmanians. With the aim of preventing such a tragedy from happening again, the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) has launched its 2015-2016 Bushfire Safety Campaign.



Intense bushfires can strike with little warning so it is very important that residents are not complacent. If you live in or near bushland, you and your home are at risk. A home or property is more likely to survive a bushfire if it is prepared properly.

The most important job is to create a defensible space - an area around your home where you have modified the vegetation and removed most flammable material to reduce the fire's radiant heat intensity. A well prepared space makes it much easier to defend your home and if you choose not to stay, it will help firefighters protect your home, or may even protect your home if firefighters cannot reach it.

As well as preparing your property, it is essential for people living in or near bushland to have a bushfire survival plan which details exactly how to prepare and what action to take if threatened by bushfire. Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) Acting Chief Officer, Gavin Freeman said writing and practicing a bushfire survival plan will help you think through the actions logically, give you something to refer to and can help control fear and anxiety if a bushfire breaks out nearby. "The plan must take into consideration the ages and physical capabilities of everyone in your household, including children and the elderly," he said.

"Once a Bushfire Survival Plan is in place, it is important for people to know what action to take when a bushfire approaches. People should decide well in advance of a bushfire whether they will leave or stay with their homes to defend them," Mr Freeman said. "There are two options when threatened by bushfire - leaving well before the fire arrives, or staying and defending a well prepared property. "Leaving early is always the safest option as staying to defend property during a bushfire always carries some risk of injury or death. When the fire danger ratings is 'catastrophic', you should not plan to defend your home under any circumstances," he warned.

The TFS is encouraging members of the community to identify a number of safe places to relocate to at very short notice if they are caught unaware by a bushfire, or the plan to defend their home fails. A nearby safer place could be a well prepared neighbour's home, a nearby ploughed paddock, a sports ground or a beach. "You should only rely on these places as a last resort," Mr Freeman said

For further information and to download your Bushfire Survival Plan Booklet, visit www.fire.tas.gov.au, or free call 1800 000 699.

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(From L-R) Representing councils participating in the Tasmanian Local Government Joint Venture are Mayor Tony Foster (Brighton), Mayor Roseanne Heyward (Tasman), Mayor Deidre Flint (Central Highlands), Mayor Tony Bisdee (Southern Midlands), Mayor Kerry Vincent (Sorell) and Mayor Peter Coad (Huon Valley). Absent: Mayor Kristie Johnstone (Glenorchy) and Mayor Martyn Evans (Derwent Valley).

Joint Venture Producing Significant Savings

A common services joint venture, established earlier this year by seven Tasmanian councils, is already generating significant benefits and is estimated to save the participating councils more than \$1 million this financial year.

The councils are providing and sharing common services such as planning, engineering, rating, finance, information technology, asset management, workplace health and safety and risk management.

Since the establishment of the Tasmanian Local Government Common Services Joint Venture Agreement in April, more than 4,700 hours of shared services have been exchanged between participating councils, with a net benefit of \$320,000. It is projected that 15,000 hours will be exchanged this financial year, providing savings in the order of \$1 million. The net benefits are achieved through the increased use of current council staff and from client councils employing common services within Local Government at a considerably lower cost than using external consultants.

Members of Joint Venture are: Brighton, Central Highlands, Glenorchy City, Huon Valley, Sorell, Southern Midlands and Tasman Councils. Glamorgan Spring Bay, Derwent Valley, West Coast and Flinders Island Councils also use the Joint Venture's services.

The initiative has also proved attractive interstate, with Litchfield Council in the Northern Territory joining the Tasmanian joint venture to cut costs and improve services to its ratepayers. Litchfield, with a population of 20,000, on the outskirts of Darwin, is expected to be the first of a number of Northern Territory councils to join the innovative Tasmanian venture.

For participating councils, the benefits go far beyond simply saving money. By sharing expertise, technology, equipment and facilities, the councils are providing

improved services for their communities, attracting and retaining skilled employees and bringing a new level of efficiency to Local Government. Importantly, all this is occurring without councils losing their individual identities, and ratepayers still have ready access to their local councillors.

The newly-appointed independent Chairman of the Joint Venture, Peter Murfett, said the impetus for the model had been provided by Local Government Minister, Hon Peter Gutwein MP. In encouraging councils to consider voluntary amalgamation, the Minister has prompted Local Government to seriously examine how it operates and how it can achieve greater efficiency to benefit ratepayers.

The model ticks all the boxes outlined by Minister Gutwein in his push for reform. It is very much in the best interests of ratepayers, provides improved services for the community, preserves and maintains local representation, and ensures that the financial status of the participating councils is strengthened.

The joint venture is not another level of bureaucracy. It does not employ staff directly. Instead, councils are charged for time the chief administrator and independent chairman spend administering and reporting on particular activities.

It effectively formalises previous ad hoc arrangements, enabling councils to simply and cost-effectively exchange services, strategically plan for resourcing requirements, invest as a group to reduce costs and deliver the most appropriate services to communities.



Women Disadvantaged when it comes to Super

NAOMI EDWARDS, CHAIR
Tasplan Super

Tasmanian women have significantly less super than their male counterparts. Just under half of Tasplan's 75,000 Tasmanian members are female, yet women only hold 43% of the super savings that the fund manages on behalf of its Tasmanian members.

The substantial gender super gap in Tasmanians' super can be largely attributed to the structure of Australia's super system. Tasplan wholeheartedly welcomes the Senate inquiry into the economic security for women in retirement.

On average, male Tasplan members have a 25% higher account balance than females. Men over 55 years old, enjoy an average balance that is 18% higher than women in the same age bracket. The news is no better for young women, with men aged under 25 similarly enjoying an average balance that is 18% higher than women of the same age.

The Senate inquiry will look at factors contributing to the gap such as the gender pay gap, women's caring responsibilities and whether there are structural impediments in the super system. There is no question that the very structure of super disadvantages women. The system is designed to reward lifelong full-time workers, that is, men.

Women work differently. They tend to take career breaks to care for children and/or older relatives, and often subsequently return to work part-time. They can miss out on a lot of super in those years out of full-time work. To make matters worse, many women have more than one job. The super laws dictate that if they don't earn \$450 each month (before tax) from one employer, they miss out on super.

The super structure is only the tip of the iceberg. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the gender pay gap is at a 20-year high, currently at 18.2%. Adding to this, the ABS says women live an average 4.3 years longer than men. This means

that women have to fund more years of retirement after having worked for less money for fewer years. No wonder many women have second-rate retirements.

To make things worse, our female membership tells us that they find super complex, boring and scary. Because of this, sorting out their super keeps dropping to the bottom of many women's to-do list. Many women just cross their fingers and hope their husbands will take care of them in retirement, but a man is not a financial plan.

In a perfect world, the Government would immediately acknowledge that the super system privileges men and take steps to address the imbalance. The Senate inquiry into the economic security of women in retirement is a promising first step.

In the meantime, my advice to women is to talk to a financial expert about their super, even just to find out the basics. Find out how much super you have, how much super you need to retire comfortably and what you can do to close the gap. The sooner you get your super sorted, the better off you're likely to be.

Tasplan offers two key resources to help women sort their super such as the *Women and Super* video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=TstE-D6HVDU and the *Ms Money* booklet, available by calling 1800 005 166, or for download at www.tasplan.com.au/assets/Docs/Publications/Other/Tasplan-MsMoney.pdf.

This article is general information only. Readers should consider getting financial advice before making financial decisions.





A TASSIE FIRST IN RUBBISH COLLECTION

Sorell Council has a new secret weapon, thanks to a waste management contract with Veolia for kerbside garbage and recycling collection.

The Municipal Area's general waste and recycling is now collected using trucks employing new camera technology, and Sorell Council is the first Council in the State to utilise the service.

The technology includes six cameras offering 360 degree views that capture all service exceptions, including bins not placed out on collection day. It also tracks the date, time and location of ratepayers bin empties. The system features DVR capability that provides live image recording which is available to Veolia and council staff. Veolia can also live track vehicles, ensuring optimal service levels are maintained.

Sorell Council Mayor Kerry Vincent says that new camera technology will help alleviate a lot of our customer service

issues with waste collection. "These cameras will help solve the age-old problem of whether the garbage bin was put out on time. If a resident calls to complain their bin was missed, the footage can be viewed to clarify if the bin was put out at the correct time, or if the bin was simply missed," Mayor Vincent said.

"In addition, the live streaming will provide the service with a greater level of efficiency and safety for all stakeholders. Council is thrilled to be the first in the State to take advantage of this technology. It will allow incidents with collections to be captured and provide certainty over the service provided," he said.



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Learner Driver Mentor Program Offers More than Driving Skills

In communities facing isolation and high unemployment, learning to drive means freedom, self-confidence and increased opportunity.

Earlier this year, Break O'Day Council received funding from the Department of State Growth allowing the extension of the Learner Driver Mentoring Program, *Get in2 Gear*, in the Fingal Valley and facilitate the purchase of an automatic car. Since the purchase of the car, the driver mentoring program, which is affiliated with Driver Mentoring Tasmania, now offers mentoring to 14 learner driver participants from the Break O'Day area.

Break O'Day Mayor Mick Tucker said we live in regional communities where there is no public transport and so people can easily feel isolated and disadvantaged. "The driver mentoring program can not only alleviate these feelings of isolation, it can give people the confidence boost and ability they need to find employment and contribute to their community," Mayor Tucker said.

The success of the program has seen interest coming from outside the Break O'Day area and Council said it was happy to accommodate anyone who was eligible. "The value of this program to regional areas like ours far outweighs just learning to drive," Mr Tucker said. "Already the program has helped

young mums who wanted to be able to get their children to medical appointments, multicultural members of the community who are seeking employment, as well as retired mainlanders who have never held a licence."



Get in2 Gear Project Coordinator - Julie Severin, Learner driver participant - Peijing Weng, and Learner Driver Mentor - Keith Walters with the new Get in2 Gear car

MyRoadInfo Providing Motorists Easy Access to Road Safety Information

The team that created the road safety website is encouraging Tasmanian councils to jump on board and provide their residents with easy access to road safety information via their computer, tablet or Smartphone. The team attended this year's LGAT Annual Conference where there was significant interest in the website.

MyRoadInfo is an online service that allows motorists to view council and state road information about road closures and delays due to accidents, storms, or rising floodwaters. The site displays local council information and feeds from Live Traffic NSW, Queensland's 131940 Traffic and Travel Information website, and VicRoads. If Tasmanian councils were to join the system, motorists could use the website on any journey from Townsville right down to Hobart.

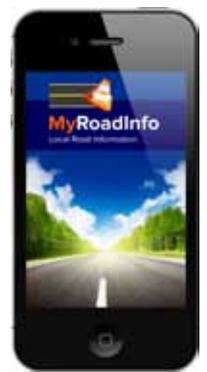
"MyRoadInfo is now the most comprehensive, single website for travellers along the east coast of mainland Australia and we would love to see Tasmanian councils adopt this technology as we believe there are gains for both the travelling public and local council workers," Lismore City Council IT Manager, Garth Hayhurst said. "What it would mean for Tasmanian residents is a user-friendly, simple interface that gives all motorists information about road closures right around the island. For councils, it's cost-effective and easy for staff to update in the field via a Smartphone or tablet.

"The more councils that sign on, the more comprehensive the website becomes for the travelling public. At the end of the day, that's our number one goal – to make sure motorists right across Australia have access to accurate, up-to-date road information to get them safely from A to B," Mr Hayhurst said.

MyRoadInfo includes a free iPhone and Android app with a 'favourites' function so residents can check their most common routes to home and work, plus it offers media outlets with print-ready, text-only alerts for easy dissemination, including on-air reading during times of natural disaster.

The MyRoadInfo website was developed in 2009 as an online information hub following a severe flood in northern NSW which highlighted the need for a service that bridged council boundaries. It has since won an R.H. Dougherty Award and the Government Communications Australia National Award for *Best Crisis Communications*.

**To view the site, visit www.myroadinfo.com.au.
For information about joining MyRoadInfo, phone Lismore City Council on 1300 87 83 87.**





The new ShoulderMaster, set to widen and repair roads faster and more cost-effectively

NEW INNOVATION SET TO MAKE OUR ROADS SAFER

Dangerous, narrow roads and crumbling edges can now be made safer quickly and cost-effectively following the launch of innovative road widening and repair machine, the ShoulderMaster. As well as making roads safer, the universal skid steer paving attachment will help councils and other users to save money, cut repair time, minimise disruption to traffic and reduce fuel consumption.

Business Manager and Engineer, Mr Mark Pilgrim said the skid steer paver attachment was set to revolutionise road safety while helping to solve road maintenance funding shortfalls faced by councils and governments across the country.

"The ShoulderMaster is without doubt the most effective, efficient, environmentally responsible and financially beneficial road maintenance attachment for the Australian road network," Mr Pilgrim said. "Road widening works with the ShoulderMaster are twice as cost-effective and three times as fast as traditional methods, meaning councils and others can repair more roads with the same budget while minimising traffic disruption and improving safety."

ShoulderMaster Managing Director Peta Pinson said this technology will save lives on our roads. "A report to the Federal Government in May 2015, identified that half of crashes on regional roads are single vehicle run off road crashes, which have been attributed to dangerous or unsealed road shoulders," Mrs Pinson said. "The report indicated that by adding just one extra metre of gravel or asphalt to the shoulder of the road decreases the potential for runoffs by 30%. The ShoulderMaster makes this possible," she said.

The ShoulderMaster has completed works for Port Stephens Council and Kempsey Shire Council, and won the Innovation Award at Civenex earlier this year.

To find out how ShoulderMaster is making Australian roads safer, visit www.shouldermaster.com.au.

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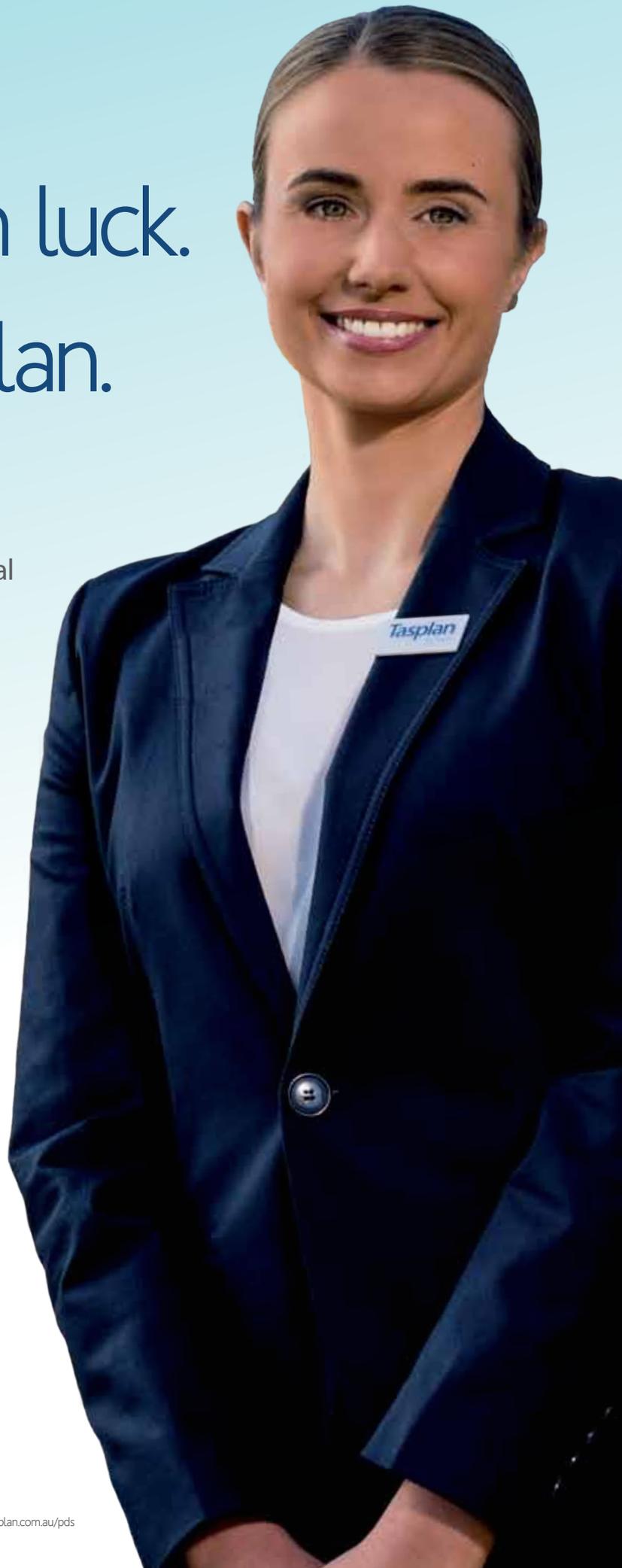
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