

Media Release

For immediate release

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New LGAT CEO Appointed

The President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT), Mayor Christina Holmdahl, announced today that following careful deliberation the General Management Committee of LGAT has determined to directly appoint Mr Dion Lester, LGAT's Policy Director to the role of CEO. He will commence in the role on the 6th January 2021.

The role of LGAT CEO is a unique one requiring a complex set of skills and knowledge. With that in mind, the matter of succession planning had been discussed early this year with current CEO, Dr Katrena Stephenson.

“Dr Stephenson advised the LGAT General Management Committee that Dion Lester would easily be able to take up the CEO mantle”, said LGAT President, Mayor Christina Holmdahl.

“As demonstrated in his role as Policy Director and while acting as CEO on previous occasions for the past five years Dion Lester has strong corporate knowledge, an understanding of GMC's desired style for LGAT; an excellent reputation in relation to skills, experience and stakeholder relationships; and is highly respected by Government and LGAT's Members”. In addition, Dion brings significant experience in private industry as a senior manager in a major Australian consultancy firm prior to joining LGAT.

Mayor Holmdahl said “GMC was sure that a formal process would be unlikely to deliver a candidate of a similar high calibre, and that running an expensive recruitment process that was unlikely to deliver a better outcome, did not represent value for money for LGAT or the sector”.

There is no requirement for LGAT to advertise the position of CEO, as is similar for councils. While not done frequently, there is precedent in the right circumstances, including the appointment of General Manager of Brighton Council (James Dryburgh) earlier this year.

Mayor Tony Foster of Brighton Council has said “it made sense to utilise our succession plan and with James we have had a smooth transition and strong hands with results already becoming evident”.

“I congratulate the LGAT General Management Committee on this decision. Dion Lester is well respected, has strong relationships and broad experience and it just makes sense” said Mayor Foster.



To examine GMC's view that Mr Lester was the preferred appointment to the role of LGAT CEO, the Performance Review Committee of the GMC conducted a rigorous interview with Dion to be assured that he would confidently take LGAT forward and ensure a seamless transition

"We congratulate Dion Lester on his appointment to the role and thank the outgoing CEO Dr Stephenson for her outstanding contributions to the Local Government sector and we wish her every success for the next chapter of her career".

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