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FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

## **LGAT Service Awards honour dedication and leadership in local government**

At its 2025 Annual Conference yesterday, the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) honoured outstanding dedication to local government through its prestigious Service Awards.

### **Life Member – Dr Mary Duniam**

LGAT congratulates Dr Mary Duniam, the Mayor of Waratah-Wynyard Council, on being awarded Life Membership.

LGAT President Mayor Mick Tucker said the LGAT Life Member award recognises excellence in service and contribution to the local government sector, within and beyond Tasmania.

“Life members are leaders and champions of Tasmanian local government and exemplify the best qualities of the sector,” Mayor Tucker said.

“Mary has demonstrated exceptional commitment not only to our sector, but the community more broadly through her leadership, academic research and advocacy for women in civic life.”

Elected to Waratah-Wynyard Council in 2005, Mary served as Deputy Mayor from 2014 before becoming the municipality’s first female Mayor in 2022. She was inducted into the Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women in 2023 and is the current Tasmanian President of the Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA).

Believing that increased diversity leads to more inclusive and effective decision-making, Mary has undertaken significant research into female civic leadership in Tasmania and how this can influence change. She is a Master Mentor with ALGWA, where she supports women to stand for election.

Mary was elected to the LGAT General Management Committee in 2023 and represents local government across a wide range of roles, including serving on the Tasmanian Premier’s Local Government Council and the Tasmanian Library Advisory Board. Her leadership and advocacy contributions have left a lasting impact on local government in Tasmania.

### **Outstanding Commitment and Service to Local Government – Karen Hampton**

Karen Hampton was recognised with an Outstanding Commitment and Service to Local Government Award, celebrating her dedication to strengthening Tasmanian communities.

Karen retired in July 2025 after 25 years in local government, including pivotal roles at Kentish Council, the Cradle Coast Authority and, most recently, Devonport City Council, where she served as Community Services Manager.

Karen's commitment to community wellbeing was vital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognising the need for grassroots support, she designed and implemented a revised funding approach that prioritised smaller-scale, community-based initiatives. This strategy empowered local groups to deliver targeted support to vulnerable residents and helped strengthen social cohesion during a time of widespread disruption.

Her leadership was again on display during the Hillcrest Primary School tragedy, demonstrating her ability to guide communities through crisis with empathy and strength. As Devonport City Council's Municipal Recovery Coordinator, Karen was a vital link between grieving families, the local community, and State agencies. She was seconded to the Department of Premier and Cabinet for 12 months as the Hillcrest Recovery Coordinator. In this role, she oversaw support for first responders, managed public donations and ensured affected families had access to counselling and financial support. Karen also formed and led the Spontaneous Memorial Working Group, managing over 2,000 tributes with sensitivity and care.

Karen was the President of Local Government Managers Australia (Tasmania) from 2014 to 2016, the first female and the first non-General Manager to hold the role. She also represented Tasmania nationally as Director on the LGMA National Board from 2011 to 2015.

LGAT President Mayor Mick Tucker praised Karen's legacy.

"Karen exemplifies the very best of local government," Mayor Tucker said.

"Her compassionate leadership and dedication have left a mark on the community around her."

The LGAT Service Awards are presented annually to individuals who have made significant contributions to the local government sector. Nominations for Service Awards are made by councils, elected members and General Managers and are determined by the LGAT General Management Committee.

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