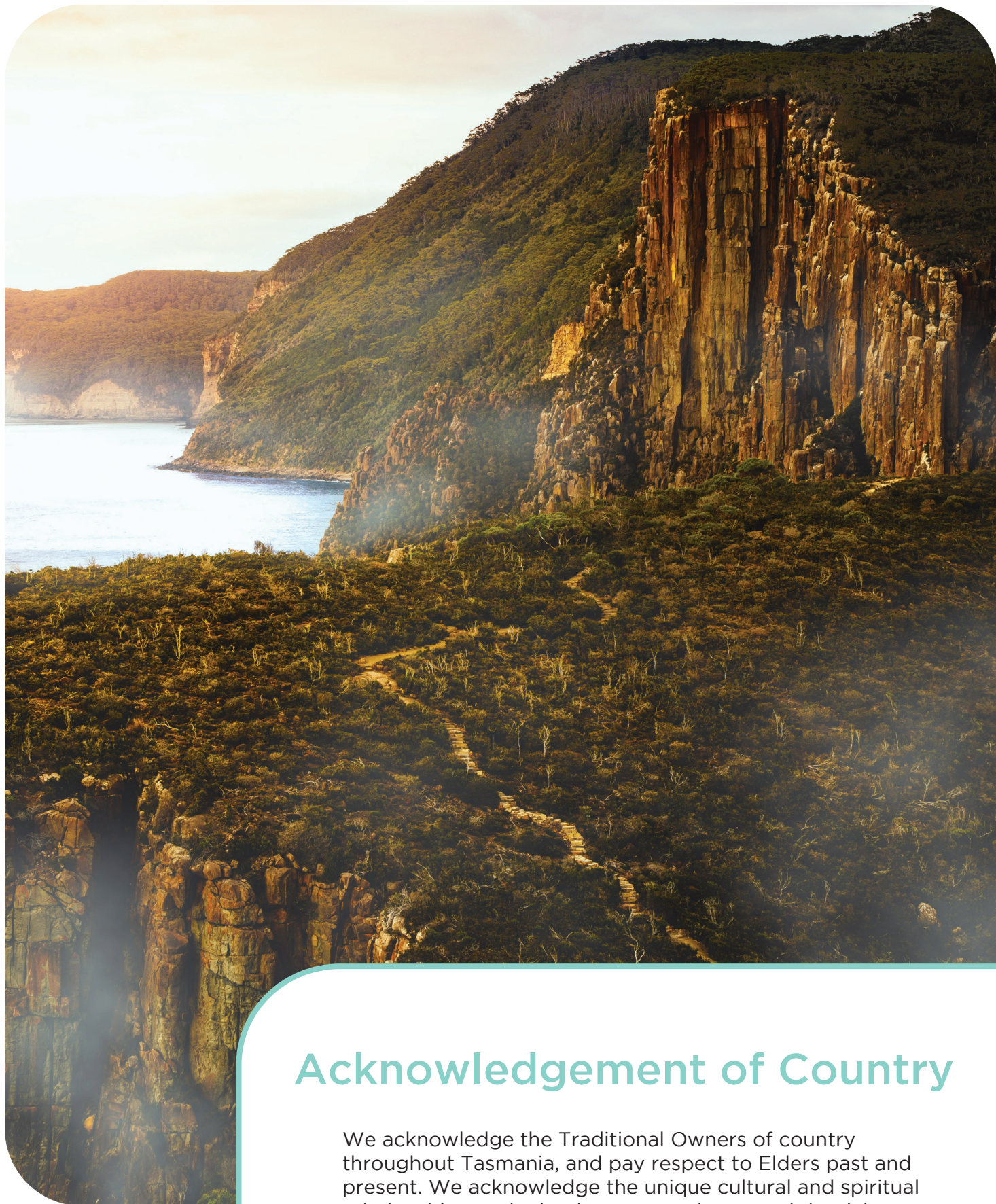




# YEAR IN REVIEW

2023





## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Tasmania, and pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and the rich contribution that First Nations People continue to make to our society.

*Cover: Kingston Wetlands Project. Image supplied by Kingborough Council.*



# ABOUT US

## OUR VISION

To build stronger councils.

## OUR MISSION

To provide leadership, support, representation and advocacy on behalf of Tasmanian councils.

## OUR VALUES



Effective



Supportive



Rewarding



Integrity



Adaptive

We exist to serve every one of Tasmania's 29 councils and work collaboratively with our members to support them, and the communities they represent.

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) was established in 1911. We are the peak body for local government and all 29 of Tasmanian councils are members.

The functions of the Association are to:

- Protect and represent the interests and rights of councils in Tasmania.
- Promote an efficient and effective system of local government in Tasmania.
- Provide services to member councils, councillors and employees of councils.

Our role is to support, promote, advocate for and represent the local government sector so our members can best serve their communities.



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is with significant pleasure that I am providing you with the LGAT President's Report for the Year in Review.

It was a great honour to have been elected to the role and I look forward to my remaining time serving the sector to the best of my ability.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution Mayor Christina Holmdahl has made as a GMC Member, including the past four years as LGAT President. She has been an inspirational leader for our sector and I for one will certainly miss her on the LGAT GMC. I was very pleased to see Christina awarded Life Membership to LGAT at our recent conference, a recognition she most certainly deserves.

In the six months since I was elected President, I have been overwhelmed by the enormous amount of work the small team at LGAT delivers on behalf of the sector. The following pages give you a small snapshot of the key things the team has achieved over the past 12 months.

Perhaps most significant amongst these has been the stewardship LGAT has provided over the Future of Local Government Review. Alongside securing several reform wins for the sector, we have managed to ensure major improvements to the process. This included over \$200,000 for LGAT to conduct consultation with our sector and a number of extensions to the consultation phases at key stages throughout the review.

Alongside the backdrop of this major review of local government we have seen numerous other significant policy announcements by the State Government, some with less-than-ideal engagement in the lead up.

In July of this year the Tasmanian Government announced its intention to establish Development Assessment Panels (DAPs) for certain types of developments. Various forms of DAPs operate in a number of other jurisdictions, and some in our sector are supportive of the concept. As we know it can sometimes be difficult balancing the dual roles of elected representative on one hand, and planning authority on the other. However, it is a balance that our sector is managing. Data from the Future of Local Government Review noted that the proportion of council planning decisions that go to appeal is about one per cent state-wide and decisions made by elected representatives were no more likely to be appealed than those by council officers.

It is the historical lack of state-level planning policy that has resulted in councils bearing the full brunt of public criticism on development problems. While the State Government is finally investing resources into developing planning policies and regional strategies, it is too late to deal with the development pressures our state is experiencing.

At the time of writing, the sector was still considering the proposed changes.

Unfortunately, the Government's initial announcement of what could be significant changes to how some development applications will be assessed came as a complete surprise to the local government sector. It was extremely disappointing that the Premier made this announcement with no prior consultation with Tasmanian councils. We certainly made our thoughts known on this issue.



The other significant policy announcement in recent months was the release of the long-awaited Fire and Emergency Services Bill. It was way back in 2016 when a review of the *Fire Services Act 1979* was first recommended by a House of Assembly Standing Committee, with the review commencing a year later and going through several stages.

Despite there being work occurring over some years, the State Government did not directly engage with key stakeholders, including local government, during the drafting of the Bill. Alongside this lack of engagement was the issue that the proposed fire levy changes would result in some staggering increases for many landowners.

Local government recognises that change is needed to the current funding arrangements that are extremely complex, highly prescriptive and relies on a broad range of sources. In addition, we agree an increase in the overall total of funding is needed if our fire and emergency services are to be appropriately resourced and equipped to respond, protect and support our communities.

LGAT was successful in highlighting the issues and as a result, the State Government agreed to 'go back to the drawing board' by pausing the current process and establishing a working group to inform the development of an updated Bill and levy structure. While a pleasing win, we will be ensuring that going forward there will be effective engagement with the broader local government sector, as this is critical.

This year we finally saw some long overdue but welcomed changes to the Code of Conduct framework. Improving the Code of Conduct has been a high priority for the sector, as the current framework is failing us.

LGAT has commenced work on supporting councils in implementing the changes and you can read more about this work later in the report on the Workplace Health and Safety priority.

I know all of you are feeling significant pressure in the lead up to Christmas, with an extraordinary number of State Government consultations landing on us in November, and this is alongside the usual business of council. LGAT has raised this through our recent Premier's Local Government Council meeting with the aim of this not occurring again.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous GMC members and welcome our new and returning members. Your support is greatly appreciated.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution that the small team at LGAT make to supporting our sector. The team is highly respected amongst State and local governments and consistently delivers for Tasmanian councils.

I wish you all the very best for Christmas and hope you have an enjoyable and prosperous 2024.



**Mayor Mick Tucker**  
PRESIDENT





# FROM THE CEO

## It has been a huge year for the team at LGAT in supporting the sector.

While there has been more work produced during 2023 than in any of the years that I have been part of the team, there has also been a number of significant wins on behalf of the sector.

In the policy space we have had several notable successes in securing key sectoral priorities in the final report of the Future of Local Government Review. You can read more about these in our full report on the review.

Similarly, we have seen success with recognition of the need for an infrastructure charging regime and also the important role that local government has in the provision of well-located residential land and building, and maintaining local prosperity in the recently released Housing Strategy.

Each of these important advocacy areas remain priorities for LGAT in 2024 as we move from securing the policy win to informing their implementation.

Alongside these important policy wins, we have been successful in growing the direct financial support for the sector. This includes:

- An expansion of the health and wellbeing program that LGAT has been running with support from the Public Health Service to now include individual council funding to undertake locally relevant community health and wellbeing work.
- Over \$200,000 for local government engagement activities to inform the Future of Local Government Review.
- \$200,000 to prepare the Tasmanian Development Manual.
- \$500,000 for the Local Government Climate Change Capability Program.

This year we also commenced the roll out of the \$4 million CCTV project and round one of the \$5 million Open Spaces grants for councils.

The Open Spaces Grants Program is funded by the Tasmanian Government and delivered by LGAT. It comes as a direct result of our advocacy. The purpose of the program is to support councils to provide new or renewed infrastructure to support active living. Round one has just concluded with 15 Tasmanian councils sharing in \$2.9 million of funding through the Program. We will be opening round two in early 2024.

Alongside these significant funding sources, our sector services continue to go from strength to strength, with our events and professional development offers expanding and LGAT Procurement continuing its growth. Next year you can expect to see us investing in the establishment of the first Tasmanian-specific civil works panel and growing the highly successful procurement training, alongside of the ongoing support we are providing to councils on their procurement needs.

Looking ahead to 2024, I think we can expect it to be an equally frenetic year, with the implementation of the endorsed Future of Local Government Review recommendations, continued expansion of the Learning and Development Framework and planning reform to name just a few. You can rest assured that as your Association, we will continue to speak as a persuasive voice to the State Government on what matters most to our sector.

**Dion Lester**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER







**Mayor Mick Tucker**

President: July 2023  
Elected: July 2015



**Mayor Paula Wriedt**

Vice President: July 2023  
Elected: July 2023



**Mayor Mary Duniam**

Elected: July 2023



**Mayor Cheryl Fuller**

Elected: July 2023



**Cr Danny Gibson**

Elected: June 2021



**Mayor Leigh Gray**

Elected: July 2023



**Mayor Mary Knowles**

Elected: July 2023



**Lord Mayor  
Anna Reynolds**

As of right position  
since July 2019

# GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The General Management Committee (GMC) has eight members who provide oversight of LGAT operations.

The GMC is elected by councils every two years and it comprises of the popularly elected President, the Lord Mayor and six other members elected by regional groupings of councils. The GMC elects the Vice President.

## THANK YOU

We thank the following past members of the GMC who served until the previous term:

- Peter Freshney
- Alex Green
- Christina Holmdahl
- Annette Rockcliffe
- Kelly Spaulding
- Bec Thomas.

	Nov 2022	Dec 2022*	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	Sept 2023
Mary Duniam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Danny Gibson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leigh Gray	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Peter Freshney	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cheryl Fuller	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓
Christina Holmdahl	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mary Knowles	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✗
Anna Reynolds	✓	✗	✓	✗	P	✓	P	✗
Kelly Spaulding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bec Thomas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mick Tucker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paula Wriedt	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓

### Attendance at GMC Meetings

\* = special meeting

N/A = not elected to  
the GMC at this time

P = Proxy attended



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The LGAT Strategic Plan outlines our role which is to support, promote, advocate for and represent Tasmanian councils so they are best able to serve their communities.

We do this by delivering on the following strategic areas:

- Advocate – to protect and represent the interests and rights of councils.
- Sector Services – to provide services to member councils that promote an efficient and effective system of local government in Tasmania.
- Governance and Operations – we will embed agile and efficient governance and operations to enable the Association to provide value to members.

Meanwhile, the LGAT Annual Plan provides the specific focus areas and key performance indicators.

The [2024 Annual Plan](#) has recently been endorsed by the General Management Committee and contains the following priorities.

## Advocate

- Local government reform – Support Tasmanian local government through the next phase of reforms from the Future of Local Government Review.
- Workplace health and safety for elected representatives – Work with State Government and councils to continue the development of the framework to supports a safe workplace for all councillors.
- Housing – Work to ensure councils are properly supported in their role in improving housing security.
- Land use planning – Support councils to engage with the reforms and implementation of the Tasmanian Planning System.
- Infrastructure – Continue our advocacy and delivery of projects that support local government to provide quality services to the community.

- Community safety – Deliver the \$4 million Regional Towns CCTV Program, funded by the State Government.
- Waste and resource recovery – Continue our advocacy to State and Federal Governments for the policy settings and funding to support councils.
- Emergency management – Advocacy to the State and Federal Governments for continued acknowledgement and support for the role of local government in emergency management.
- Climate change – Deliver the statewide Local Government Climate Change Program in partnership with the State Government.
- Child and youth safe organisations – Ensuring that councils have the right information and training to support their obligations under the *Child and Youth Safe Organisation Act 2023*.
- Health and wellbeing – Support for local government officers working in health and wellbeing to connect with others in the sector and develop their skills.

## Sector Services

- LGAT Procurement – Implement year 2 of the business plan supporting increased services and advice to councils.
- Sector development – Support the professional development and capacity of elected representatives.

## Governance and Operations

- Continuing to modernise internal systems to support timely and high-quality member services.
- Ensuring that risk is appropriately managed to provide for a sustainable organisation.
- Continuing to foster a work environment that is rewarding and supports LGAT's values.



# WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

In mid-2022, LGAT engaged Edge Legal to undertake a workplace health and safety review for elected representatives with funding support from the Office of Local Government.

This review provided a suite of recommendations to ensure a safe workplace for councillors. LGAT has been working with the Office of Local Government on implementing the priority recommendations throughout 2023.

## Local Government (Code of Conduct) Amendment Act 2023

In September 2023, the *Local Government Amendment (Code of Conduct) Bill 2022* was passed by Parliament. These amendments come after some sustained advocacy by LGAT and the broader sector. A key change is that all councils are required to adopt a dispute resolution policy and process to deal with Code of Conduct complaints at the initial stages. LGAT has commenced work on a template policy and process for councils to adopt and is expecting to consult on these in early 2024.

The next stage of the Code of Conduct reforms includes:

- A review of the model Code of Conduct.
- Assessment of the feasibility of transferring the Code of Conduct Panel to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TasCAT).

## Managing unreasonable behaviour in Local Government

In collaboration with LGAT, the Office of Local Government is developing a framework for the management of unreasonable conduct across local government. The framework outlines what constitutes unreasonable conduct, a model policy for managing unreasonable conduct by community members and tools to assist with the management of such behaviour. Initial consultation with council General Managers was completed in late 2023, with the final documents to be released in early 2024.

## Managing serious misconduct

Recent, widely acknowledged events have highlighted some limitations with the existing statutory framework for serious councillor misconduct. LGAT's advocacy resulted in the Office of Local Government releasing a discussion paper earlier this year seeking feedback on options for more significant sanctions, including dismissal, in cases where a councillor's conduct warrants that consideration.

The framework to address serious councillor misconduct will be legislated once the transfer of the Code of Conduct Framework to TasCAT is resolved. Consultation on options surrounding this transfer is anticipated in early 2024.

## Managing interests framework

Local government councillors must make decisions in a way that fairly represents the interests of the community. Relationships become problematic when they give rise to conflicts that affect the impartiality of councillors' decision-making.

Consultation on the discussion paper 'Managing conflicts of interest of councillors - framework proposal' commenced on 8 November 2023. The consultation period closes on 12 January 2024.

We look forward to working with the State Government on the further changes needed to ensure a safe workplace for elected representatives.



# FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW

## It's been another big year for local government reform.

To support the local government sector through Stage 1 of the Review, LGAT secured State Government funding to coordinate and deliver a range of engagement mechanisms, including workshops with Mayors and General Managers, nine regional forums, three online sessions, and an online survey to capture the experiences, ideas and aspirations of council elected representatives and staff for the future of local government. The first stage of the review concluded in July 2022.

Stage 2 of the Review was extended at the request of LGAT by three months, to 31 March 2023, to allow for sufficient time for the newly elected councillors (in the October 2022 local government elections) to settle into their role and become familiar with the Review process. At the end of 2022, the Board published an Options Paper, which discussed a package of 33 potential reforms that the Board believed could deliver improved outcomes for both local government and communities in Tasmania. The Board also sought feedback on three potential structural reform options:

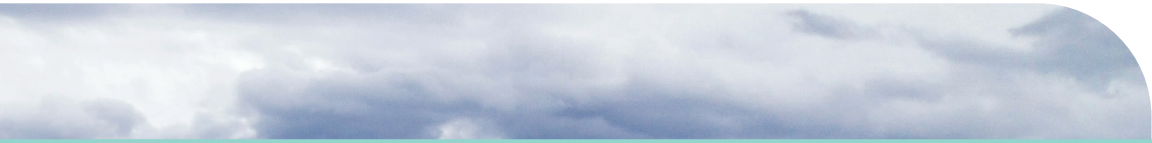
1. Significant (mandated) sharing and consolidation of services.

2. Significant boundary consolidation to achieve fewer larger councils.
3. A 'hybrid' model combining both service and boundary consolidation.

The final stage of the Review commenced on 1 April 2023, with the Stage 2 Interim Report confirming, amongst other things, that the preferred structural reform pathway was the 'hybrid approach' outlined in the December 2022 Options Paper. In May 2023 the Board released nine information packs, one for each 'community catchment'. Each of these packs modelled several scenarios for how councils could be structured to "best service and represent the communities within their catchment".

LGAT advocated strongly for an extension to the consultation period and for financial support to allow councils, through LGAT, to engage with the options presented in the information packs. Our advocacy was successful, with an additional six weeks being provided for submissions and funding for LGAT to conduct 21 face-to-face sessions and 12 online sessions across the nine community catchments. Each workshop was focused on the scenarios presented by the Board for the relevant community catchment and discussed what alternative options should be considered. The feedback we received from these





sessions was provided to the Board and also made available to councils to aid them in determining a formal position.

The Local Government Board continued with its community and council hearings and taking formal submissions. LGAT provided a [submission](#) to the final stage of the Review. In broad terms it focused on:

- Financial sustainability and the opportunities associated with infrastructure contributions, collaborative procurement, fairer road funding and depreciation of externally funded assets.
- Workforce – noting this is a major challenge for councils (and other sectors), we recommended future actions to better understand the local skills demand, strategically tailor needs and bridge gaps, and support local career entry and progression.
- Solutions for the community – the three main challenges councils raised during our Stage 1 consultation for the review were climate change, emergency management and health and wellbeing. We suggested various options to better support councils' role and capacity across each of these important areas.

On 17 November 2023, the Minister for Local Government released the Future of Local Government Review final report, with 37 reforms proposed. Councils and the community were given until 29 February 2024 to provide feedback to inform the Government's final position.

Amongst these recommendations there were a number that were as a direct result of LGAT's advocacy. Notably:

- Introduction of a developer charging / infrastructure contributions regime.
- A review of the heavy vehicle motor tax revenue made available to councils and consideration of basing this total amount on service usage data.
- A review of the current rating system under the *Local Government Act* to make it simpler, more equitable and more predictable for landowners.
- Establishment of a genuine, co-regulatory approach to councils' regulatory responsibilities, with state agencies providing ongoing professional support to council staff and involving councils in all stages of regulatory design and implementation.
- Funding for LGAT to prepare a local government workforce development toolkit and support council implementation.
- State Government support of councils to build capacity and capability to plan for and respond to emergency events and climate change impacts.





# HOUSING

Councils in all regions, from urban to rural and remote, are experiencing housing shortages combined with local economic and financial effects.

More broadly, the housing crisis deepened this year with impacts across homelessness, the rental market and supported housing services.

Our focus has been for the Tasmanian Government to take an integrated approach to issues that impact on the housing crisis, rather than single themes such as land use planning. In [our submission](#) to the 'Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy Consultation Paper', we argued for better growth management actions and tools from the Government to help facilitate housing. In [our response](#) to the draft Tasmanian Housing Strategy, we argued that the focus needs to be on market and economic behaviours that cause our housing crisis, not land use planning, regulation or councils.

We reiterated this and the need for the State Government to fully understand the problem before rolling out solutions through our representation on the Housing Minister's Housing Reference Group.

Across the theme of being 'ready for growth' we advocated to the Tasmanian Government for a local government infrastructure contributions framework, completion of planning reforms and helping communities navigate growth and change. To date, this advocacy has been gaining momentum and support within State Government and beyond. This has culminated with our [State Budget Priority Statement 2024-25](#), which challenges the Government to deliver on these issues and invest to help set conditions for smoother housing delivery.

Following a member resolution, we have established a Local Government Housing Reference Group. This group is looking at how the sector can respond to the housing crisis, particularly around the impacts on residential supply of the short stay accommodation market.



# PLANNING

2023 was a very significant year for planning with substantial reforms.

This has included the development of the first statewide planning policies, an overhaul of outdated regional land use strategies, a review of the State Planning Provisions, all on top of the ongoing rollout of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, with 23 councils now having the Local Provisions Schedules in place.

We have been actively supporting councils in engaging with this work and ensuring the local government voice is heard within State Government. This support has included making submissions to the development of the [Draft Tasmanian Planning Policies](#) and the [Regional Planning Framework](#), along with significant advocacy behind the scenes. More directly we have held online workshops for local government planning officers on current projects and to develop submissions.

Our role has also been to explain, and defend, the role of councils' planning approvals in responding to the housing crisis. We have worked hard to [shape the narrative](#) that completing the planning system and supporting implementation is the key to better performance and planning effectiveness. We expect that this need will continue, particularly through the Tasmanian Government's proposed Development Assessment Panels, an issue [currently in play](#).

We delivered the first in what will be an ongoing series of professional development sessions with the Planning Authority and Managing Growth workshop. The workshop was a full day professional development event for councillors and staff, with more to come in 2024.



Above: Attendees at the workshop in Devonport.



# INFRASTRUCTURE

This year has seen significant achievements for local government across roads, development, heavy vehicles and infrastructure contributions.

The State Government has initiated a [review of Tasmania's road management legislation](#), following steady advocacy by LGAT and councils on the requirement for a review to ensure the legislation reflects contemporary needs and supports best practice. We [responded to a discussion paper](#) on the review highlighting the key issues for sector.

We were successful in achieving State Government investment for the Tasmanian Development Manual Project<sup>1</sup>. This project will build upon LGAT's [Tasmanian Subdivision Guidelines](#) to provide contemporary standards for local government infrastructure for developers and councils. Given its importance, the State Planning Office [specifically identifies this work](#) within its State Planning Provisions Review reporting.

Tasmania's Heavy Vehicle Access Management System (HVAMS) is [widely recognised](#) as best practice at a national level, with councils very satisfied with the performance of the system. Now, the rest of Australia has [agreed to adopt Tasmania's HVAMS](#) as the basis for a National Automated Access System (NAAS). We have been a very active part of the development of Tasmania's HVAMS and active promotion to councils, other jurisdictions and the Australian Government.

Following significant [policy development](#) and advocacy work on the local government infrastructure contributions framework, these efforts are now bearing fruit. The framework has been picked up this year in the [Draft Tasmanian Planning Policies](#), the [State Planning Provisions Review](#) as a likely area of work and in the [Tasmanian Housing Strategy and Action Plan](#). The [final report](#) of the Future of Local Government Review cemented this with a very strong recommendation for the State Government to "undertake a significant policy review to consider a legislated, state-wide, and consistent infrastructure charging regime". We will continue to make the case for the framework until it happens.

<sup>1</sup> Described at page 25 of the 30 June 2023 [LGAT General Meeting Minutes](#).



Our advocacy on climate change over several years saw success with the release of the Tasmanian Climate Change Action Plan 2023-25.

The plan identifies collaboration actions with local government, including capability building, managing coastal hazards and development of a risk information portal.

The 'building climate change capability in local government' action follows a proposal developed by council regional groups in conjunction with LGAT. This action is supported with \$500,000

of grant funding for LGAT to engage a program facilitator who will work with councils and other partners to identify the key areas to build capability.

The program will commence in 2024, following recruitment of the program facilitator that was underway at the time of publishing.



*Left: Kingston Wetlands Project.  
Image supplied by Kingborough Council.*

In late 2022 we partnered with the Department of State Growth to deliver a \$4 million program to help councils deploy CCTV security cameras in regional towns to improve community safety.

We were successful in gaining agreement to run the project on a needs basis with LGAT engaging technical experts and project management, rather than a traditional grants program.

The project has gained considerable momentum and delivered the first tranche of CCTV installations in 2023. Throughout this year we have engaged extensively with the sector and worked closely with our key stakeholders, contractors, and suppliers to set the foundations of this project.

We have commenced and substantially completed our Stage 1 proof of concept councils of Break O'Day, Brighton, Central Highlands and Tasman with the lessons learnt applying to the Stage 2 rollout.

Engagement with Tasmania Police has been a particular focus to build a partnership that ensures the system is managed under clear guidelines that protect public privacy and council staff.

We are looking forward to 2024 where the program will expand to many more councils around the state.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

## CCTV PROJECT





# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2023 has been a year of review and reform in the emergency management space.

This year's focus has been engaging with the Tasmanian Government to undertake a review of the Tasmanian Emergency Management Arrangements (TEMA) and the State Special Emergency Management State Recovery Plan. These reviews enabled us to continue urging the State Government to invest in council's capability and capacity through [our submissions](#). The results of these reviews have ensured the essential role local government plays in disaster preparedness, response and recovery is recognised.

We have collaborated with Department of Premier and Cabinet's newest division, Resilience and Recovery Tasmania (RRT), to support its formation and connection to local government. Through our strong relationship building, we have been able to ensure recovery is community-led. We have also advocated for investment into building local government capability and capacity, as recommended by the Royal Commission into

National Natural Disasters. This has resulted in training and networking opportunities for council officers, the reintroduction of regional social recovery committees and the Recovery Partners Network during the year.

We successfully collaborated with RRT and the State Emergency Service (SES) for funding in round five of the Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Grants Program to deliver a Tasmanian Local Government Emergency Management Recovery Audit. This audit will assess the capability and capacity of up to 18 Tasmanian councils to deliver their emergency management and recovery responsibilities, in particular the functions prescribed in legislation and emergency management doctrine.

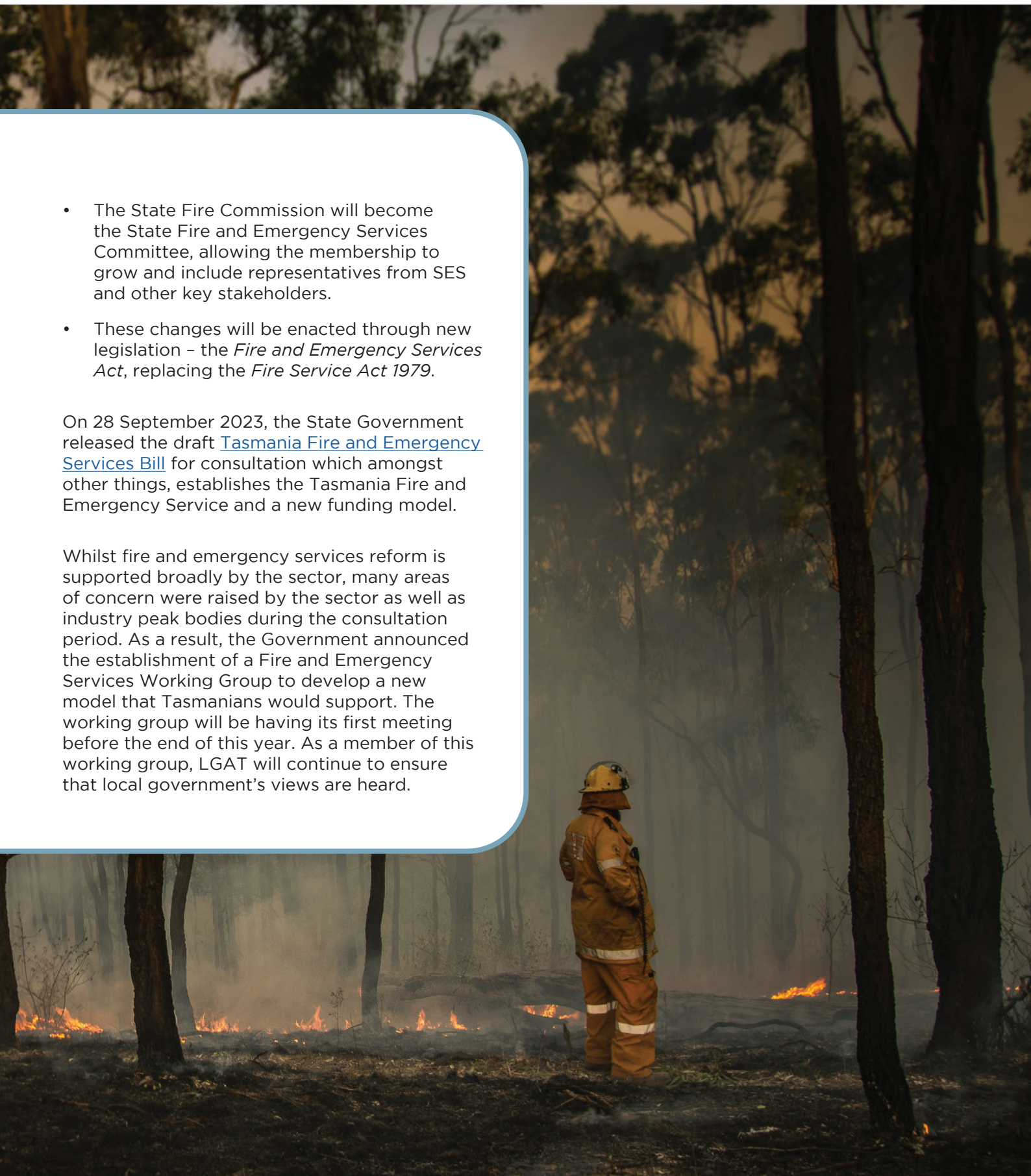
After six years of comprehensive reviews, the Tasmanian Government [announced](#) in January 2023 that:

- It would merge the Tasmania Fire Service and the SES to create the Tasmania Fire and Emergency Service.

- The State Fire Commission will become the State Fire and Emergency Services Committee, allowing the membership to grow and include representatives from SES and other key stakeholders.
- These changes will be enacted through new legislation – the *Fire and Emergency Services Act*, replacing the *Fire Service Act 1979*.

On 28 September 2023, the State Government released the draft [Tasmania Fire and Emergency Services Bill](#) for consultation which amongst other things, establishes the Tasmania Fire and Emergency Service and a new funding model.

Whilst fire and emergency services reform is supported broadly by the sector, many areas of concern were raised by the sector as well as industry peak bodies during the consultation period. As a result, the Government announced the establishment of a Fire and Emergency Services Working Group to develop a new model that Tasmanians would support. The working group will be having its first meeting before the end of this year. As a member of this working group, LGAT will continue to ensure that local government's views are heard.





# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We continued our long running partnership with the Public Health Services (PHS) of the Tasmanian Government to support improved health and wellbeing at a local level.

Through our activities, the Healthy Tasmania Action Plan acknowledges the essential role of local government in improving community health and wellbeing across Tasmania.

The revised Action Plan also reflects the practical steps LGAT and PHS have taken to improve funding agreements and develop the council health and wellbeing network. This includes 28 councils taking up the \$20,000 Lift Local funding. These non-competitive grants are to address a priority health and wellbeing need decided by the council and their community. We have received positive feedback from councils and PHS on our approach. The program will continue into 2024 and will be focused on building the skills, understanding and application by councils of place-based health and wellbeing.

*Right: Children examining waterbugs as part of City of Hobart's State of our Rivulets project. Image supplied by City of Hobart.*



# CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY

We, on behalf of the entire local government sector, are strong supporters of legislation, protections and guidance that protect young and vulnerable people.

We advocated throughout the year on the effective implementation of the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*. This was particularly important given that the Independent Regulator is yet to be appointed.

Our advocacy focused on the need for a whole-of-government approach to coordinate the many factors required for change, and that councils be adequately resourced given their unique role at the local community level right across Tasmania.

While this advocacy is ongoing, we are supporting councils to collaborate on the key requirements, including the sharing of a council safeguarding children policy. This provides all councils with a sound foundation for implementing the Child and Youth Safe Standards in 2024. We are hopeful of additional support for the local government sector and communities in the new year.

# PROCUREMENT

In the 2022/23 financial year, councils saved more than \$2.6 million using the LGAT Procurement panels.

This is an increase of 30% on last financial year and the savings equated to more than the total member subscriptions we received. Council spending through the contract panels exceeded \$16.1 million, with the biggest spend being over \$4 million through the Trucks contract.

Beyond the savings, in the past 12 months, we have continued to assist councils and suppliers to deliver procurement best practice and have seen an increasing demand for consultancy services to support council procurement needs.

We have also delivered a range of new initiatives, including procurement skills training developed in consultation with the LGAT Procurement Reference Group. To date we have delivered six training sessions, attended by around 75 individuals from various councils. The feedback received from these sessions has been exceptionally positive.

Further courses will soon be offered to councils, including reference to risk management, negotiation skills and contract management.

We are also in the process of establishing a set of Tasmanian-specific civil works panel contracts. The aim of these contracts is to streamline engagement, reduce red tape and secure competitive pricing for all councils.

Significant work has gone into developing the tender and contractual documents. In particular, the customer contracts will help councils manage risk, reduce legal and subscription costs, and support a harmonised approach to civil works procurement.

Consultation with councils has strongly informed our work on the contracts and will continue to be important as we progress to market and commencement of the contracts in 2024.

*Right: Dynapac roller purchased by Sorell Council in 2023.*



*Left: Trommel purchased by City of Launceston. Image: Adam Clark.*



# EVENTS

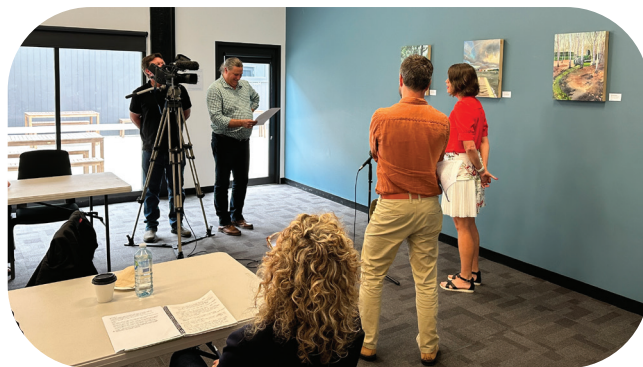
During the past 12 months we have delivered over 29 member events with an additional 21 face-to-face and 12 online consultation sessions to support the sector's engagement as part of Stage 3 of the Future of Local Government Review.

In addition to regular face-to-face events, LGAT also hosted a series of webinars on various issues to update and engage with council officers on emerging policy and legislative change.

Key events delivered during 2023 included the Managing Growth forums, which provided elected members with professional development on their role as a planning authority, followed by a broader policy focused session on planning for our current and future growth.

Our regular and very popular Elected Members Development Day provided councillors with a fantastic opportunity to network with colleagues from around the state whilst also receiving targeted professional development and support in areas critical to their roles. This year speakers included Edge Legal on councillor workplace health and safety, Brett de Chastel (previous CEO of Noosa Shire Council) reflecting on his experience with local government reform and Amy Imms from the Burnout Project discussing how to recognise and overcome burnout.

Procurement essentials training for council officers was a new offering in 2023. The training was specifically designed to meet the requirements of



Tasmanian councils and addresses a demand for training which was identified in various Auditor General reports and council feedback.

The Local Government Learning and Development Framework has delivered a solid foundation of learning materials for elected members. The project is led by the Office of Local Government in partnership with LGAT and is guided by a governance group including two Mayors and a General Manager. The Framework is a great example of our partnership approach to developing the sector and has been identified in the Future of Local Government Review final report.

A good portion of the LGAT events program for 2024 has been locked in, with over 14 events planned already for the year. In addition to our regular sessions, the following policy and professional development events are in the program:

- Finance and Asset Management
- Emergency Management
- Health and Wellbeing
- Joint Mayor and Deputy Mayor Workshop.

Dates and locations are now available on the [LGAT Events Calendar](#).



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The LGAT Annual Conference is our pre-eminent event on the calendar each year.

The two-day event provides attendees with inspiring keynote speakers on strategic matters, as well as opportunities for professional development and networking with council colleagues from across the state.

Our 2022 Annual Conference 'Leading Through Uncertain Times' was held in Hobart on 8 and 9 December. The conference was held later in the year to allow for newly elected members to attend following the local government elections in October 2022.

The 2023 Annual Conference 'Embracing Change' was held in Devonport on 1 and 2 November with 127 attendees and featured the announcement of our Service Awards and Awards for Excellence.

Presentations included Jason Clarke from Minds at Work, who provided councils with a battle-tested process to draw on the experience and talent of their communities to solve problems together; Alison Holloway from SGS Economics and Planning who discussed using wellbeing indicators to

shape local government actions; and Jeff Griffith from Devonport City Council on how artificial intelligence can be leveraged to support council service delivery.

Attendees also had the option of participating in workshops to:

- Understand how parking impacts the economics and wellbeing of our cities, suburbs and rural villages.
- Gain an appreciation of how plain English can help us connect better with our communities.
- Learn best practice recruitment guidelines and performance management for senior council staff, including General Managers.

We appreciate the fantastic feedback we have received regarding this year's conference and look forward to making 2024 bigger and better.





# AWARDS

Our 2023 Service Awards saw us formally recognise the significant contribution of elected members and council staff to their communities.

Earlier this year the GMC undertook a review of the Service Awards offered by LGAT and updated the structure and criteria.

We were pleased to honour two new Life Members – Christina Holmdahl and Rolph Vos.



*Life Member recipients Rolph Vos and Christina Holmdahl with LGAT President Mick Tucker.*

Christina Holmdahl has served on the West Tamar Council for 14 years and has been Mayor since 2014. She served eight years on the LGAT General Management Committee, including two terms as President of LGAT and a stint as the Vice President of the Australian Local Government Association.

Throughout this time she displayed her leadership and fierce advocacy for the local government sector, working on issues such as a review of the Local Government Act, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Future of Local Government Review.

Rolph Vos served for over 27 years at West Tamar Council. He joined the council in 1996 as a cadet building surveyor and then worked his way up through the organisation to become General Manager in 2016.

Rolph represented the sector on a number of key bodies, perhaps most notably the Australian Building Codes Board, where he was the sole representative of the entire local government sector across the nation.

We also recognised John Brown and Jon Doole with Outstanding Commitment and Service to Local Government awards.

John Brown has served in local government for 22 years, with 14 of those as General Manager of Break O'Day Council.

John has been and remains an active contributor and leader across the sector, through forums such as the Regional Jobs Hub Board, Review of the Local Government Act Reference Group and the Elected Member Learning and Development Framework Governance Group.

Awarded posthumously, Jon Doole's more than 30 years at Kingborough Council saw him have a tremendous impact on Tasmanian local government and on climate change action in particular.

Jon helped his council, one of the first councils in the country, to develop a Climate Change and Energy Plan and championed its transition to cleaner vehicles and supporting its communities vulnerable to climate change.



*John Brown and Gary Arnold (accepting Jon Doole's award).*

You can read more about the Service Awards on [our website](#).

The Local Government Awards for Excellence are an annual celebration of Tasmanian local government achievements, highlighting innovative solutions that make a difference to local communities.

**We congratulate Break O'Day, Brighton and Huon Valley councils as the winners of the 2023 Local Government Awards for Excellence.**

Break O'Day Council won the Delivering Excellence – Smaller Council Award.

Break O'Day's winning project was its Week in the Life of Council program which aimed to address an ageing workforce. Over a week, students from St Marys District School immersed themselves in various council departments, gaining valuable insights into careers within local government.

The judges were impressed that the initiative successfully engaged with students and shed light on work opportunities available in local government, as well as providing a great template for other councils wishing to engage with young people within their communities.



*Students from St Marys District School.  
Image supplied by Break O'Day Council.*

Brighton Council won the Delivering Excellence – Larger Council Award.

Brighton Council's Big Bangin' Youth Night was the winning entry for the Larger Council Award. This was an event by young people, for young people and will inform how Brighton Council works with and supports young people into the future.

The council provided the catalyst by forming the Brighton Youth Action Group, who then led the design of the event, building skills in leadership, public speaking and event planning.



*Big Bangin' Youth Night attendees.  
Image: Grace Chia.*

Huon Valley Council won the Showcasing Innovation Award.

A new award introduced for 2023, the judges recognised that the Huon Valley's Food Hub project was successful in building connection, understanding and a more secure food system. Participants and the broader network have demonstrated increased capability in connecting food to need.

The Food Hub has provided a successful foundation for a vibrant and connected food system in the Huon Valley that contributes to the health, social, economic and environmental outcomes of the community.

The project used innovative engagement that utilised trusted people within the community to support the process and strengthen existing connections.



*Food Hub participants.  
Image: Emily Samuels-Ballantyne*

We also congratulate the City of Hobart and Kingborough Council who received highly commended awards for the Delivering Excellence – Larger Council Award.





Above: Sheffield Visitor Information Centre.  
Image: Flying High  
Production - Dean Weeks.



Above: Couple dancing during Back Streets Week,  
an initiative of City of Hobart. Image: Richard J. Ho.

[lgat.tas.gov.au](http://lgat.tas.gov.au)