



## **Media Release**

For Immediate Release

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### **LGAT General Meeting Outcomes and Praise for State Government Stimulus Response**

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) today recognised and praised the State Government for their response to COVID-19 to date including the latest economic stimulus package with broad community benefits.

LGAT President Mayor Christina Holmdahl said “these are difficult times for councils and it has been fantastic to see the Premier’s willingness to engage with the Local Government Sector as we develop our responses to enable us to best serve our communities”

"Local Government staff play a critical role in responding to this pandemic and ensuring essential services continue to be delivered to communities. This will continue to occur as we shift into the community recovery phase” said Mayor Holmdahl.

LGAT has been supporting the sector in addressing a range of practical day to day issues, related to business continuity and legislative requirements, as well working with councils to develop a coordinated approach to supporting communities wrestling with significant and widespread financial impacts.

The LGAT General Meeting was today held, for the first time, online. While there has not been time for councils to formally consider all the matters discussed today, voting representatives gave in principle support to the following potential relief mechanisms.

1. No penalties, charges, interest or debt collection for late rates payments and extended payment periods until 30 June 2020.
2. Rent relief on council owned buildings where tenants are experiencing financial hardship until 30 June 2020.
3. A common approach to hardship/assistance policies with LGAT to develop a model based on engagement with councils.
4. Community grants to be refocussed as appropriate to support local business and not for profit recovery or conversion to a digital environment or circular economy until 30 June 2021.

5. Amendment Southern Midlands: As a means of supporting local business recovery and injecting funds into communities in a timely manner, councils be encouraged to settle creditor invoices within a maximum 14-day timeframe (or sooner), irrespective of normal trading terms.
6. A 0% increase on general rates for 2020-21 but fees and charges may be indexed by CPI.

Further voting representatives supported seeking the option of relaxing depreciation requirements or extending standard asset life (upon criteria to be agreed by the Auditor General) for 2020-21, subject to the Auditor-General adjusting financial indicators accordingly.

Voting delegates will now take the proposal back to their councils for consideration and will provide LGAT advice regarding ratification.

LGAT has commenced work on a model hardship policy and will consult with councils on the draft next week.

“Not all councils have the same capacity to absorb the impacts of this Pandemic” said Mayor Homdahl, “but we are already showing a strong commitment to playing our part in supporting our communities during these strange and difficult times”.

**For queries please contact Mayor Christina Holmdahl on 0417804210**