



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 July
For immediate release

Local Government Already Responding to Minister's Concerns

The Minister for Local Government, Peter Gutwein today addressed delegates at the Local Government Association of Tasmania's Annual General Meeting and Conference.

The Minister acknowledged the constant changes that the Local Government sector is addressing but also noted areas of concern for the State Government. Namely improving leadership and governance, being open to change and the need to address water and sewerage infrastructure issues.

"LGAT Members have also recognised these issues and individually and collectively through the Association and the Tas Water Owner Representatives group have been working to address them" says LGAT President, Mayor Doug Chipman.

Apart from the sector inputs into the review of the Local Government Act, and LGAT's participation on the Steering Committee, the Association and State Government have partnered to:

- improve the Code of Conduct mechanisms in the Local Government Act with legislative amendments enacted this year and training currently being progressed in partnership between LGAT, the Local Government Division and the Integrity Commission.
- to develop a Good Governance Guide which was launched in May this year;
- and to deliver governance training in a variety of forms.

"Councils have heavily invested, along with the State Government in feasibility studies for voluntary amalgamations and strategic resource sharing and as the data and findings are delivered to them will engage with their communities about the best paths forward" says Mayor Chipman.

"Local Government is happy to partner and work with State Government to ensure improvement in water and sewerage infrastructure and services".

Mayor Chipman, the President of LGAT says that "In the lead up to the recent Federal Election, councils made a clear indication of a willingness to shoulder some of the burden, agreeing to cap dividend payments for a further 10 years".

"Further, we have advocated for regulatory changes which would improve the flexibility of TasWater and reduce pricing pressures on householders".

While these activities are continuing, Mayor Chipman notes that “councils continue to deliver a wide range of services and infrastructure for their communities; and as can be seen through the recent natural disasters, councils play a pivotal role in supporting and rebuilding communities in times of crisis”.

Councils perform a wide range of roles within Tasmania – some of which are driven by statutory or regulatory requirements and others which are more discretionary and have evolved out of the unique relationship with its local communities.

There are day-to-day services related to waste and recycling, public and environmental health, planning and building, community development, child care, sport and recreation just to name a few. Councils also develop infrastructure such as roads, footpaths and trails and manage stormwater and community infrastructure such as halls and sports facilities.

Mayor Chipman explains that “Local Government services have increased in number and scope with an increasing focus on the delivery of regulatory and support services. Councils are also tackling emerging issues such as regional economic development, climate change and social inclusion”.

The theme of the LGAT Annual Conference is *Metamorphosis: A Time of Change and Transformation*.

“This theme recognises that Local Government has a constant focus on improvement, that the role of councils is evolving and that councils, elected members and staff will need to not only respond to, but lead change and deliver the best possible outcomes to their local communities”.

**For media enquiries, please contact
LGAT CEO, Dr Katrena Stephenson on 0488 610 341**