3 – 6 October 2011
Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
Cnr Gold Coast Highway and TE Peters Drive, Broadbeach

This Conference is offset by Green Energy
Monday, 3 October 2011

8.30am - 1.00pm  Policy Executive Meeting

1.00pm - 6.00pm  Registration
                 Delegates, Observers and Partners
                 Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
                 Cnr Gold Coast Highway and TE Peters Drive
                 Broadbeach

1.00pm - 1.30pm  Policy Executive Lunch with LGMA (Qld) Board of Management

1.00pm – 5.00pm  Indigenous Leaders Forum

1.15pm – 1.45pm  IPAD Training

2.00pm – 4.00pm  QTC National Water Commission Update
                 Chris Davis
                 Commissioner
                 National Water Commission

                 A presentation on the work of the National Water Commission and
                 the implications for councils in the provision of urban water supplies.

4.00pm – 4.30pm  Annual Conference Briefing for first time conference attendees

4.30pm – 5.00pm  IPAD Training

4.00pm – 4.30pm  Trade and Sponsor Briefing

5.30pm – 7.00pm  Welcoming Ceremony
                 Trade Exhibition Area, Central Rooms A,B&C, and Hall 1,
                 Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
                 Hosted by King & Company

5.30pm  Welcome to Country
         Kalwun Development Corporation

5.35pm  Welcome to the Gold Coast
         Cr Ron Clarke MBE
         Mayor
         Gold Coast City Council

5.45pm  Response
         Cr Paul Bell AM
         President
         LGAQ
5.50pm  Sponsors Address
Mr Tim Fynes-Clinton
Managing Partner
King & Company

7.00pm  Program concludes - FREE EVENING
Tuesday, 4 October 2011
Member Council Day

7.45am  Registration
Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
Cnr Gold Coast Highway and TE Peters Drive
Broadbeach

8.15am  Call to Order by President

8.16am  Security Briefing Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
Staff

8.18am  Presentation of Executive

8.30am  Official Opening
Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC
Governor of Queensland

9.00am  Presidential Address
Cr Paul Bell AM
President
LGAQ

9.30am  Keynote Address: “And you Queensland Councils think you are doing it tough- how’s this for reform? - UK Council reforms explained”
John Tizard
Director
Centre for Public Service Partnerships

10.30am  Morning Tea

11.00am  Panel Discussion and comments from the floor: Community Attitudes Survey & Council Image Campaign – how will this help your own campaigns?
Chair: Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer
LGAQ

Craig Johnstone
Media Executive
LGAQ
12.00pm  **State Government Address**  
Hon Paul Lucas MP  
Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government  
and Special Minister of State

12.30pm  **Lunch**

1.30pm  **Council Elections 2012 – What makes a successful election campaign – Tips and Tools of the Trade?**  
Chair: Dennis Atkins  
National Political Editor  
Courier-Mail and panellist  
ABC TV “The Insiders”

Presentation on the latest US Trends –  
Craig Johnstone  
Media Executive  
LGAQ

And comments by:  
Bruce Hawker, Principal, Hawker Britton  
Ben Myers, Policy Strategist, Leader of the  
Opposition’s Office  
Sharon Lee, Poll Topping Councillor and  
Community Consultant

3.00pm  **LGAQ’s New Policy Representation and Engagement Processes Explained**  
Greg Hoffman PSM  
General Manager, Advocate  
LGAQ

Stephan Bohnen  
Principal Advisor Intergovernmental Relations  
LGAQ

4.00pm  **Council Forums**  
Rural and Remote  
Indigenous  
SEQ Councils  
Coastal  
Resource Regions

5.00pm  **Program Concludes – FREE EVENING**
Wednesday, 5 October 2011
Your Council Day

8.05am Conference Resumes – Housekeeping

8.15am Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal
Deputy President Adrian Bloomfield
Chairperson
Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal

8.30am AGM/Motions

8.45am Debate

9.00am Getting to Know You
Hon Joan Sheldon AM
Local Government Ethics Advisor
LGAQ

9.15am LGM/LGW Awards

9.30am State Opposition Update
Campbell Newman
Leader of the LNP

10.00am Morning Tea

10.30am Debate

12.30pm Lunch

1.30pm Council Forums continued
Rural and Remote
Indigenous
SEQ Councils
Coastal
Resource Regions

2.30pm Keynote Address: The right stuff – what our country needs today from political leaders of all levels of government
Dr John Hewson
An economic and financial expert with experience in academia, business, government and the financial system.

3.15pm Debate
4.00pm  ALGA Update – ALGA’s Constitutional Recognition Campaign
Strategy
Cr Genia McCaffery
President
ALGA

Professor George Williams AO
Faculty of Law
University of New South Wales

4.30pm  Conference Close

4.30pm-5.00pm  ULGA Special Conference – formalities for merging with LGAQ
Chair:  Cr Paul Pisasale
Mayor
Ipswich City Council

6.30pm for 7.00pm  Gala Dinner
Arena Room, Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

Gala Dinner: Hosted by Hastings Deering
Dress:  Coat and tie
Long Service Certificate Presentations

11.30pm  Program Concludes

Thursday, 6 October 2011
Your Day

8.30am – 9.30am  Breakfast in Trade Area

9.30am – 10.30am  Professional Development Streams

10.30am  Morning Tea

11.00am – 12.00pm  Professional Development Streams

12.00pm  Close
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Association Matters

NO. 1

EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS

MOVER: Cr R Dare (Diamantina)                      SECONDER: Cr R Loughnan (Maranoa)

The President’s Annual Address will be read on Tuesday morning, 4 October 2011, and needs to be formally received prior to consideration later in the Conference.

“That the President’s Annual Address for 2010-2011 be received.”

CARRIED

NO. 1A

EXECUTIVE

ADOPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS

MOVER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)                    SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Toowoomba)

The President’s Annual Address remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on 5 October 2011.

“That the President’s Annual Address for 2010-2011 be adopted.”

CARRIED

NO. 2

EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF THE 115TH ANNUAL REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE

MOVER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)                     SECONDER: Cr G Belz (Rockhampton)

The Annual Report of the Executive needs to be formally received prior to consideration later in the Conference.

“That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2010-2011 be received.”

CARRIED
NO. 2A  
ADOPTION OF THE EXECUTIVE REPORT

MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

The Executive’s Annual Report remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on 5 October 2011.

“That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2010-2011 be adopted.”

CARRIED

NO. 3  
RECEPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT

MOVER: Cr R Abbot (Sunshine Coast)  
SECONDER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)

The Annual Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report need to be formally received prior to consideration later in the Conference.

“That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2011 and Auditor’s Report be received.”

CARRIED

NO. 3A  
ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT

MOVER: Cr G Belz (Rockhampton)  
SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Toowoomba)

The Annual Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report remain before the Conference during proceedings and are considered on 5 October 2011.

“That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2011 and Auditor’s Report be adopted.”

CARRIED
ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION – AMENDMENT CONFIRMING CHARITABLE STATUS

MOVER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)  SECONDER: Cr R Clarke (Gold Coast)

“That PART 13: ORGANISATIONAL INCOME AND OTHER ASSETS, be amended as follows -

a) Existing clause 13.1 Use and Application Generally be deleted and replaced with the following clause –

13.1 Use and Application Generally

(1) The Organisation’s income and property must be used solely for promoting its objects.

(2) Subject to directions given or limitations imposed by resolution of a general meeting or by these Rules, the Board controls the Organisation’s property and may exercise all of the Organisation’s investment powers concerning that income and property.

(3) No portion of the income or property is to be distributed, paid, or transferred to any Member except as genuine compensation for services rendered to the Organisation or expenses incurred on its behalf.

(4) In particular, no portion of the income or property is to be distributed, paid, or transferred to Members as a bonus, dividend, or other similar payment.

(5) The Organisation must not make donations, grants or loans totalling more than $1,000.00 to the same person unless the Board:

a) has approved the payment; and

b) is satisfied the payment is not otherwise prohibited by these Rules; and

c) if a loan, the payment is made on satisfactory terms.

And

b) Existing clause 13.2 Distribution of Surplus upon Liquidation, be deleted and replaced with the following clause –

13.2 Distribution of Surplus upon Liquidation

(1) This Clause 13.2 applies if:

a) the Organisation goes into liquidation; and

b) surplus Organisation assets remain after the satisfaction of its liabilities (including the liquidation costs).

(2) The liquidator must transfer the surplus assets:

a) to an entity that is registrable under the Taxation Administration Act 2001 (Qld), Part 11A; or

b) to an entity that the Commissioner of State Revenue (Qld) (“the Commissioner”) is satisfied has as a principal object or pursuit
mentioned in section 149C(3)(a) of the Taxation Administration Act 2001 (Qld); or

(3) A receipt issued by the recipient entity, with a written undertaking by the entity to use the transferred assets solely for the pursuit of its objects, will discharge the liquidator's responsibility for the transferred assets.”

CARRIED

NO. 5

ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

LGAQ – REVIEW OF OPERATIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

MOVER: Cr D Carter (South Burnett) SECONDER: Cr A Williams (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Annual Conference endorses that:

1. LGAQ commission a fully independent and external survey of member councils to determine the satisfaction rating and if the direction of LGAQ is meeting the needs of member councils.
2. A survey review panel be established consisting of 2 members of the LGAQ Executive, 2 Mayors not on the Board of LGAQ, 2 Chief Executive Officers and a representative of the Department of Local Government.
3. The Terms of Reference to include:
   a) An assessment of relationships with State Government;
   b) Level of support for existing councils;
   c) Influence on State and Federal policy issues;
   d) Level of advice to councils on economic and policy issues impacting on councils;
   e) Quality of education and training provided to councils;
   f) Acceptance by industry peak bodies;
   g) Capabilities of the management of LGAQ.”

WITHDRAWN
Governance Section

NO. 6  PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION – ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLAND PEOPLE

MOVER: Cr A Lacey (Palm Island)  SECONDER: Cr R Clarke (Gold Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) to have its position on the proposed referendum to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution informed primarily by the direction and advice of the State Local Government Associations and their local government members, and represent that position to the Federal Government in the appropriate manner.”

CARRIED

NO. 7  REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

COAG-STYLE FORUM – STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

MOVER: Cr M Hobson (Redland)  SECONDER: Cr W Boglary (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to commit to establishing a COAG-style forum with State and local government representatives to discuss common issues.”

CARRIED

NO. 8  NQLGA / ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL

LEGISLATION – IMPROVED PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

MOVER: Cr W Devlin (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr W Bethel (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State and Federal Governments to ensure, where practicable, that before any new laws are made, the white and green papers are mandatory and that a regulatory impact statement is also mandatory; and furthermore, that an independent authority be established to audit the process of developing law and the performance of law once it is made and in force.”

CARRIED
NO. 9  CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

LEGISLATION – INCREASED ROLE FOR LGAQ ON IMPACT ASSESSMENT

MOVER: Cr L Cooper (Cairns)  SECONDER: Cr K Lesina (Cairns)

“That Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to seek a commitment from the Government that when legislation is amended that will impact directly on local government, that prior to the Bill being tabled, the Government will have undertaken and provided to LGAQ, for comments, an impact assessment of how the proposed changes will impact on local government with regard to a compliance actions and reporting, as well as financial and human resources.”

CARRIED

NO. 10  BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

ELECTIONS – CONFIRMATION OF DATE FOR 2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

MOVER: Cr M Bourke (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland and Councils across Queensland call upon the State Government to hold the next Local Government Quadrennial elections in March 2012.”

CARRIED

NO. 11  NQLGA / COOK SHIRE COUNCIL

ELECTIONS – MAIL ADDRESSES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ROLL

MOVER: Mr C Burns (Cook)  SECONDER: Cr A Wilson (Cook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Electoral Commission of Queensland to provide candidates for local government elections with the mailing address of registered voters, and not just street or locality address as currently appears on the Electoral Roll provided to candidates.”

CARRIED
Finance & Administration Section

NO. 12 MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR DISSEMINATION OF FLOOD INFORMATION

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay) SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to establish standards and guidelines for the dissemination of flood information to the community, in particular standardisation of flood related terminology, flood mapping products and associated legal disclaimers. This work is to be done in collaboration with LGAQ and councils.”

CARRIED

NO. 13 BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – PROTOCOL FOR STANDARD DISASTER RESPONSE BOUNDARIES

MOVER: Cr M Bourke (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr J Brent (Scenic Rim)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to Emergency Management Queensland to implement a State-wide disaster management and response sectoring and boundary protocol based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Collection District (CCD) and Statistical Local Areas (SLA).”

LOST

NO. 14 WQLGA / LONGREACH REGIONAL COUNCIL / CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL / HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT – NDRRA GUIDELINES AND DAY LABOUR COSTS

MOVER: Cr P Giandomenico (Hinchinbrook) SECONDER: Cr L Cooper (Cairns)

“That this Conference reject the concept that council day labour costs incurred in carrying out natural disaster restoration work are ineligible for funding under NDRRA guidelines, and that the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State and Federal Governments to have the NDRRA guidelines changed.”
CARRIED
NO. 15  
**NORTH BURNETT REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT – NATURAL DISASTER INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

MOVER: Cr J Jensen (North Burnett)  
SECONDER: Cr P Lobegeier (North Burnett)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal Government to review the determination which includes new requirements for local governments to take out insurance cover to be eligible to access Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements.”

CARRIED

NO. 16  
**MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT – PUBLIC ACCESS TO FLOOD INSURANCE**

MOVER: Cr C Meng (Mackay)  
SECONDER: Cr D Camilleri (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Insurance Council of Australia and the State Government with the objective of ensuring all Queensland residents have access to appropriate flood related insurance coverage to minimise the financial impacts on residents and the broader community of any future natural disasters.”

CARRIED

NO. 17  
**NQLGA / HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT – MONTHLY PAYMENT OF DISASTER RESTORATION FUNDING**

MOVER: Cr M Bourke (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr L McLaughlin (Burdekin)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to pay for disaster funding on a monthly basis, rather than wait for the end of repair works for full payment.

AND FURTHER

Calls on the State Government to clarify the Queensland Reconstruction Authority’s interpretation of the NDRRA Funding determinations that:

1. Refuse the payment of mitigation and holding costs until final restoration works are completed;
2. Holds council liable for the resultant increase in the scope of damage and resultant costs from original damage until restoration works are completed;
3. Refuses the payment of increased costs in restoring assets to current engineering standards even if only restoring the asset to pre-disaster level of service;
4. Refuses the payment of additional overhead costs arising from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's more extensive business rules and processes; and
5. Provision of advances against damage assessments, as provided by Councils with subsequent acquittal of the advance against compliant expenditures.”

CARRIED

NO. 18  REDLAND CITY COUNCIL
BULK WATER CHARGES – STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO CAPPING BULK WATER PRICE INCREASES

MOVER: Cr M Hobson (Redland)  SECONDER: Cr W Boglary (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government and the Opposition to commit to cap bulk water price increases.”

CARRIED

NO. 19  MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL
STATE PENALTIES ENFORCEMENT REGISTER (SPER) – REVIEW INTO EFFECTIVENESS

MOVER: Cr C Meng (Mackay)  SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Whitsunday)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government calling for a review of the effectiveness of the State Penalties Enforcement Register (SPER) in recovering costs on behalf of councils resulting from Court action against offenders and is successful from councils perspective and for which a penalty has been given by the Courts.”

CARRIED

NO. 20  EXECUTIVE / WQLGA / RICHMOND SHIRE COUNCIL / NQLGA / COOK SHIRE COUNCIL
VALUATION OF LAND – RATING OF STATE GOVERNMENT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

MOVER: Cr J Wharton (Richmond)  SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Toowoomba)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government and the Valuer General to seek the amendment of the definition of the term “owner” in Schedule 4 to the Local Government Act 2009 to include the State Government, where the property is a residence used by State Departments for housing tenancies of State employees, contractors and other State tenants.

Owner of land

However, an owner of land does not include the State, or a government entity, except as far as:
(a) the State or government entity is liable under an Act to pay rates; or
(b) the land is used for residential purposes for either
   (i) the provision of community housing; or
   (ii) the provision of accommodation for an employee, contractor or tenant of the State
        regardless of whether the accommodation is incidental to the performance of the
        occupant’s duties.”

CARRIED

NO. 21 REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY – PRICE SETTING FOR SERVICES, UTILITIES AND OTHER FEES

MOVER: Cr M Hobson (Redland)    SECONDER: Cr W Boglary (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government
and the Opposition to commit to allow local governments autonomy in price setting for all their services,
utilities and other fees.”

CARRIED
Planning & Development Section

NO. 22 BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING – PARTNERSHIP APPROACH BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MOVER: Cr M Bourke (Brisbane) 
SECONDER: Cr J Brent (Scenic Rim)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to:

- Seek a commitment to a renewed full partnership approach to planning with local government including priority given to regulatory and process reform.
- Encourage the State Government to work closely with local governments to ensure:
  o The next generation of planning schemes deliver more certainty for local communities and future development;
  o Planning scheme drafting and amendment process and implementation, and structure planning process under the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 must be simplified, particularly with respect to the role of State agencies and the number of State interest checks required;
  o The provision of timely State agency responses and a clear articulation of State interests overseen by each State agency;
  o The increased use of code-based and compliance-based assessments;
  o A focus on carefully maintaining the balance of future urban growth (infill versus greenfield) to confirm the most appropriate approach to long-term sustainable growth of each region, including the consideration of the implications of housing affordability.
- Ensure commitment for collaborative and continuous improvement to development assessment performance by the State Government, local government and the development industry, including commitment to completing an administrative and policy review and rationalisation of referral agency triggers.”

CARRIED

NO. 23 MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

PLANNING POWERS – REVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE PLANNING ACT TO ENHANCE COMPLIANCE BY ILLEGAL BUSINESS OPERATORS

MOVER: Cr C Meng (Mackay)
SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Whitsunday)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to undertake a review of the Sustainable Planning Act (SPA) to provide greater investigative powers to Councils in gaining evidence against operators of illegal businesses and to also review the level of penalties imposed in the legislation which are considered excessive in gaining compliance.”

CARRIED
NO. 24

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

PLANNING CHARGES – INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

MOVER:  Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  SECONDER:  Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Department of Local Government and Planning (DLGP) to amend the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 by incorporating, within the definition of ‘development infrastructure’, the ability for local government to charge for building works for local community facilities.”

CARRIED

NO. 25

LOGAN CITY COUNCIL

SWIMMING POOL REGULATION – LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT TO EFFECT “ONE SYSTEM” FOR SWIMMING POOL FENCE APPROVALS

MOVER:  Cr G Able (Logan)  SECONDER:  Cr M Bourke (Brisbane)

1. “That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Building Act 1975 and Sustainable Planning Act 2009 to effect the repeal of requirements for building certification of swimming pool fencing to allow the Pool Safety Certificate legislative provisions, that commenced on 1 December 2010, to be extended to be “one system”. Further, that the State Government be requested to involve local government comprehensively in this process.

2. That the Local Government Association of Queensland amend its policy statement to include a position that the State Government should activate legislative amendments to create one system for swimming pool safety standard approvals.”

CARRIED

NO. 26

LOGAN CITY COUNCIL / MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

SWIMMING POOL REGULATION – COST RECOVERY FEES FOR COMPLIANCE INSPECTIONS BY COUNCIL OFFICERS

MOVER:  Cr C Meng (Mackay)  SECONDER:  Cr G Able (Logan)

1. “That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Building Act 1975 at Section 246ADA (4) to allow reasonable cost recovery by local government for referrals of non-attainment of Pool Safety Certificates from the State Government and private pool safety inspectors.”
2. That the Local Government Association of Queensland amend its Policy Statement 2010 to include a position that local government has been impacted considerably by the new pool safety amendments to the Building Act 1975 and the State Government must work closely with local government to ensure the effective implementation of such.”

CARRIED

NO. 27  
IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

BUILDING REGULATION – AMENDMENT TO THE QUEENSLAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO PROTECT HABITABLE FLOOR AREAS IN RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS FROM OVERLAND FLOW

MOVER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government requesting that the Queensland Development Code include a new mandatory part that addresses cumulative overland flow matters in respect of habitable floor heights.”

LOST

NO. 28  
IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

BUILDING REGULATION – CONDITIONING OF BUILDING WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH AMENITY AND AESTHETICS APPROVALS OR DEMOLITION, REMOVAL OR REBUILDING

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government requesting that the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009, particularly Schedule 7 Table 1 Item 17 Amenity and Aesthetic impact of particular building work, be amended to allow local government to impose conditions on approvals, and Schedule 7 Table 1 Item 25 Building work for removal or rebuilding, be amended to include demolition and allow local government to impose conditions on the approval.”

CARRIED

NO. 29  
CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

BUILDING REGULATION – STATE POLICY FOR INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SEA WALLS

MOVER: Cr W Shannon (Cassowary)  
SECONDER: Cr J Downs (Cassowary)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to develop a State Policy in consultation with local government which clearly defines the installation and maintenance responsibilities for sea walls constructed to protect private properties.”
CARRIED
Environment & Health Services
Section

NO. 30  
REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

CARBON PRICING SCHEME – NO INCREASE IN THE COST OF PUBLIC AND MARITIME TRANSPORT

MOVER: Cr M Hobson (Redland)  
SECONDER: Cr W Boglary (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal Government to ensure that the implementation of the carbon pricing scheme does not result in an increase in the costs of public transport or private maritime transport where it is the only form of transport available to residents.”

CARRIED

NO. 31  
SOUTHERN DOWNS REGIONAL COUNCIL / LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

NUISANCE NATIVE WILDLIFE – CONTROL OF FLYING FOXES

MOVER: Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  
SECONDER: Cr R Bellingham (Southern Downs)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to acknowledge the real and potential damage to human life, animals and cropping brought to our communities by flying foxes, introduce controls to immediately reduce flying fox populations and adopt a system that allows for the maintenance of those populations at a sustainable level.”

CARRIED

NO. 32  
IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

NUISANCE NATIVE WILDLIFE – RELOCATION AND MANAGEMENT

MOVER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to request the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) accept a stronger role in assisting the public in managing nuisance native wildlife.”
CARRIED
NO. 33  
ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

WASTE MANAGEMENT – DEFERRAL OF WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING BILL 2011 TO 1 JULY 2012

MOVER: Cr L Loizou (Burdekin)  
SECONDER: Cr B Carter (Rockhampton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make further and stronger representations to the State Government on the Waste Reduction and Recycling Bill 2011 and associated Regulations, and seek a deferral of its implementation until 1 July 2012 to allow a more considered approach by the State Government in the development and finalisation of this legislation.”

WITHDRAWN

NO. 34  
MORNINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

WASTE DISPOSAL – FEASIBILITY OF ON-SITE WASTE CONVERSION TECHNOLOGY

MOVER: Cr C Francis (Mornington)  
SECONDER: Cr F Pascoe (Carpentaria)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal and State Governments to fund a research study of the feasibility of on-site waste conversion technology that is cost-effective (in comparison with building more landfills, cells or transporting the waste to a landfill), has low environmental impact and can be maintained by remote councils with limited operational cost.”

CARRIED

NO. 35  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT – POWERS OF SEIZURE AND DESTRUCTION OF DOGS

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr B Battersby (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government seeking amendments to the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 to give local governments the power to, without notice, seize and destroy a dog that is proven to have seriously attacked and injured a person or animal, whether that dog is a Regulated Dog or not, and whether the dog poses a continuing risk to public safety or not.”

CARRIED
NO. 36  
LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL

BIOSECURITY – INCREASED STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

MOVER:  Cr S Jones (Lockyer Valley)  
SECONDER:  Cr G Moon (Lockyer Valley)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to request an increase of resourcing into biosecurity, specifically addressing issues that affect human health, in particular the Hendra Virus and flying foxes, and other issues which affect lifestyle and agricultural production, such as fire ants and parthenium.”

CARRIED
Infrastructure, Economics and Regional Development Section

NO. 37 NQLGA / WQLGA / ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – NO MINING ON GOOD QUALITY AGRICULTURAL LAND

MOVER:  Cr C Marshall (Isaac)  
SECONDER:  Cr R Ferguson (Isaac)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to stop the exploration and mining leases on ‘good quality agricultural land’, and implement legislation to protect ‘good quality agricultural land’ similar to the Strategic Cropping Land Policy.”

CARRIED

NO. 38 NQLGA / WQLGA / ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – PLACING A CAP ON THE NUMBER OF NON-RESIDENT WORKERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RESOURCE INDUSTRY

MOVER:  Cr C Marshall (Isaac)  
SECONDER:  Cr R Ferguson (Isaac)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland makes representations to the State Government to place a ‘cap’ on the number of non-resident workers who are associated with resource industry activities and encourage community growth.”

CARRIED

NO. 39 IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – COMPULSORY COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON APPLICATIONS FOR MINING RELATED LICENCES, LEASES AND PERMITS

MOVER:  Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER:  Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Minerals Resources Act 1989 to incorporate compulsory community consultation as part of the application process for any Mineral Development Licences, Mining Leases and Mining Lease Extensions and Exploratory Permits to be carried out prior to the granting of any permit, lease or licence.”

CARRIED
NO. 40  
BANANA SHIRE COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – STRENGTHENED REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPLORATION PERMIT APPROVALS

MOVER: Cr L Cooper (Cairns)  
SECONDER: Cr M Clancy (Banana)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government in order to ensure that, in the approval of exploration licences, they need to address issues such as road usage, water usage, quarries and environment, or alternatively that these licences be conditioned to ensure that local government approval for road use (etc) has been forthcoming before the exploration licence is issued.”

CARRIED

NO. 41  
NQLGA / WQLGA / ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A BUFFER BETWEEN MINING ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITIES

MOVER: Cr C Marshall (Isaac)  
SECONDER: Cr R Ferguson (Isaac)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to change legislation to provide an appropriate buffer based on local needs between the mining activities and the communities within the regions.”

CARRIED

NO. 42  
NQLGA / WQLGA / ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL

RESOURCE INDUSTRY IMPACTS – STRENGTHENED CONDITIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON RESOURCE COMMUNITIES

MOVER: Cr C Marshall  
SECONDER: Cr R Ferguson

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend current legislation to allow for the conditioning of mining developments to reflect the health and wellbeing impacts now being experienced in resource communities.”

CARRIED
NO. 43  
IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

ROAD WORKS ON STATE-CONTROLLED ROADS – REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT EXEMPTION AND NOTIFICATION FOR MOVING/STORING SOIL

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government requesting the review of the extent of development exemptions which exist for moving and storing soil from State-controlled road roadworks.”

CARRIED

NO. 44  
WQLGA / DIAMANTINA SHIRE COUNCIL

ROAD STANDARDS – ADVANCEMENT OF SEALED ROADS

MOVER: Cr L McLaughlin (Burdekin)  
SECONDER: Cr R Taylor (Whitsunday)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to advocate for the advancement of sealed roads to improve lifestyles in Queensland, specifically regarding equity and cost of living improvements.”

CARRIED

NO. 45  
BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – PROVISION OF ADEQUATE PARK AND RIDE FACILITIES AT URBAN BUS AND TRAIN STATIONS AND FERRY TERMINALS

MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane)  
SECONDER: Cr M Bourke (Brisbane)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to reconsider its current policies on Park-and-Ride to develop strategies and investment programs in consultation with councils for the provision of adequate park and ride facilities at urban bus and train stations and ferry terminals.”

CARRIED
NO. 46  
MORETON BAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – IMPROVED CONSULTATION BY TRANSLINK TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY

MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Moreton Bay)  SECONDER: Cr B Battersby (Moreton Bay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to TransLink regarding improved consultation with local governments and the community on any future amendments to local transport network services and/or infrastructure.”

CARRIED

NO. 47  
MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

ABANDONED VEHICLES – SIMPLIFIED PROCESS FOR REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL

MOVER: Cr M Brunker (Whitsunday)  SECONDER: Cr C Meng (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government seeking amendment of the legislative requirements which local governments are forced to follow in dealing with vehicles which are left abandoned on council owned/controlled roads with a view to making the process less restrictive and time consuming.”

CARRIED

NO. 48  
CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIGITAL TELEVISION – FUNDING FOR MAINTENANCE OF UPGRADED RETRANSMISSION SITES

MOVER: Cr L Cooper (Cairns)  SECONDER: Cr K Lesina (Cairns)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal Government to investigate the ongoing financial implications for local governments for the maintenance of retransmission sites as a result of the digital television upgrade. Further, that the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations for a shared funding agreement for ongoing maintenance of this important community infrastructure.”

CARRIED
NO. 49

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL

DIGITAL ECONOMY – DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES AND ROADMAPS – INCREASED FUNDING PROGRAMS FROM STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

MOVER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal and State Governments for additional funding programs for the development of local government coordinated digital economy strategies and roadmaps that promote and implement innovative services over high speed broadband.”

CARRIED
Community Development & Social Policy Section

NO. 50  TORRES STRAIT ISLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE CENTRE (IKC) SERVICES – INCREASED FUNDING TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT OF CO-ORDINATORS
MOVER: Cr F Gela (Torres Strait)  SECONDER: Cr L MucKan (Fraser Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal and State Government to secure a sustainable funding base to employ Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) coordinators on a full time basis and provide a career pathway in local government; to provide cultural keeping places with 21st century library services, that contribute to closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage through lifelong learning opportunities.”

CARRIED

NO. 51  PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL
ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES – CALL FOR REVIEW
MOVER: Cr A Lacey (Palm Island)  SECONDER: Cr J Molony (Mount Isa)

“That the Local Government Association make representations to the State Government to conduct a comprehensive review into its Alcohol Management Policies and strategies for Indigenous Shires to assess their effectiveness in addressing their stated objectives as well as identifying any unintended consequences, and the implications thereof, of these strategies.”

CARRIED

NO. 52  NQLGA / ETHERIDGE SHIRE COUNCIL
ALCOHOL LICENSING – REVIEW OF CONDITIONS FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS
MOVER: Cr W Bethel (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr W Devlin (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to request a review of the liquor licensing conditions for non-profit organisations and community groups, to enable these organisations more flexible and sensible conditions when applying for a ‘Community Liquor Permit’.”
NO. 53
COMMUNITY WELLBEING – ADOPTION OF INDICATOR FRAMEWORK
MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government for the adoption of a community wellbeing indicator framework in Queensland to effectively and consistently measure community wellbeing to ensure that citizen engagement is well informed and decision making is evidence based.”

CARRIED

NO. 54
PALM ISLAND ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL
INDIGENOUS HOUSING – REVENUE IMPACTS ON INDIGENOUS COUNCILS
MOVER: Cr A Lacey (Palm Island) SECONDER: Cr L MucKan (Fraser Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Federal and State Governments in relation to the changes in delivery of Indigenous housing to ensure that discussions are held with Indigenous councils about the financial and long term implications of the new policy for the revenue base of affected councils prior to any signing off on proposals between the State and Federal Government.”

CARRIED

NO. 55
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES – AWARENESS AND ONGOING FINANCIAL SUPPORT
MOVER: Cr M de Wit (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland encourages and fosters the awareness of its members about the broad range of factors that impact on health and wellbeing in communities and recognition by State and Federal Government of the benefits and implications for local government, both socially and financially, in working to create healthy communities. Further, that the LGAQ make representations to the State and Federal Government for ongoing assistance to and communication with local government to ensure an effective inter-government approach.”

CARRIED
People & Performance Section

NO. 56

HINCHINBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR COMPLAINTS – INVESTIGATED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT AND NOT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MOVER: Cr P Giandomenico
(SECONDER: Cr M Clancy (Banana)
(Hinchinbrook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Local Government Act 2009, whereby Section 177 of the Act should not apply in situations where the Chief Executive Officer has made a complaint to the Department about the conduct or performance of a Councillor; instead, the Department should carry out the assessment.”

CARRIED

NO. 57

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR AND STAFF TRAINING – NEGOTIATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

MOVER: Cr L Cooper (Cairns)
(SECONDER: Cr K Lesina (Cairns)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland work closely with existing and incoming Councillors to develop strategies and training to better protect council officers and Councillors from physical and emotional harm when dealing with confrontational members of the public particularly during public consultation events.”

CARRIED

NO. 58

REDLAND CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION – LOCAL GOVERNMENT REMUNERATION AND DISCIPLINE TRIBUNAL TO SET COUNCILLOR SALARY LEVELS

MOVER: Cr M Hobson (Redland)
(SECONDER: Cr W Boglary (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make requests to Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal to set Councillors’ salary levels, rather than providing a remuneration range, as is currently the case.”

CARRIED
NO. 59  EXECUTIVE

WORKFORCE PLANNING – DEVELOPMENT OF QUEENSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE STRATEGY

MOVER: Cr R Taylor (Whitsunday)  SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to support LGAQ in the development of a Local Government Workforce Development Plan that is comprehensive in covering all local governments in Queensland, is evidence-based in its findings and conclusions and addresses both labour demand and labour supply in identifying strategies at both council level and industry level.”

CARRIED

NO. 60  EXECUTIVE

WORKFORCE TRAINING – CONTINUATION OF SKILLING QUEENSLANDERS FOR WORK FIRST START INITIATIVES

MOVER: Cr C Pisasale (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr L Pyefinch (Bundaberg)

“That Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government for continuation of the First Start and First Start Green Army Programs of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Initiative for local governments.”

CARRIED

NO. 61  EXECUTIVE

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – MITIGATING ENTERPRISE BARGAINING CONFlict OF INTEREST ALLEGATIONS

MOVER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)  SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Toowoomba)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Local Government Act to require that a local government take appropriate action to mitigate against a Chief Executive Officer and/or an employee of a local government being placed in a position which may give rise to allegations against them of having a conflict of interest in circumstances where a Chief Executive Officer or an employee of a local government is responsible for the development and negotiation of a local government’s certified agreement.”

CARRIED
Tuesday 3 October 2011

Official Opening:

Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC
Governor of Queensland

Attorney General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister for State, the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government and Sport Mr David Gibson MP, Mayor of the Gold Coast City Council Mr Ron Clark MBE, President of the LGAQ and Mayor of the Central Highlands Regional Council, Councillor Paul Bell AM, Mayor's, Deputy Mayor's, Councillor's, CEO's and Council Staff, Conference Delegates, Sponsors, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning!

In the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge Australia's Indigenous Peoples and in particular, the Yugambeh-Bundjalung people, who lived in this region before European settlement and whose dependents still retain a special relationship with these lands and waters.

It is a great pleasure once more to be at the Gold Coast, a location that I have visited often during my tenure as Governor. In fact, on a quick count last night, I worked out I have attended twenty three official events here over the past three years. A good number of them, here in this splendid convention centre covering a very wide spectrum of organisations and activities! That high number of visits and the diversity of purposes, (opening libraries, veterinary clinics, surf life saving carnivals, visiting schools and sugar mills, medical research institutes, presenting environmental awards [as I did last night], celebrating anniversaries [as we did with some of you last night], welcoming national and international visitors to various conferences), is a reflection, not only of my busy life as Governor, but also of the fact, that as Mayor Ron Clarke has reminded us all in his welcome to the conference, this is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia.

A diverse and challenging Local Government area and one to which thousands of Australians are drawn each year, for holidays and leisure. Like the Mayor, I am acutely conscious the Gold Coast has an intensely appealing image (domestically and internationally) of sun drenched paradise, beautiful beaches and a verdant hinterland of thrilling theme parks and great shopping and dining. I hope all of our delegates can find some time in the very busy program, to take in some of these justly famed attractions.

As Governor, I know that the Gold Coast is more complex and diverse than that image. It hosts three major university campuses, it has a multi-dimensional economy, it has a culturally diverse population and it has all the challenges of managing a population that is growing by 15,000 people a year. Each with their own rising expectations of what Local Government should/will provide to them. In that sense the Gold Coast, as well as being a premier convention venue, is a very appropriate venue for this LGAQ Annual Conference. All be it on a different scale, all our Queensland Council's are grappling with elements of the same challenges.

- How to deal with growth and change;
- How to meet the shifting, ever expanding expectations of Communities, whose composition and demographics is changing;
- How to maintain and improve infrastructure, constantly, relentlessly, under strain;
How to deliver services. All those classic services, so traditionally the responsibility of Local Government and to deliver new ones as the public is more and more focussed on issues of the environment and the sustainability of healthy living and lifestyle requirements.

The public wants all the usual things, but it also wants different things - A different kind of responsiveness from its Councils. It is a very tall order, especially against the backdrop of amalgamations and all the adjustments, adaptations and the changed ways of doing things, that that involved. But, in some cases are still being worked through. There is still evidence of a few faded bruises, as I travel around.

That is why the theme that the LGAQ has chosen for this conference 'Dare to be Different' is also, so appropriate. I complement President Paul Bell and the Association Executive, on devising such a strong framework for your discussion, as I complement them, on the strong, decisive leadership they have given to the Association during turbulent times. For many, perhaps the most turbulent imaginable or perhaps unimaginable, when they took the step of standing for their Local Council, contesting the position of Mayor, or applying for the job of CEO.

As Cr Bell explains in his foreword to this years' Conference Program, the theme is meant to highlight the way that Local Government has adapted and has risen to the many challenges, natural and manmade that have confronted Local Governments in Queensland in the past twelve months. It also encapsulates well, the courage that many council's have had, to think outside the square - or outside the town footprint altogether in the case of Lockyer Valley Mayor Steve Jones. When facing the challenge of rebuilding damaged infrastructure and fragile Communities, as so many of you have had to do following our summer of disasters.

I know that it is hard not to dwell on these experiences. They do remain a major preoccupation for many and they certainly still are for me, as I continue to visit affected communities across the State. To monitor progress with recovery and to look for practical value adding ways to encourage, support and to assist that ongoing recovery! There is still a lot of pain out there, still much work to be done. But the theme 'Challenges', associates association members, to look and think way beyond disaster response. It invites you to apply it to all aspects of your work and of the issues that come before individual Mayor's and Council's - However novel and in whatever unique configuration that you may have to deal with it in your local region.

I would like to think that I have a good appreciation of many of these, of the issues common to so many councils. Those that are distinctive, unique to particular regions are influenced by a host of factors obviously - geography, population, natural assets and resources.

Although, I haven't visited all parts of the State and not quite all Councils, I have managed to get to most since I became Governor three years ago. Fulfilling my pledge I made then, to be the Governor for all of Queensland. As indicated earlier in relation to the Gold Coast, I visited some regions and centres more than once, indeed several times. Some like Ipswich, Toowoomba, the Western Downs, the Sunshine Coast, Cairns and Townsville, many times over. In all cases, I have been given generous, significant assistance from Local Councils, in gaining what I am seeking - an understanding of their preoccupations and concerns as well as their plans and ambitions for their regions.

As I look out at this very quiet audience this morning, I see many familiar faces. Faces of people for whom I have formed the strongest of admiration and considerable affection - The Mayors, Deputy Mayors, councillors, CEOs and other council staff. Having observed them at work in their communities! Having gained an understanding of the increasingly complex demands and responsibilities they handle. Realising how tough it can be, juggling so many different elements and always as Governor, mindful of my own
responsibilities, conscious of how critical your work and the quality of Local Government is for the effective functioning of our State and of our Queensland Society.

You might wonder a little bit, about my drawing a link between my responsibilities and yours. In raising this, I am thinking, not about my advocacy and awareness raising roles, nor that community outreach and community engagement role, fundamentally important though these are. But I am thinking instead of the Governors Constitutional Responsibility, to ensure the stability and the smooth functioning of Government. And, that the Government commands the support of the Parliament and of the people.

Looking at your conference program, it is evident that the interest of rate payers and voters are central to your deliberations. One would expect this with both Local Government and State Government elections scheduled to be held in 2012. While as Governor, I don't participate in the political process and am scrupulously, meticulously neutral about political issues, I am not neutral about the electoral process itself. In the sense that - key responsibility to ensure the stability and smooth functioning of Government and of the democratic processes involved - Elections in fact, they are an essential, integral part of the process of this system.

Thinking further about this, it would seem pretty obvious that if the system is to work as it should, then it is important that voters be well informed about the issues at stake in an election campaign. That they understand the implications of exercising their franchise and that they are aware of the content and the consequences, of particular policies and proposals. Transmitting that information - informing the electorate in a measured way, in a noisy and crowded media landscape, when people have so many other issues competing for their attention.

When world financial markets are unstable and other international developments are distracting and troubling. When families are focussed on immediate concerns, that you all know, is an extremely difficult task. But it must be pursued. Not for the individual wellbeing of candidates, but for the health of our democratic system itself. The issue goes well beyond the future of any candidate for next years’ Local Government elections, or any political party, right to the heart and the health of the body politic and to the reasonable functioning of any subsequently elected Council’s or Government’s.

The question could be raised, if issues are not well ventilated or well understood by your communities, do we in fact have a basis for good stable Government. And, raising a further question before this audience of Local Government representatives - isn’t it at Local Government level, where you work so closely with members of the Community. Where you deal so directly with grass roots concerns, you are right on the front line. Isn't it here that this understanding, might best be, should best be developed and encouraged.

Maybe I am becoming a little fanciful. But, my thoughts in this regard were very much influenced by the fact, that this will be the last conference before the next Local Government elections and by the focus in today’s sessions on, getting the message across! This created a really appealing opportunity to proffer the observation, that your efforts to do this and to encourage members of your communities to appreciate better, the issues and the challenges that Local Governments are dealing with. To discuss and ventilate these well and thoroughly within your communities, could add significantly to the value of your role and the contribution of Local Government within our wider systems of Governance. In this regard, I was really pleased to see the LGAQ launch a campaign in August, to promote the work that Local Government Councils do.
You talked in the press release Paul, about showing what Local Councils do and what they contribute to Communities. Thinking about that, I think there is another whole dimension to educating the public about what it is you do and the complexity of the challenges.

Still on the theme of 'Daring to be Different' and getting the message across - one of the opportunities and challenges for Councillors and everyone in Government, is getting this message across in social media. Again, I was pleased to see that the conference program includes a professional development workshop on this theme. Although I know that some people here are really adept at it, do you ever see Paul Pisasale without his Twittering and Tweeting - there are a few of you like that. I also know that social media was used really effectively by Local Councils and the association itself, during the floods....... really effectively!

But there are downsides. Yes, it is a terrific opportunity to engage directly and instantly with the community, but there are also concerns about the way the very speed and immediacy of social media (the way that it is driving responses across the board), is changing people's understanding and their expectations. It could be that it is hindering thoughtful, in-depth debate, discussion and the provision of considered responses. That it is creating problems, with conducting effective consultations with all stakeholders, to reach collaborative solutions, best outcomes and ultimately agreement on complex matters.

I raise this, because I know this is something that some Local Councils have been struggling with. Consultation could be construed in some quarters now, by an impatient public attuned to those quick responses as obfuscation - That a Council arguing need for a time to consult, to consider a matter, could be criticised (is criticised) as unacceptable delay. The cult of the now (as I call it), is the difficult downside, to the otherwise welcome move to greater transparency and responsiveness.

While I know many of you will welcome the session on social media and learning more about how to use forums like Facebook and Twitter, to particularly reach those who might otherwise ignore more traditional media, including (I would suggest particularly, those young members of your community and those future voters), possibly those future Mayors and Councillors.

But, I do hope that in the Council group sessions and in the Council Forums, you will explore how to get the balance right. How to respond to demands for those instant answers, those immediate solutions. Because in the complex and diverse society of Queensland and Australia today, most policy solutions simply cannot be condensed into 140 characters, or postulated on the spot as a Facebook status update - and a greater regard for the merits of reflection at all levels of Government is to be encouraged, facilitated and welcomed.

I have a lot of faith in our Local Government and our Councils, to really lead the way in this regard.

There is another initiative that I want to particularly welcome today. That is the appointment of an Ethics Advisor. I note that Joan Sheldon, the very first, will address the conference tomorrow. I am not sure how many of you saw reports in the media, of the 'Mapping Social Cohesion Report' by Professor Andrew Markus of Monash University. It was released, not very long ago (27th September). Its finding made for quite disturbing reading for anyone interested in Government, in the health of our body politic. The Monash survey, which claims to be the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Australia - samples the views of about, 2000 people. It is conducted in eight languages, reaching into migrant communities, (often overlooked by general polls). The Report worryingly, paints a grim picture of a very steep fall in the publics’ trust in Government. Australians have always had (I think it is wonderfully refreshing), a healthy scepticism about Government. But this survey reveals a distinct and a sharp growth in negativity and in pessimism. People nominated the quality of Government and Politicians, as the third most pressing problem facing Australia today, after economic issues and environmental concerns.
Political Strategists argue strenuously about the causes and I will leave those arguments to them. While the study did focus on the 'Federal Sphere', other commentary indicated the sentiment seemed to apply more broadly, to perceptions of Government more generally. It is incumbent on all (all) participants in the political process at every level, to seek to do what they can, to rebuild trust in the political process and ethical practice is a key part of that.

I acknowledge that the Association’s decision to create the position of an Ethics Advisor, was born from a very strong call by its membership, for Local Government to take a stand on promoting greater integrity in public life. I congratulate both the Executive and the Membership, on making the decision to create this position and to create time in this very busy conference program for Mrs Sheldon to address you. It demonstrates a commitment to building public confidence in the transparency and the accountability of local Government. To that I say, bravo! There are many things to express compliment about, when talking to this group.

One of the main benefits of the conference (I know from discussion with many of you) is the opportunity it gives for you (if you can leave that iphone in your pocket, not the one you are going to be following the conference proceedings on - the ipad); but it is the ability to disengage briefly from the frantic pace of your roles, to network with each other, to share problems and solutions and to work on identifying areas of common interest. This is no doubt the case with all conferences. But it is particularly magnified in our large, enormous diversified State, where councils have been through a significant and dramatic experience of change through the amalgamation process. Where just as things were starting to settle down, councils then had to face the Global Financial Crisis, or the new instability (as some are calling it)! Then the floods, rains, storms and cyclone Yasi! Then the challenge of rebuilding within significant budgetary constraints, that are likely to be long term in nature.

I am certainly no wide eyed optimist. I acknowledge the significant challenges all this creates. I acknowledge likewise, that the expectations of the community (as I have said repeatedly), are never revised downward, along with revenue projections. I do think within this theme of 'Dare to be Different', there is great scope and impetus for delegates to come together within this conference, to discuss both continuing and emerging issues. To explore new policy proposals and innovative solutions!

Reflecting back again, on the culture of rising expectations, of instant solutions and that increasing disillusionment (in many respects with Government) there is a greater incentive than ever before to share information about what works and what doesn't. Hopefully to identify problems as they are appearing on the horizon.

One final thing! You know my background. You know that I am an internationalist and I am delighted also, to see that you have invited people from overseas to come and contribute. The keynote Address today, by John Tizard from the Centre for Public Service Partnerships, does sound like it has a tinge of that familiar UK/Australia combativeness. But with reform a continuing prospect for all levels of Government, I am absolutely certain that there is a great deal to learn from the experience of reform in other jurisdictions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, reaching for my beloved dictionary, looking up the work 'Dare’ - it means to have the courage needed to do something! As each of our delegates, each of the councils represented here today, ponder the challenges implicit in the theme of 'Dare to be Different’. I do hope that the discussions and deliberations of this conference will help to assist you to determine what needs to be done in your communities. The support and encouragement of your fellow councillors and executives, will help to embolden you to implement innovative and effective solutions in your constituencies throughout Queensland.
I compliment the Association on delivering this challenge to its members. I thank you for the immense contribution, you, your councillors and your local government staff, make daily to your communities, to the life and to the people of our State. I wish all delegates a most enjoyable and productive conference experience.

It is now that I declare with great pleasure, the 115th Local Government Association of Queensland Annual Conference to be officially open!

'Dare to be Different'!

**Presidential Address:**

Cr Paul Bell AM  
President

The Mayor of the Gold Coast Cr Ron Clarke, Her Excellency Penelope Wensley AC the Governor of Queensland, Minister for Local Government the Hon Paul Lucas, Local Government and Planning Shadow Minister David Gibson, other members of parliaments state and federal, distinguished guests, colleagues in Local Government.

It’s great to get together one last time before we end this tumultuous term of office. What better place to do it than the ever wonderful Gold Coast.

The last time we met for annual conference here was in 2007 - the end of an era in Queensland local government history. Now, we are back, and it’s fair to say that 2011 marks the end of the beginning of a new era.

I want to pay tribute to all retiring Mayors and councillors especially our host Cr Ron Clarke. Ron is an Australian icon, up there with the immortals, someone who has enjoyed not one, but three stellar careers; he was the holder of countless world athletic records; then a very successful businessman/entrepreneur; and finally twice the Mayor of Australia’s second largest council. Old mate, we have been on the LGAQ Executive together for 8 years and you probably saved your toughest assignment to last.

Ron has endured family tragedy, a six month CMC Inquiry into the council at the outset of his term which proved the council was spotlessly clean, a major boundary change in 2008, then the state government-imposed debacle of water reform. Your famous race in the Rome Olympics must seem like a breeze in comparison to your time as Mayor of the Gold Coast.

Rest assured, though, that you can point your critics to the scoreboard on 31 March 2012 and it says, undefeated. You are a legend and we won't forget you.

Let's give Ron and all those retiring elected members the standing ovation they deserve for the great service they have rendered their community and Queensland through service in Local Government.

And there’s another achievement we should acknowledge at this conference. We have representatives from 14 of the 17 indigenous councils in Queensland attending this conference, a record many times over.
That outcome is thanks to the tireless work of our new Indigenous representative on the Policy Executive, Palm Island Mayor Alf Lacey, and the LGAQ’s own Tony Goode who has made sure we redouble our efforts to serve the needs and aspirations of those Indigenous councils, which make up 20 percent of our total membership.

Friends, the theme of this year’s conference is ‘Dare to be Different’. That is a subject I want to expand on in terms of what it means for both our sphere of Local Government and the LGAQ itself.

CONTEXT
It’s all too easy to become overwhelmed by the malaise, sourness, disillusionment - call it what you want - that is besetting some local communities, our state and nation.

Now is not the time to turn inwards - or on ourselves. That’s not my way, nor the LGAQ way, nor is it the way of Local Government in Queensland. Over the decades we have stood together and held the line. We have not allowed those who seek to split our solidarity, succeed.

In the Policy Executive’s report to this year’s Annual Conference, much is made of the fact that what’s happening to us in Local Government is not unique.

Sure, we have endured amalgamation, an historic mining boom, floods and cyclones of biblical proportions. But there are even bigger changes affecting our communities. The second wave of a profound global restructure is well and truly upon us.

The world has seen riots in England, record post-war unemployment and a credit down grade in the US, three or four European countries on the brink of defaulting on their debt, and the so-called Arab Spring, where the batting average of long term dictators slumped dramatically this season.

At home, we’ve got unpopular governments federally and in Queensland, new governments in the two biggest states, plus the rise of the Greens and the advent of new maverick parties. There is even what many political and social commentators are calling the race to the bottom, with both sides of the political spectrum turning populist and largely rejecting the reform agenda of the past 20 years.

At the community level things are different too. Household formation rates have lifted for the first time in a generation. That is, more of us are living under the one roof. Personal debt is falling for the first time in a decade. Yet the cost of living has outstripped real wages growth – the cause of a fair proportion of the community’s grumpiness.

You get the picture. This is much bigger than our patch, Local Government land.

LGAQ’s pollsters nailed it in August when they revealed that the results of our regular Survey of Community Attitudes towards Local Government over the past several years have followed a remarkably similar track to the results of the renowned Pew Foundation’s American Community Satisfaction with Government Index.

The American index is following the same rate of decline as ours. Between 2005 and 2011, both indexes have fallen by the same amount in terms of community satisfaction. I rest my case – we are not alone.
UNITY AND DARING TO BE DIFFERENT

After 26 years as a councillor, approaching 12 years as an LGAQ Executive member, almost eight years as your President, and four years as ALGA president as well as a member of COAG during that time, I've seen many things. Let me reflect on that experience.

The great constant in Queensland's 152-year Local Government history is unity. United we stand, divided we fall.

Our Local Government movement is now 115 years proud, and has never been split by geographical, political or ego-centric considerations. That makes us unique among every Local Government Association in Australia.

Despite our more recent difficulties, Queensland Councils continue to enjoy the most independent system of Local Government in the nation. Our elected members are also the best rewarded for their efforts. Folks, that didn't come about because of chance.

As an old electrician, let me try to explain what I mean by referring to some basic laws of physics.

In galactic terms, there are 1000 points of light in the Local Government constellation – representing the myriad communities we lead right across Queensland. There are 73 stars – our councils - providing the illumination and guidance to those 1000 lights in our firmament.

Then there is the LGAQ. It's not the centre of the galaxy, but it is the energy and glue that holds everything together.

It's the positive force that draws together otherwise disparate parts.

One of the simple laws of physics tells us that great energy comes from anchoring the centrifugal force. It's positive natural energy – not a negative draw on resources.

We all know about shooting stars. They leave the constellation, burn brightly for a very short time, catch our attention, expire, never to be seen again. Then there are the black holes in space, where matter turns inward on itself, leaving a very nasty consequence.

Like space, the galaxy in which Local Government exists needs to be an expanding one. Not a diminishing universe collapsing in on itself.

As always in Local Government, the trick is to enlarge our galaxy, not squabble inside an ever contracting one. State Governments love that outcome – councils fighting each other over the scraps.

The pressures on Local Government in Queensland are such that the sector runs the increased risk of splintering and losing its clout in the years to come.

There is no doubt in my mind the current State Government has encouraged that outcome over the past four to five years.
This is one of the reasons LGAQ embarked on its new individual member council-focused approach two years ago. We sought to better reflect and service the needs of individual councils as well as different and emerging groups of councils formed around single issues and/or shared geography.

As well, we continue that century-old role of representing everyone and harnessing that combined power, be it in advocacy, service provision or capacity building.

And we have never ceased building and maintaining a close working relationship with both the State and Federal governments, based on the principles of mutual respect, open and honest dialogue and a recognition that we all share in wanting to deliver the best service to the people of Queensland.

THE PAST YEAR

The last 12 months have been extraordinary for councils and the LGAQ alike.

For councils, it has been a tale of trial and tribulation as you have stood shoulder to shoulder with your communities through unprecedented natural disasters. At the Disaster Management Conference in Bundaberg in July, we acknowledged those who lost their lives. I again ask that we all stand and observe a minute’s silence for all those who lost their lives in December and January, especially a council worker from Western Downs Regional Council Mr Graham Purcell who lost his life in service of his community.

I pay tribute to every elected member and every council employee who worked so tirelessly during the floods. You did an amazing, in some cases, heroic job. Well done.

It’s been a tough year financially for councils. We began this financial year with the loss of the 40 percent State Government water and sewerage subsidies. Southeast Queensland councils took a big blow on the dividends paid by the three council-owned water retailers, adding insult to injury in what has been a state-inspired fiasco on water reform over the past few years.

If any one hadn’t noticed, the State Government’s own financial affairs are a mess. They have debt coming out of their ears, their credit rating remains downgraded from Triple-A, and the five year fiscal forecast is grim - deficit after deficit.

That is the context in which you have to assess the State Government’s treatment of councils and any real likelihood of money coming our way in the next few years. That’s taking into account the fact, the State Government could well change in the first half of next year. Any new government will inherit the same set of accounts. And that’s before we know what any Commission of Inquiry into the state’s finances would throw up.

So we need to be realistic about state financial help coming our way any time soon. Of course, LGAQ will argue for a new set of priorities for Queensland and with it more money for councils. You only have to look at the LGAQ’s Advocacy or 10 Point State Election Plan to see we are still in there fighting for the increasingly meagre state resources that are up for grabs.

This year brought some good news. LGAQ through its very own efforts was able to

- Win an additional $400m in category C and D NDRRA payments that weren’t originally on offer, including $50m for day labour.
- Secure, finally, after eight long years, a decent Stock Route Management regime greatly assisting rural and remote councils.
- Fix the silly and divisive Conflict of Interest Laws in the Local Government Act. I want to acknowledge the great help Minister Paul Lucas afforded us in securing those legislative changes just a month back.
- Securing through the High Court of Australia in December 2010 the right of councils to ‘specially or differentially’ rate mining operations. Sorry Moscow Brunker, your council didn’t get its money. It was a classic case of LGAQ losing the battle for Whitsunday Council’s specific matter but winning the war for all councils.
- Have pool fencing laws commencement date deferred and made more council friendly.
- Launched the Local Government Image Campaign to pave the way towards the National Referendum on Recognising Local Government in the Australian Constitution.

And of course, there were other wins, but for a comprehensive report on all our activities please read the Policy Executive Report to Annual Conference.

I can say confidently that the total value of LGAQ’s lobbying, industrial relations efforts and savings for councils through in house business units or from our subsidiary companies such as Resolute, LGM/LGW, Local Buy, QPG and LGIS - was around $600m over the past year. Not a bad return on $3.8m in subscriptions you paid us.

Throughout all that, the LGAQ has managed a big internal change, the largest in our history, as a matter of fact.

In 80 hours of interviews in late 2009 between you and the LGAQ’s external reviewer, Professor Peter Wilton from the Berkley Campus of the University of California, Member Councils set the course for that change. That whole process cost just on $300,000 and the results were fed back to all councils and especially the 200 plus individuals who participated.

The result is a new corporate strategy, organisational structure and operating model and the pursuit of 13 new initiatives that you, our Member Councils, asked for.

We are on track to realise our goal of the LGAQ becoming the best imaginable Association.

In the last year the following specific initiatives you sought have been completed:
- A beefed up media effort – Craig Johnstone, multiple award winning journalist and Assistant Editor of the Courier-Mail, was appointed as the LGAQ’s first Media Executive in October 2010.
- A better image for Councils, via a $500,000 TV ad and multimedia campaign; with stage two of the ad campaign starting next year.
- Stronger ties to Canberra and George Street.
  - Former diplomat Stephan Bohnen appointed in 2011 as the LGAQ’s first Intergovernmental Relations Advisor.
- A new Annual Conference format – it’s on show here – especially the breakout sessions of our five council groupings – SEQ, Coastal, Indigenous, Resource Regions, Rural and Remote.
- A Delegations Register to help the CEOs.
- A Grants Service – proving very popular.
- An Independent Ethics Advisor
  - The Hon Joan Sheldon AM
- An Independent Elected Member Advisor
  - Hayden Wright; and he started with us yesterday.
- A new enhanced Member Services Help Desk to co-ordinate all contact – in person, by email, phone or social media for Mayors, councillors, CEOs and senior staff.
  
  I will launch the new number at the conclusion of my speech.

- A new policy development engagement and LGAQ governance process, which you will discuss later today.

Better still they are all “free” services or initiatives. That is, they are not fee-for-service offerings.

On top of those very significant service improvements, LGAQ Ltd - as we now are – successfully implemented new Customer Relationship Management and Knowledge systems to underpin all those changes. These changes have simple goals – to give you and you Council what you want, when and how you want it and at a price you’re happy with.

In implementing this raft of reforms, we went back to you again and again and again to check and double check, to ensure we were on track and delivering what you originally asked for. All up LGAQ spent a staggering 2000 hours talking with elected members and staff over the past year in undertaking this work.

This will continue into the future. We will keep asking for your opinion. Our formal process involves asking 1000 mayors, councillors and senior officers their thoughts on what we are doing each year so we can respond to the ever-changing circumstances confronting councils.

We will measure the performance of the overall organisation, senior management and staff according to how well they are serving your needs – you will be the judge through the annual surveys.

Some things never change, though. LGAQ didn’t put councils on hold while we went through these tough organisational reforms. We did what we always have done – advocating, representing, partnering with and serving councils.

Over the last year, your Association produced or was involved in:

- 411 circulars
- 73 News Releases
- 30 Legal Opinions
- 63 Industrial Relations Commission Hearings
- 19 submissions to state and federal governments

All of this on top of the over 70,000 telephone calls and requests from member councils for support, assistance and advice.

When LGAQ had to stand and fight for councils it did:

- on planning issues such as the Sunshine Coast Regional Council opposed declaration of Caloundra South as an Urban Development area,
- or the State Government’s bully boy tactics on SEQ Water Reform.
- or fighting for the best available deal on NDRRA funding.
- or insisting on a better deal for councils that will be hit hard by the Government’s determination to introduce a waste levy.

Seven front pages in the Courier-Mail and 3000 plus mentions in all forms of the Queensland media over the past year are testament to that fact.
The collective voice of Councils is heard strongly across the length and breadth of Queensland. However, when cooperation and good will between the LGAQ and the Government were all that was needed through the early months of 2011, the relationship worked.

Premier Anna Bligh has publicly and repeatedly congratulated the LGAQ on the great and tireless work it did as part of the State Disaster Management Group. LGAQ is not a one trick pony – we have and do play many cards. It’s a case of horse for courses, issue by issue.

Not to forget the quite literally 24/7 support LGAQ and LGIS offered councils during the December/January natural disasters. Plus the LGAQ has been front and centre after the disasters,
- representing councils at the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
- rebuilding the built infrastructure and social fabric of communities across the state in partnership with federal and state government.

Finally, at the July and August meetings the Policy Executive and Board of LGAQ Ltd signed off and launched the new LGAQ logo and branding strategy, with its slogan of Connect, Innovate, Achieve. It was purposefully done in a low key manner and at the completion of two years worth of solid work in the Member Engagement Project. Put simply, it was decided the sausage was more important than the sizzle.

The new logo and corporate livery has been well received.

END OF THE BEGINNING
31 March 2012 is fast approaching. It will mark the end of the beginning of a new era of Local Government in Queensland. Colleagues, your lot in life was to endure what has certainly been the most difficult term of Local Government in Queensland since WW2.

Hopefully, those that follow us next term will have it a bit easier. They will be one term removed from the pain of amalgamation. They should have more legislative and financial certainty on which to plan, albeit with no greater level of resources. God willing, Queensland will not be beset by natural disasters like we were earlier this year. And, by the second half of the next term, hopefully, we will also see a more benign global outlook.

Beyond individual councils, the challenge for the Local Government movement is to learn from history and stay united. I really encourage you to think hard about the form of statewide Local Government representation and governance that you want when we discuss this matter later today. It is after all, your organisation. Have your say.

CONCLUSION
In conclusion, can I thank all the hard working staff at LGAQ for their tireless and exemplary efforts over the last three and a half years. Doing all of the things councils require of us while undertaking a root and branch reform of the organisation is no mean feat. Well done, team.

I also thank the 13 other members elected on the Policy Executive. Many of them have indicated they will be retiring from the Local Government scene at the next election. So this time next year, it will be a very different group of elected members that take the stage as your leadership group at the conference.
Importantly, you or your successors will directly elect the new Policy Executive in May, 2012.

I especially want to thank the other three directors of LGAQ Ltd, Crs Bob Abbot, Margaret de Wit and Brendan McNamara. They have done a mighty job taking on additional responsibilities as company directors after LGAQ became a public company on 1 July 2010. The four of us have met monthly to oversee the company’s financial and corporate affairs. Both Bob and Brendan have announced they are not contesting the next election and I thank them profusely for being - in their own very different styles - champions for Local Government for so many years.

My only other task is to wish all those recontesting the next election, the best of luck and again extend best wishes to those retiring on 31 March 2012.

Thank you.
Keynote Address:

"And you Queensland Councils think you are doing it tough – how’s this for reform? - UK Council reforms explained"

John Tizard
Director - Centre for Public Service Partnerships

Good morning. Can I say first of all, what an honour and privilege it is to be invited to the Gold Coast and in particular to this conference! When I first got the invitation to come and tell you about the experience of Local Government in England, and I stress England for reasons I am going to go on and say later, we are beginning now to move to a diverse system of Governance in the UK, which you pioneered in Australia many decades before us.

I questioned why you would want someone to come from England, to tell you how to do Local Government. It seems to me, reinforced by what I have heard from Her Excellency and your President this morning, you have much to tell us and it seems to me that one of the great strengths of conferences like this, (again as the Governor said in her Address) is to share and learn between of us, not for any of us to think we have the answers, because we don't. What we have is the ability hopefully to learn, to absorb, to reflect, to think and share across - whether it is the conference in Queensland or a conference I was at last year in Brazil, or a conference anywhere in continental Europe where I often speak, I think we have much to learn.

One of the great things we do learn, whatever the great differences in our legal structures, whatever the differences in our competencies and powers of Local Government (and they most certainly are very different), between England and Australia and different again with many Countries in Europe and Brazil to name but a few. What absolutely unites us and we heard it today and we saw it personified in the Presidents address, is that passion for community, that passion to serve, that passion to listen and respond to communities. Which I think is strong throughout the political system. It is not fashionable to be in favour of politicians at the moment, most certainly not if you look at opinion polls in the United Kingdom. Politicians come well below journalists and that may be due to the fact that you have exported many good things from Australia. I do wonder sometimes about some of your media magnates, who have influenced the body politics in the United Kingdom and elsewhere.

Actually, what does serve us particularly at local level is that closeness, that richness of our relationship with local people. I was an Elected Member for some 18 years (standing 5 times for a re-election in what was always a marginal seat), and it strikes me that one of the great strengths of local democracy, is to have to fight a marginal seat where your Party Label is not automatically the guarantee that you are going to win. But you have to listen, you have to respond.

You also have to show leadership. Sometimes you have to take difficult decisions and sometimes you have to say things which are unpopular because, they are in the best interest, or because they fit in with the overall strategy. It isn't just about listening and doing whatever is said. There is a huge amount of benefit from the whole way in which we listen to you and communicate. And we heard about the application of technology and social media. It doesn't take away it seems to me, that ability to listen, but also that ability to show leadership and sometimes leadership as I say, is making the difficult planning decision which people don't want, which is actually the interest of the overall. We can't all say no to development. It has to go somewhere. Because we all want the economical benefits that that development will bring.
Sometimes it's about saying no to a community, in order to give support for a minority community that may be part of the community. So, leadership is a key part of being a Local Member. As I said, it is a two way exchange. I don't think the two maps on the side are necessarily to the same scale, but I am very conscious that we could lose literally scores, if not hundreds of Local Authority areas in England, in Queensland and the population (your President was telling me at dinner last night, that his area is about the same size as Wales, but with a population it of 38,000. Wales is a population of some 2-3 million people), so there are vast differences. But, there are many similarities as well and I think we can learn and we can share.

I was asked when Greg was over in England (I had a very enjoyable time with him in April), to host him and other colleagues from the LGAQ, to talk about those things where England was better than Australia or vice versa. The Governor referred to the competitiveness of this. I hope we are friendly, we are not competitive. I have deliberately got a picture here of the Ashes Urn. It seemed to be rather dangerous at this stage in history, to have a picture of the world rugby union cup.

But it does seem to me that we have a long history and we have a lot we can learn from each other. I am not from a generation that can remember Bradman playing. But I am of a generation who have seen films of Bradman playing, not that tragic last innings at the oval, but that huge contribution to cricket. And I hope there is more than cricket that unites us, there is more than sport that unites us. It does seem to me that, neither of us is better than the other. We are different, we dare to be different and we want to learn from those differences.

I made the point earlier that you can't speak about the UK Local Government, if ever you could... and my Scottish and Irish and Welsh colleagues will tell me you never could.... but we have, since the late 1990's, when the then Labor Government introduced evolution to Wales and Scotland. Then more recently (thankfully we have had a more settled political arrangements in Ireland), with a Northern Ireland Assembly. We now have a position, where we have a very different legal structure to Local Government in Scotland, in Wales, in Northern Ireland and in England.

There is a diversion. Every year, indeed every month, if not every week, we move in different directions. In some ways I think that is a great strength. One of our failings is, we don't learn sufficiently across what are very small geographic areas. I work in London and work about 50 miles north of London and people I work with, think Scotland is a long way away. Well, if they were in Queensland that might be the other side of their Council area, let alone the state.

But, we don't learn sufficiently. What I am going to draw on is what is happening in England, rather than what is happening in the wider United Kingdom. I am not going to bore you with a technical lecture on the structure of Governments in England. Most of you will know about it and if you haven't, you have got your iPad’s so you can look it up and preferably after I have spoken.

We have a very diverse system of Local Government, even in England. In the rural areas (and I say rural again, very advisedly to this audience, because I live in Bedford Shire and we think we are rural [I think not by comparison to your areas]) you know, people think we have a long way to go to the local facility if we have to go three miles to the next town or village. I suspect three miles is what you do to go and get your mail from the bottom of the drive for some of your colleagues.

We have a three tier system of Local Government. We usually say we have a two tier system, but actually it is three. We have County Council. I was a County Councillor for 18 years. I was leader of a County Council for eight or nine of that period. A Council that has since been abolished by the Government (not I'm sure,
because I was a member of it once)! We have District Councils which represent smaller areas. In a typical Council there may be 6 or 7, maybe 10 District Councils and then a whole host of Parish and Town Councils. Community level Councils - upwards of several hundred in a County the size of Kent, some six or seven hundred.

In the urban areas we have Metropolitan Authorities and Unitary Authorities which combine the legal functions of County and District Councils. Just to complicate it, they are County Councils, even though they are not Counties. Then we have the Greater London Authority and the Mayor. The Greater London Authority is unique, because it is a scrutiny body not a policy making body. Nor is it a body that can - it can veto the Mayor's budget, it can approve it, but it can't set it. We have very recently, had formed in Greater Manchester by the efforts of the local authorities there, a new Greater Manchester Authority where the burrow authorities in and around Manchester have come together and have formed an Authority and Parliament has conceded to that.

We have some elected Mayors (most famous of course Boris Johnston and Ken Livingstone in London), but we have elected Mayors in some 14 other cities and parts of the country. We are about to have probably another dozen, subject to local referenda in the next few years. They have executive powers! There is a big debate as to whether you should have a Chief Executive and a Mayor at the same time. I am a great believer in that you want both. I think they are complimentary. You don't have Ministers in Government replacing their permanent secretaries - it seems to me these are dual roles. The political, the executive and the balance - the relationship between the two is very important.

In most places we have elected leaders (elected by the Councils, usually by a party caucus), because in England (probably a contrast to Queensland), nearly every Local Authority with very few exceptions, is a political contest between the three major political parties. Increasingly the fourth, the Greens having taking control of Brighton and Hove Council, their first Council where they have got political control. So it is a Labor, Conservative, Liberal, Democrat fight with some Coalitions. If you are the majority, you become the Mayor. The leader then appoints his or her Cabinet. You can have strong, or you can have weak leaders.

We all know you can have strong and weak leaders, don't we? You probably have strong leaders everywhere. I know a lot of weak leaders. We actually have a legal form of strong and weak leader. The strong leader can appoint his or her Cabinet, but with the non-strong leader the Council elects them. They are all Councillors and I think that is the important thing to remember.

The structures are different and the legal responsibilities are very different. County Councils’ and Unitary Authorities have responsibilities for Children’s Services, Child Protection, for Adult Social care, personal care for elderly people, disabled people, those are their two big areas of expenditure. They have a role to coordinate schools. They used to manage and run schools. That is increasingly changing as we move towards a more Localist form of education, planning, environmental health, housing, which we are at District Level in the Shire areas. They are different levels but they compliment each other.

We don't have a Constitutional Settlement for Local Government. I have been writing recently and speaking very strongly in favour, of a Constitutional Settlement as you would get in every other European County and you would certainly get it in the United States. Because it seems to me at the moment, our Local Government is at the will and whim of Central Government. It turns it on and it turns it off. Many in Central Government see Local Government as the agency and you hear Ministers quite openly say 'they should do what we tell them to do. Oh and by the way we are Localists and believe in local democracy'. So, there is a real tension there.
Funding
Some Local Authorities get 85% of their funding from Central Government. Some get less than 15%. The funding comes in the form of a Revenue Support Grant, for revenue funding. There were some several hundred specific grants up until the election of the Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition last year. Those have now been rolled into the General Grant. That is quite significant for some. Most local, 85% or the 15% (depending on where you are in the country), is raised through Council tax, which is a property related tax that (have charges and some local fines from traffic offences) go to the Local Authority. Some go to the Central Government and we have got changes proposed to business rates.

At the moment Local Authorities do not set the rate for businesses, they collect it. The money goes centrally to Central Government and it gets redistributed. There is a move now for some of that to be retained by Local Authorities. You can imagine there are some huge issues about transition.

The City of Westminster and the City of London will do extremely well from retaining their business rates. Some rural Authorities and Authorities in the north with serious economic disadvantage, will have a very different position. But, from 2014 onwards, the proposal is - the only additional money you will be able to have as a Local Authority, is by business rates and something called the New Homes Bonus where you get to retain some of the taxation from new homes. This is meant to incentivize growth and authorities to be more open to planning. I think it is going to leave some very big challenges for the future of Local Government in terms of its funding and then capital borrowing.

Local Authorities are quite able to borrow and most still retain their AAA ratings. But, the real issue for Local Government is, it is asset rich and revenue light. One of the big challenges is how Local Government uses its assets, its property and its other assets to leverage in additional capital - work in partnership with the private sector and again I imaging, that is something that will resonate here in Australia. The ability to rationalize the State and free up resources as well!

The biggest challenge facing Local Government is the spending one. We are going through a period of restructuring of the economy, as a result of a whole range of things (and I am not going to talk about the economic background to where we are. We have had references to the global crisis, the banking crisis). We have record levels of public expenditure, public deficit and public debt in the United Kingdom. Some would say it is some what, exaggerated for political purposes! I don't want to get into that contentious area today. Our Chancellor Mr Osborne spoke yesterday, I am sure he had a view, he also told Councils they could freeze their Council taxes for the next few years and he would find a bit of money to help them, but not all of it, interestingly.

The expenditure cuts we have faced across the public sector in the UK (this is UK National level) and then in English Local Government in particular, is the greatest reduction in percentage terms since the late 1920’s. So this really is going back to 1929, not just rhetorically, but in terms of what is happening to expenditure.

Local Government was disproportionately hit (and don't forget, for some Local Authorities, remember 85% of their money comes from Local Government), on average over the next two to three years, that money will be cut by 28%. For some authorities it is 40-45% and for some like Dorsett in the south of England (and those who know England, one of the more affluent parts of our country) they’re actually going to get an increase. Such is the whim of the way in which we - it is a joke that Local Government finances is understood only by two people in England and the two of them disagree and they are both officials in Communities Local Government, which is the sponsoring White Hall Department.
It is extremely complicated, but one of the reasons is taking away those specific grants I talked about earlier. Most of those (and particularly those introduced by the last Labor Government) were to tackle areas of social and economic disadvantage. Of course if you then wired those into the total grant (and those are the authorities that have probably got 80% plus of their funding % from Government), you then take 40-45% off.

Just think about it - if you had to take 40-45% of your budget off and you don't know what is going to come in the next two years after that! Government set a four year spending program nationally, but has only allocated an expenditure for two years, for Local Government. We know that the expenditure targets are not being met. It is unlikely that our health service, which is the biggest domestic spender after welfare payments, will meet its budget. Because of unemployment, welfare expenditure is rising. Big debate about the ability to make massive cuts in the military, not least because of international activity. The criminal justice system has already thrown its hand up and said it won't be making its cuts, thank you very much!

So Local Government is quite fearful that, the Chancellor may come back for further cuts in two to three years time. *A huge period of uncertainty!* Just to compound that big cut, they were frontloaded, so it was a disproportionate amount in the current year, as opposed to future years. As the Governor said in her address, as your President said, the public want reductions in public expenditure, they tell us in opinion polls. Interestingly now, polls in England / the United Kingdom are suggesting it’s about 50/50 that that appetite for cuts is going, as people see what it means when it is their library closing, when they see it's their road not being repaired, it's their classroom for their school getting bigger. That demand is not falling. The demand is not falling just because of public expectations, we have a rise in elderly population and in many parts of the country, a rising population as well.

Some of the traditional ways of dealing with the expenditure reductions, make its efficiencies all important, are just not enough. You can't make 2 or 3% efficiency and expect to get a change.

On top of the expenditure reductions, we have a massive program of reform and change. We had a massive program of reform and change, particularly under the Blair Government and before that under the Thatcher Government. A bit less under the Brown Government, but we have a huge program of reform, from the Liberal Democrat Conservative Government lead by David Cameron. I am not sure if this is meant to be Einstein or not in this slide, but it does sometimes feel as if you have got the *mad scientist* producing these policies. I was interested when in the previous presentations, we talked about things that come and go. Ministers love initiative don't they? So, a new Minister has to have a New Local Government Initiative. Do you know, under the Labor Government, we had 18 education Acts that changed the role of Local Authorities in education. That Government only lasted 13 years (18 Acts!). The present Government is into its second education Act. You know ...................... nothing changes!

Your President boldly talked about the laws of physics. We don't wait to see what has come out of FERN do we, but maybe even the laws of physics are about to be challenged. I think what we are, is in a period where there is a lot of change, a lot of challenge. I know that the great certainties that many of us might be involved in Local Government for 40 years just took as norm, are no longer there.

What are some of those changes? Well, something we call Localism. We are all in favour of Localism. No one is Centralist! Well, there are a few Civil Servants who are Centralists, there are a few Ministers who are Centralists and there are a few traditional Labor Party Fabian Social Democrats who believe the Centre knows best as well.. But the idea is we are going to devolve power from Westminster and Whitehall to Town Hall and then down to the Community Level. We are seeing that trend of Localism, powers moving down. What does that mean in practice?
We have been very descriptive. I said ‘we are all Localists! But Local Government up until last year had something like 530 National Performance Indicators, which it had to report to Central Government on. It meant that Local Authorities employed rooms (not as big as this, but in some places they seemed almost as big as this room) of people, whose only job was to fill in the forms and feed the people in Whitehall. In Whitehall of course, even more people sitting waiting to receive it and interpret it. Then we had an Audit Commission and five or six other inspectorates that went round inspecting it and measuring it.

We are moving away from that, so the national targets are going. The National Performance Management, with the exception of Children’s Services and some aspects of education, are moving away. As I say, some of that power is going. But of course, Local Governments wanted that. But what Local Government was expecting at the same time was more money, so it is getting more powers to make some of the difficult choices. Local Government has been expected to devolve power to Communities, to Parish and Town Councils, to voluntary organisations, to community groups as well, as part of that agenda. And I guess that is an agenda you yourselves will be facing as well.

We are going through a whole range of other policy changes, some of which are on this slide and I am not going to talk in detail to them. They all impact, it all means in this period of uncertainty and make change, Local Government is having to, grapple with taking a lot of money out, while having to think of doing different things in different ways. It is not just Local Government. It is partners in the health service. We are into the biggest change in our National Health Service since 1946 when it was established. The Government stalled half way through, reinstated what it had already undone, the changes it was going to make before. They spent something like 3 billion pounds on that. Go back to those expenditure cuts, who knows and of course the relationship between Local Government and the Health Service Act which is critical for people with long term illness, dealing with public health (Public Health is coming back to Local Government where it was pre to 1974) there are those changes. In Police outside London, we are about to have elected Police Commissioners who are going to oversee the Police Service. But they will be outside Local Government, where as at the moment the Police, is a partnership between the Home Office in Whitehall and Local Government in terms of Governance.

Earlier this year the Government published a long overdue White Paper, on the reform of Public Services. If every Government has to have an Education Act, every Government has to every so often, have a White Paper on Public Service Reform. I think it is best said, I think Ministers in the current Government would admit it (certainly Ministers in the last Government did), sometimes they have to publish it even though they have got nothing new to say, but they have to have a new Paper. The essence of the open Public Services is that there should be a greater pluralism of supply. It should no longer be assumed that the Public Sector should by default, deliver health services, education services, core public services which otherwise would be delivered by Local Government.

There should be more competition through competitive processes - public procurement; a much greater for Not-For-Profit organisations; for voluntary traditional charities; social enterprises; community enterprises. Local Authorities and other public bodies are being encouraged to help and assist their staff to set up employee cooperatives, to speak out in the public sector. So we have the slight irony of the right of centre to Government, advocating workers control and a left centre opposition, not quite knowing how to respond to that and a Trade Union totally bemused by it.

The Government’s ambition is that one in five Public Service employees, by the end of the Parliament in three years time, will be in a cooperative. I think that is over ambitious. But never the less, you see the level of direction and more personalisation for areas such as Child Care (not Child Protection), for adult care, for
managing long term chronic illness such as diabetes in the Health Service. People will be given their own budgets by the State on a means tested basis, to purchase directly from providers. Already happens in adult care (about 30%), but it will be 100% within two years.

Huge change for Local Government, because it ceases to be a provider! Ceases even to be a purchaser and becomes - assess its needs, allocates resources, I think has an advocacy in brokerage role (though not all Local Authorities would agree with that), but its role changes fundamentally. Because we have got less money (I hate these words - co-production and co-payment), but expecting that people will do things, work with the professionals and will make personal contributions.

Most adult care in the UK outside Scotland (where it is free), is funded either totally by, or in part by service users. I suspect within two years (because of the budget cuts), that will be something like 80%. Of course health care is free, so that leaves contentions between if it is a health, or a social care issue.

And co-production, probably where it is best in things like (we are all the same here I know in terms of recycling): we all very religiously spend hours sorting out our rubbish into plastic, paper, disposable tin and we actually think we are doing that for the good of the planet. We are actually doing that to save Local Government some money, so they don't have to employ someone else to do it down the line.

So what has been the response to this massive period of change and uncertainty? Well, it has been very mixed. It has been 'rabbits in headlights'. A lot of people just don't know what to do. There has been a lot of panic. There has not been a great deal of strategy. For some there has been a more strategic response to the situation.

What is happening?
There is some strategic commissioning, by which I mean identifying need, match it up against resources, taking priorities, recognising that you can't just take 10% off all things. You can't salami slice! If you are going to make savings of this level, you have got to say, 'we are not going to do some things'. We have very optimistic National Politicians who go around saying 'don't worry, you have got 30% less money, you have just got to do more for less'. I think to borrow the phrase from this conference - it is about doing things differently for a lot, lot less.

Many authorities have been slashing and burning, making cuts. Not quite knowing where those cuts are being made. Not thinking through what the long term consequences are going to be. Significant amounts of redundancy. I have been in and out of Local Government for forty years. I have not known moral so low and people not being certain if they are going to be in post (I am talking about the paid officials now, because we politicians have always known that we could get thrown out) in three or four month time and if they are, what job they are going to be doing. It is very difficult to look to the long term future when you are in that position. It takes really good effective leadership, by good Council Leaders, Mayors and CEOs working together. Those authorities where that partnership is really strong are coming through this, where it is weak, I wouldn't put money on them. I wouldn't invest in them if they were on the stock market.

There is a lot of devolution and some of that is quite cynical. You push it down the line. A bit like Central Government has done to Local Government. You say, "over to the community, you do it", but there is no money to do it. Very cynical way of doing it, but that is what is happening. There is a growth in outsourcing to the private sector. I know that is something you are particularly interested in here. Many of the traditional areas of outsourcing have been things like, back office support services and IT. If you ripped out every pound spent on back office in every Local Authority in England, you wouldn't find a third of the savings that are going to be required. These things are important. But if you are making a saving of 15-20% by
outsourcing your back office or shared services, it is not going to be enough. It means those big areas like Adult Care and Children’s Services can no longer be protected.

One interesting area we are seeing, in the area particularly of dealing with those families (there may be two or three hundred in any Local Authority) and you will know these families and households - where 60 or 70% of your budget is spent - Where the families can have 20 different professionals working with them because they are dysfunctional. You have got police, criminal justice system, you have got Local Authorities, you have health people, and agencies from the voluntary sector. I sometimes say, the best thing we can do is pay for them to have a social secretary, so they can organize all these people coming through their front door to help them sort out their lives.

What we are looking to do, is invest to put preventive work in place, to get long term savings by different forms of intervention. That is very difficult to do when you haven’t got the money to deal with the resulting problem. There is a great interest in (and we are seeing the first launch of a) Social Impact Bond. This is where money is raised either through philanthropists, or through private markets to invest in services where a private sector organisation, will bear the risk and will be paid by results for the long term delivery, which will accrue the savings back. I am doing some work with Birmingham City Council, that thinks it can halve its expenditure on looked after children and it spends approximately 90 million pounds a year on looked after Children in the City of Birmingham. It is the biggest Local Authority in Europe, so you would expect it to be a big number. We believe that, that can be halved over a five to six year period, but it will require a huge amount of up front investment to make that happen. They just cannot make that, when they are making literally something like 37% reductions across their overall budgets.

Some interesting things going on! You talked about amalgamations. We have had amalgamations and management teams. The most interesting is in the London Boroughs’ of Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster that have moved to what they call the Tri-Borough Arrangement. Not quite a unified structure. They are going to have two Chief Executives, not three, until one retires in a few years time and then they will have one. They have got one Children’s Services Department that is across their whole Authority and they’re beginning to slowly move and integrate all of that. That will make quite significant savings.

I talked about the small District Authorities. Many shared Management Teams, shared Chief Executives, shared back offices and in some cases, complete shared Authorities with different political heads - two or three political heads but one Local Authority in terms of Management Structure. There was a very bold attempt by two Authorities in the east of England last year, to merge their politics, but it didn’t work because they had to have a referendum and the voters rather liked keeping the two separate Authorities. I suspect they didn’t even know they were just lines on the map, but there we are!

So we are going to see a pluralism of supply. A whole range of different sorts of Service Delivery and frankly this is just a continuation of what we have had in England and the UK (England in particular), for the last 20 or 30 years. There will continue to be in-house services, whatever the White Paper says about the assumptions that there won’t be. There will be a lot more shared services between Local Authorities. Between Local Authorities and the Health Sector, Local Authorities and the Police! A lot more out sourcing, joint venturing and partnership working with the Private Sector! Probably looking to the Private Sector to bring capital, to ease over that period of reduction, not just the traditional out sourcing (make a quick saving). There is some of that and some returning to very price driven competition. There is also, a greater role for third sector organisations as well.
Local Authority has been given new powers to set up Trading Companies and act commercially. So, a whole range of different responses emerge over the next few years. Some of those, which I am sure are of interest to you. Like I say, looking for different forms of financing!

One of the most interesting initiatives that the last Government had was Total Place. I had the privilege of working with one of the twelve National Pilots, where we looked at the total public expenditure in a Locality. I was working in Worcestershire County in the West Midlands, just south of Birmingham (population of just over half a million people). The total Public Spend in that Locality was about 44 billion pounds a year. Interestingly, less than 10% of that was under the control of Local Government. The biggest level was the Department for Works and Pensions, welfare payments and transfers and then you move through it. The idea was, you would effectively give a grant to the Locality (naturally I would argue to the Local Authorities, the democratic body), that would then allocate the money between the agencies. It wouldn't have been for everything, I don't think the police would have let their Counter Terrorism money go. But they might have let their Community Policing money, go into that pot. Elements of Health might have gone into it and so on......

The current Government has introduced Community Budgets which are on a much smaller scale, much more client focussed. I think it is a move in that direction. It is a resurgence (where people and I are saying to Central Government), where if you believe in Localism, you have got to give Local Democratic Control over that spend. You can do it more effectively and more efficiently. You can eliminate waste and you can focus it, so it is actually more tailored to what is required in Localities.

Then we have had the big 'Society Vision'. We don't hear so much about it, it has become slightly scarred I think and devalued as a phrase. It was one of David Cameron's great initiatives. Which is very much about greater volunteering, a greater role for the voluntary sector. It is about people taking on a much more responsibility for themselves, for their house holds and for their neighbourhoods. As part of a response to his ideological position of a smaller State, both at National and Local level, partly in response to Public Expenditure reductions, but partly because it is what good society is about. No one, in a sense would disagree and it's a huge opportunity to Local Government (it seems to me) to facilitate some of that change. To build the necessary capacities in Communities! Communities can't just take on additional responsibility, because someone in the Town Hall, or in Whitehall, or in the State Government says, "that is what you have got to do, you have actually got to build it, you have got to invest in it and build that up". We are seeing that move towards the 'Big Society'. Some Local Authorities trying to control it (don't think they are going to succeed), others really keen to make it happen. But, it is going to take some time to do and it. It probably would have been better (and ideally not introduced), at the time of Budget Reductions. People will be cynical that there is less capacity to build. We have a very thriving voluntary and community sector in which makes capital available, to the voluntary sector on the basis that a bank would, in order that they can invest and actually make a return and have to return loans. I think that is going to be very much a part of that picture - of building that approach.

We are seeing a huge diversification. But what we are seeing is that, England is different to Wales, is different to Scotland, is different to Northern Ireland. The fact now is, increasingly one Authority is different to its neighbouring Authority. No two London Boroughs are going to be the same. We are going to have different patterns, different natures of Local Government in different places. Just because of the Political Persuasions - We have got some Labor Authorities that are going to become Cooperative Councils, some Labor Authorities that want to go back to being quite old fashioned Municipal Authorities, Conservative Authorities like Birmingham (who is reconsidering buying up the electricity and utilities). It is a real varied picture that is emerging. That to me is great, but we have a huge problem. We have a media that says you
can't have Local Choice. You can't have what they call a postcode lottery. It is appalling that things are
different in London, to what they are in Newcastle, or they are different in Cornwall to Northumberland.
Well, people are different there, needs are different, choices are different. I prefer to talk about Local
Democratic Choice, rather than postcode lottery. But our popular, particularly right wing newspapers, (not
all owned by News International), don't like it. They love to say, that it is terribly unfair that people can't get
the same. Then they say they want Localism and they want Local Choice! So, there is a lot of tension.

So, there a lot of choices to be made! It is like a child in the sweet shop (which ones do I have)? But,
actually, the pocket money has been taken away, so there is not much money to spend. You have got to
start making some difficult choices. Some of those choices aren't all about pleasing people as I said earlier
and some of them are going to be difficult because, you have got to decide what services you are not going
to be providing anymore, or what services you are going to provide in a very different way. Therefore,
consequently, which staff are you going to make redundant? What things are you going to turn off? These
are difficult choices to be made.

It goes back (and I think this is where, there is a resonance to what I have heard this morning, both from
the Governor and from your President). I think what we are seeing in English Local Government (and I
want to be optimistic, because I am a natural optimist), [I must be because I sort of hankered England
might pick up that World Cup in a few weeks time and we will beat you in the Ashes]). To me the great
opportunism is actually, that difficult Poison Chalice that Central Government has handed to Local
Government. What it has done, is it has handed back the right and indeed the duty of Political Leaders to
be Political. By that I mean, to make difficult Political Choices and to be accountable to local people for
those decisions. I think that is fundamentally important. You are no longer able to hide and say, "Well, that
is what Central Government required us to do and it is their fault". Of course there will be some of that and
if I were a Leader still (and I was a Leader when Mrs Thatcher was making her cuts in the 80's), you will
have to start making some of those Local Choices and being accountable for them. Listening to people,
being closer and more responsive!

Yes, I think we will have a Party Political Local Government System and you probably have a less of one
here in Queensland, than we do in England. I don't think we are going to move from that. But it will mean,
as I said earlier, different Local Authorities will look different. That is a big ask! People don't go into Politics
to make hard decisions necessarily, do they? They don't necessarily go into Politics to make cuts. People
weren't elected to close the Libraries. They weren't elected to stop the school building program. They
weren't elected to oversee potholes in the road, rather than nice new bypasses, or whatever it was that may
have been built. And that is really frightening.

I think it is a big challenge. We are challenged by (I expect for you too), who is going to be the next
generation of Councillors? Who wants to go into Local Government? Given on one hand, there is the real
opportunity to shape and lead your Community. It seems to me, that is what Local Government is about. It
is about Place Shaping Community Leadership! It is far less about whether you run things. It is about how
you influence.

The skills you need to be a Political Leader and a Chief Executive I would suggest, (they are different, but
they are similar), is:

- The ability to persuade.
- The ability to negotiate.
- The ability to commission and contract.
- The ability to listen.
The ability to communicate.
The ability to command.

I am looking at our colleague from the armed forces. Even in the armed forces, you can't simply command. You do have to have some participatory involvement, and listen, and engagement. But you certainly do in democracy! It is a very different requirement and very different mind set. And, I think that is going to be a huge challenge to the centralisers. Don't forget, they are not all in Whitehall in London and they are not all in Canberra in Australia. They can be in the Town Hall or the Council. The number of Councillors I know who say, "We want it all to come out of London to us, but we are not going to let the Community have any of it". So, you have got that tension..............

Where are we going to get the new Councillors? Who are they going to be? How are we going to be Community Leaders? Not just in the Town Hall, but in our communities as well. Working with voluntary organisations, working with faith groups, working with minority communities, making things happen. Facilitating, but not directing. I think that is a huge challenge for all of us and that is the same challenge, whether you are in Queensland, or in Queenstown in Scotland, or wherever. It is the same challenge, it seems to me. It is, how do we deploy scarce resources more effectively, how do we do things differently, how do we dare to be different, how do we dare to be political, how do we dare to represent and lead our Communities, how dare we, to take on vested interests whether they are in our Communities or external? How dare we serve our people?

My message is:
I believe what is happening here is absolutely fundamental to this - Local Government has a Democratic Mandate. We don't have compulsory voting. As somebody who fought elections, I just wish we had on occasion. On average, we get 30-35% and we think that is a good turn out for a Local Election. If you get up to 40-50%, people think there must be a problem. But, it is a Democratic Mandate. No one else has that Democratic Mandate in our Localities. The Police and Health Service - they don't have it! Yes, MP's have it, whether they are State MP's, or Federal MP's in your case and National MP's in our case. But they represent, much bigger constituencies, they are not part of the Local Community, they are not from it.

Local Government has got, it seems to me, a Democratic Mandate. Whatever the legal powers are my advice to Local Government Leaders in England and my advice to Local Government Leaders in Queensland would be, do what you believe to be right for your Communities until someone stops you. Don't wait for them to tell you what to do (Them being someone high up in a different part of Government)! You can claim the legitimacy, because ultimately in four years time or whenever, you will be held to account by the electorate. Those Officials who might try to tell you what to do, will not be held to account in the same way. Whether you are here or back where I will be at the weekend - it is about serving your Community, showing leadership to your Community, putting your Community first.

It is a great privilege to be here. I am looking forward to being here for the rest of the day, then having a couple of days of tourism in your wonderful State, before I return to England. I came here I have to say, on Saturday to cool off, because it was 32 degrees in London on Saturday (which is rather a freak). I suspect (I am going up to Cairns), when I do go back to London next Sunday, it will be much cooler. But I will go back much warmer from what I have heard of the richness of Local Government and its future here in Queensland.

Thank you!
Panel Discussion and comments from the floor:

Community Attitudes Survey & Council Image Campaign – how will this help your own campaigns?

Greg Hallam PSM
Chief Executive Officer
LGAQ

Murray Berghan
Managing Partner
Make Communications

Craig Johnstone
Media Executive
LGAQ

Chair, Greg Hallam:
Folks during the course of the next day, today indeed, we are going to be talking about Local Government Elections. Later on we are going to have an excellent panel session, where you will hear from the top people in the country, about tips and strategies and things that are important as to your campaigns, to those of you who are running again. To set the scene, we are going to talk about community attitudes towards Local Government. We have got Mr Murray Berghan who is the CEO Managing Director of Make Communications, who have produced all of the material that you are seeing on TV on a nightly basis from the LGAQ, about the work of Councils in the Community. Behind that sits a lot of research and a lot of polling. As you know the LGAQ is an organisation, that does a lot of research around these sorts of matters. For the last 12 -14 years we have done a bi-annual Member Attitude Survey and that survey looks at community attitudes towards Local Government.

We also undertake other surveys from time to time that reflect that. I just want to reiterate very briefly what the Governor had said, indeed Paul Bell and John Tizard for that matter - that all of the polls, published or unpublished over that last few years, are all telling us pretty much the same thing - that there is long term decline in public satisfaction with Government and that is world wide. I really want to refresh your memories about the slide that Paul Bell showed. It is the work that Alan Morton did for us, when he spoke to the Policy Executive back in June. What we are seeing here, is an absolute symmetrical relationship in this country with Local Government and we are seeing this with the American Government. So, what is happening to us here is not unique. There is this general funk out there, that people are unhappy and grumpy and it is not just one thing, it is a much bigger process that we talked about.

The Community Attitude Survey did show (as it has showed for a number of years), that relative to State and Federal Government, Local Government is travelling better. That might not be the best benchmark. It might not be who you want to be marked against, and the gap has narrowed, but we have had seven of these surveys which we have been doing for as I say, the best part of 12 years. It does show the same sorts of outcomes, that by and large you are still seen as more relevant and doing a better job than the State and Federal counterparts.
I think in terms of my insight, I have read all the polling any number of times, and again Moreton Consulting did a piece of work for us late last year where they compared all the polls. So we looked at every poll that we had done and about six or seven from other people (including Academia) to pull it all together to find all the commonalities.

What is clear from all that, is the vision thing is not big. At the moment, if you are out there running an election campaign and talking about vision, you are probably doing yourself a great disservice. What people want is practical, believable, achievable and to get on with it. That is the nature of the community at the minute. That is what they think, that is their language. Practical, believable, achievable - get on with it. It doesn't mean to say it is right, but that is what they think.

Longevity in office isn't an issue (I know there has been some commentary about capping terms), but that is not the first time we have asked that question. We have asked it twice before in previous surveys and it didn't influence the outcomes of those elections. And I am sure it won't influence the outcome of this one.

Read behind what the punters are telling you. You have all got that research, it was sent to you all in a summary version. What it is really saying, is they want freshness. Freshness doesn't mean you can't have served twenty years. What they want is fresh ideas and they want someone who is vital, they want someone who is going to address and listen to their issues. They want concrete short to medium term plans. Obviously you wouldn't make a great deal of your longevity, but nor should it be a deterrent for your re-election. As I said, what stands behind that, is give me something concrete, give me something fresh, show me that you can make a difference, tell me that you are vital. Consistent with that - when we asked people in that survey what are the really important things - it comes down to these things: compassion; commitment; honesty; simplicity and above all else Local.

Passion; Commitment; Honesty; Simplicity and above all else, Local!

The survey showed that if there are a group of Councils (and no individual Council was surveyed, because the sample is too small in the community attitude polling), the group that will probably have the biggest and hardest road ahead, will be the rural and provincial Councils. The one Council that we can safely say, that we had enough polling on, (because they are such a big Council and they understand our stars and Local Government). They have been and they remain (that hasn't changed with the political leadership with the new Lord Mayor), so when you see in the categories, Develop Metro, that reads Brisbane. As I said, the sample size is big enough for us to know that we had enough people sampled in there, to say that Brisbane are the absolute benchmark in Local Government.

The other thing we got Alan Morton to do and we pestered him, was to tear apart all of the polling to see whether there was an Amalgamation underlying issue. The answer was there is not. We looked at it, we twisted it and turned it, put it upside down and literally, there isn't a difference or a statistically relevant difference between attitudes towards Local Government in non-amalgamated and amalgamated Councils. You might not believe it, but the polling says that.

The last couple of points I want to make and we heard it again - the number of ways that the bar has gone up. You remember what we do in those polls, is measure on the one hand how important something is and then on the other hand, how well you have performed against that. So we have got the sort of triangulation line of best fit that goes between those two polarities. What the polling is showing, is as a direct result of all those available things we have been talking about all morning, is that they are setting a higher bench mark for you.
What they thought was important, say 3.5 out of 5 the last time we surveyed, or the time before that, is now 3.6 or .7 or 3.8. They have actually pretty browned off with State and Federal Governments and the global arrangements and they are really focussing on you! I am not telling you something you don't know, but that is the truth. They are focussing on you and they have even raised the bar again, so you are not even playing the game you were two or three years ago, you are playing a different game.

On the question of disasters - having done a good job with disasters has earned you absolutely no brownie points. None! But if you bugged it up you are in trouble! Cold comfort, but it is the truth. They really don't care about your dramas, how tough it has been for you. All they're focussed on is how tough it is for them. Us talking about how hard it has been on Local Government is a turn off. They are only interested (and they are quite selfish dare I say it), in some of those views.

If there is some simple, but really important trends that are coming through we have seen it, and it is not inconsistent with what I said before, more listening than leading. You have still got to lead, but they want to see you listening. That is very clear in what we have picked up. And, they want their leadership to be strong. So you have got to have 'A View'. You can't sit on the fence (I think that was very much the message that John Tizard gave), so listening a lot, but when you do lead, they don't want to be confused about what you think. They want to know it in black and white terms, where you stand. You can't sit astride that barbed wire fence.

The final point I want to make is probably the election for pothole Councillors (god bless them)! Those people who annoy all their other colleagues for the four years at a time, or for twenty years at a time, that only ever worry about the potholes, the barking dog and what is happening with the rates (they oppose every rate rise), have probably got lucky this time round. That is the sort of stuff people want to hear.

Finally, some of the concerns that you may have about your political future, bearing in mind it is all about who stands on the day and who your opponent is. The other underlying political current that is in all the polling that I have read (that we have done and others have done), tells me there is still a lot of fear and concern out there. People are fretful about the global situation, they are worried about Greece defaulting or Spain defaulting or Italy or Ireland. They are worried about employment, they are worried about jobs, are worried about their kids and their grand kids. That might be a factor, to go with the devil they know. I just have a sneaking suspicion that despite all this other noise we are hearing (and you can't ignore it), that may well be a factor, because we will be the first to go. I am assuming we will go before the State. By that I am saying, I think there will be a later State Election.

So there you go, that is just my analysis of all the polling we have seen. Polling we have done and others have done. Now to talk more about the campaign that we are running and the polling and work that was done by our group - looking at 'How do we sell Local Government to the Community', 'How do we preposition Local Government before the Amalgamation question'? It is my pleasure in the first instance to had over to Murray and then to the LGAQ's Media Executive, Craig Johnstone.

Murray Berghan

Thanks Greg, I would like to say that what I am about to present, although some of it may seem negative, is about assessing where we are, so we can see how good we can be. If you are looking at this, please look at it as a message of hope rather than negativity.

The first step was to assess what perceptions people had in order for us to work out, what messaging we had to go to the community with. We did this via a survey, (sample size as Greg alluded to), of a thousand
people from each region and we broke that down to South East Queensland, Central Queensland, West Queensland and North Queensland.

Many of you will know how to interpret these slides. I will just give you a brief summary due to the amount of time we have got to explain it, of what the slide says.

The majority of Queenslanders when asked, what their perceptions of Local Councils are - the majority of Queensland residents believe that Local Councils are an essential layer of Government, that provided vital services every day of the year and that they need more funding from State and Federal Governments, which is a great thing. Which is expected? Rates are contentious with 51% disagreeing that they are fair. Considering the timing of this, everyone is short on money at the moment, so that would be an expected response.

How satisfied local residents are with Local Councils and their communication?
What we were aiming to do here, is to try to find a correlation between satisfaction and the amount of communication that Local Councils are able to inform people about, what they are doing. Here the mean score was 5.3 out of a possible 10, for overall satisfaction across the State. Whereas the communication was a bit lower at 5.1.

Councils response to natural disasters being visible!
57% actually saw it and you will see with North Queensland, it being at 98%. Of those people that actually saw the disasters recently, the visibility was at 85%. Once again 91% said yes in North Queensland.

Are Local Councils seen to offer value for money?
- 20% said good value,
- 29% said neither
- The perceptions of value with 37% stating the services and facilities offered are poor value.

Do residents understand the role of Local Council?
This is where we wanted to look at what people were assessing, if they knew about Local Council versus State Government. That they would be able to separate their understanding, so that when we were interpreting the result, we could go to those people that actually understood what Local Councils were. Most residents have a clear understanding of the role of Local Councils versus State. However there is clearly room to educate residents further and there are no differences across regions.

Then we asked from peoples understanding, what are the main responsibilities and services of their Local Council. We needed to determine this as to what communication we had to include, in any campaign that we are about to go out with.
1. Local roads, maintenance and construction.
2. We have grouped together, maintaining recreation services and centres at 37% (included in that is Parks and Gardens; Libraries; Footpaths; Bike Paths; Pools and Beaches)
3. The next highest was Waste Management and Collections,
4. Followed by Water and Sewerage.

Does Perception of Value Change if Knowledge of Councils Roll is Increased?
The Perception of good value does increase, as knowledge of the role of Local Council increases. Perception of poor value still lingers. So essentially, the more people we can move into understanding what Council does, is more than what immediately comes to mind. We are able to ensure that their perception value does increase.
The goal of the campaign was to create a positive association for Local Councils, so that the people that they serve will recognise their importance in assessing commitment to delivering community services.

What can we do better?

This is just a general question when we are doing the assessment, in interpreting the research. While Queensland Councils are currently committed to delivering Community Services, their efforts in roles are not always clearly defined or recognised by the communities in which they serve. There is currently an absence in communication and awareness to the majority of Queenslanders, on the services and functions which are provided by the Councils. An effective campaign requires great positioning, delivered with empathy.

There is a saying in marketing that, marketing is not a battle of products or services, but a perception. This is really what we had to look at enhancing. The message should be delivered as a reminder rather than an in depth education campaign, as most residents are reasonably clear about the responsibilities of Local Councils.

Focussing on the most important services:

- Local Road Maintenance;
- Water and Sewerage Provision;
- Waste Management;

will deliver the greatest feeling of value for the Councils. Recent natural disasters, (as Greg was saying) - messages around the response of Councils to the natural disasters should be used with care, as residents expected a response. Communities did not necessarily perceive the Councils going over and beyond their ‘Call of Duty’ in these circumstances. They were satisfied with their efforts.

Once we gathered the research and those basic insights, we then tried to (this is actually the fun bit, where we go into qualitative research and try and put all those words and statistics into pictures), we look at how people see Council now through image metaphors and then we create a desired perception in order to achieve our goal.

The eight image metaphors that we use are:

1. music,
2. a vehicle,
3. a chair,
4. an activity,
5. a drink,
6. a place,
7. an accessory,
8. a person.

I will quickly go through how people see Council now and then the DNA of how we needed Council to be seen, in order to change the perception of value. This is what I referred to at the beginning. This is a message of hope. Because we have now through the research, got an understanding of how we need to be perceived in order to ensure that we can get people to do what we need them to do whenever we need to do them, if we are talking in their language.

For music:
People saw Councils as elevator music, believe it or not. The elevator music is typically mundane, repetitive and instrumental. While the music is in no way unpleasant or offensive, it lacks in motivation, stimulation and holds no personal touch to the listener. But as I said, this is how people perceive us now, versus the desire which I will get to in a moment.

The vehicle:
(and these are all their words) the Council garbage truck serves a specific purpose, no more, no less. While the Council garbage truck represents a needed function, it is an expected one that isn't usually given much thought. It is reliable, effective and functional, but expected.

The chair:
The chair was a practical bench seat (and remember, any metaphor could have been chosen. Any type of chair, it could have been an office chair or whatever), it is practical, no one comes to expect anything more of it besides being a resting place, to sit on. The chair represents that of what Queenslanders perceive Local Councils as - practical. They serve a purpose and meet this in a basic practical way.

The Drink:
Black coffee in a glass jug! The communal black coffee jug, demonstrates simplicity. It does not reflect that of an exciting nutritional drink. The drink is basic, not too appealing. More of a necessity to help one make it through the day!

The Person:
Once again, this could have been anyone. It was specified as the Lord Mayor and the person is just a name or title, rather than a member of their community. The Council is currently seen as the Lord Mayor, rather than the employees of the Council.

The Accessory:
The accessory was a reflector jacket. This metaphor illustrates how there is a current stereotype held towards Council employees. While the workers whom we are the vests are imperative to the success of the duties carried out by the Councils, Councils are so much more.

The Place:
The place is Town Hall. This image reflects an association Queenslanders would have with a place, in reflection to their Local Councils. It is a Government building and not something the community feels they would necessarily benefit from on a personal level. It is needed, has always been around and always will be. It is just not a place people associate themselves with.

The Activity: The Activity is a polling booth. That really needs no description.

The Desired Positioning - This is the hope!

The Music:
Going from the elevator music, to a guy who many of you will know, Michael Buble! He connects with his audience, offers entertainment in an appealing personal way. He represents a more youthful, modern, popular style of music. Something Local Councils need to reflect to their Communities. They too, are up with current times and here to connect with their people. We are not saying we need to license Michael Buble to sell Councils, but definitely the sentiment and how he universally appeals.
The Vehicle:
Moving from what our people call the garbage truck, to a Toyota Prius. The car metaphor is representative of a liability, economically efficient, modern and environmentally friendly. The car is to its owner what Local Councils are to their Communities - striving to be efficient, environmentally friendly and reliable.

The Chair:
The disabled swing represents inclusion, non-discriminative while being empathetic. Like the swing, Local Councils need to be seen for what they are, which is exactly what the swing represents. They cater for everyone’s needs.

The Drink:
Moving from the coffee, to spring water is a drink in its most natural form. Its healthy, transparent and a source of nutrient needed by everyone and everything. The benefits it provides cross over, to the benefits desired by Queenslanders from their Councils.

The Person:
Moving from the Lord Mayor to Council Employees. They put a face to the Council. They are members of the Community and they are representative of your neighbours - People who share common desires for their communities.

The Accessory:
We are moving to wifi. This is high tech, high performance, compatible, innovative and wifi delivers for its users, everything Local Councils would aspire to deliver to their residents. This metaphor also reflects the importance of communication. Just as wifi offers extensive communicative technology, we want Queensland residents to associate the Local Council, with keeping their communities connected and up to date on the services/functions being carried out to the benefit of the whole community.

The Place:
Rather than it being a Town Hall - to a family enjoying a picnic in the local park. This visual illustrates a setting which Local Councils aspire to reflect. Family oriented, making the communities surroundings enjoyable and desirable.

The Activity:
The Town Festival! This is representative of bringing Communities together to share in celebrations. Local Councils aspire to bring people together, in a more fulfilled non-confrontational way.

So here we have the existing versus the desired. Essentially right now, we have got people who perceive Councils as impersonal and we need to be basically humanising Councils. How we do this move from a brand position, to a brand ambition (a brand ambition is a desired DNA). Come up with a communication idea and we have run through five steps to do that. The conception target, core desire, role the brand, compelling truth and the communication idea.

With the conception target, we are looking for a common denominator that can appeal to everyone. We need to target those people that were unacquainted with Council. Those people that don't have a personal relationship and we can't get close enough to communicate to them.

Their core desire is, for Councils to be trusted to do the best for the community. Utilizing their rates in the fairest, most necessary way! The role the brand must play is, re-advising the residents the roles and achievements of the Local Councils. The compelling truth is, Local Councils have their Local Communities
best interests at heart, they are an essential layer of Government, they provide vital services every day of the year, they react quickly, they can be trusted to do the best for their Community and your Council is made up of people from your community.

The communication idea, which is what we developed for the TV campaign, was to humanize Queensland Local Councils. Now we will play the ad that resulted from this research and the communication strategy developed with LGAQ.

Recording:
When people think of what Councils do: they think of pipes and water works. For waste management and cleaning up the streets; looking after the parks and gardens; arts and aged care; they keep you moving and happy and build a positive environment for our children to grow; and by looking after our bit of Queensland we are contributing to the bigger picture. Your Local Council, the fabric that keeps Queensland communities together.

I will pass you over to Craig - thanks for listening.

Craig Johnstone

Thanks Murray. Just in the production of that ad which occurred over several weeks in July, it was a very hectic schedule and we of course wanted to keep costs down. Murray's crew travelled up north once and the rest were within driving distance of SEQ. I think we captured the essence of most Council's in Queensland. I would like to especially thank Hinchinbrook Council, who helped us out with that cyclone scene that was in the ad. That virtually required a whole day of work for the crew from their Council. They really bent over backwards to help the production crew, to make it look as authentic as possible. The other person I would like to thank is the Moreton Bay Lord Mayor (Allan Sutherland), who managed to pull a few strings when it looked like we weren't going to get into the 'Splendour in the Grass' music festival, because of various hiccups along the way. He was able to convince the organizers that we needed to get in. So I would just like to single out those Councils for particular thanks. Without that level of effort, the ad wouldn't have looked nearly as good as it does.

My presentation is on how people have reacted to the ad and also what we have done to hang off the back of that ad as far as online is concerned. I will go to online first.

As part of the campaign, we have created a website called www.queenslandcouncils.com.au. It is on the LGAQ website and then it stands alone on its own as a website of course. A few of the Councils have got the link on their websites. Thank you very much! The aim here was to downplay LGAQ's involvement and make the website about yourselves and the activities that you do.

We have a little blurb up on the left hand corner. You will see below the screen shot of the ad that we are updating that with Council news. We have a trawl through your website and if there is a story that we thing is particularly interesting (and interesting to people from across the State) we put it up there. It is remarkable how much feedback I have gotten from journalists and others, who discover something about some Council that they have never thought of. But, who are doing interesting things for their community. That is quite a success!

The other success that we have found is the return of the interactive map. LGAQ I am told, had one of these a while ago, now it is back. This map has become particularly fascinating for people. If you click on it,
it brings up a larger version as you scroll over it with your mouse. If you want to go to Carpentaria for example, you scroll to Carpentaria and it will take you to the Carpentaria website. It will take you to the Brisbane website if you scroll over there as well. That has gotten around 2000 downloads. So, people really do get that aspect of the website and it is good for you, in that it is an easy to use means of getting to your website and getting that information to the people who are needing it.

I will just mention too, that we are working out with the Queensland Government, some other uses for that interactive map. I think that is going to be quite exciting when it does come off. So, that has been quite a success story. Over all, that website has had around 5000 visitors since it was put up. People spend an average of around two minutes. Typically they go to the ad and then they go to the map, then come back and read some of the stories. So, it is serving the purpose for which it was created which is good.

We have also got a presence on Facebook which has the same sort of purpose. We are trying to drive Facebook users to stories that may interest them from yourselves, as Councils. We are also on Twitter. I actually handle three Twitter accounts for LGAQ. This is one of them (visual). This one I have tried to make sure, that it only provides stories generated by yourselves. It is a means of directing people again, back to your websites. The other one is LGAQ, which I have been using to Tweet this Conference on and thank you very much to the people who have joined the stream. It is #tagLGAQ if anyone would like to tweet their impressions of the Conference, or let their followers know what is going on here.

That is the online aspect of this campaign. That is permanent of course and very low cost. We did that all in-house. We are maintaining it in-house as well. That is in conjunction to the money we spent on producing the ad and screening the ad.

We thought the Conference would be a good time (because the ad has been screening since mid August and we did get some very good spots before the football finals, in A Current Affair, the Channel 9 News. It got quite a good airing). I haven't come across many people who haven't seen it. That is in SEQ and across the State as well. We just decided that, well how did it play out. Did it shift the needle for people as far as their impressions of Local Councils are concerned! We went out and did a short fast survey of 1000 people again.

We asked simple questions like:
How many times had the commercial been seen. You can see there that the most common was twice, which is good. Some even saw it three times or more, which is very good.

Was the message understood, did they get it, did they see it as positive for Councils: Of course the overwhelming majority did.

Those who thought it had a negative response to the ad. They just didn't get it (most of them). They thought it related to the environment and it was only a few who expressed any negative thoughts about their Councils.

Then the survey went on to present some statements to them, just to test whether they agree with these statements, or they disagreed strongly or not so much.

1. I don’t know what my Council does. This is after they have said they had seen the ad. You can see that there is a bit of a mix, but the leaning, is toward not agreeing with that statement. They do know what their Council does.
2. Councils just do the essentials. Again a mixed result, but the weighting is to disagreeing with that statement, in response to what the ads message was.

3. My Council provides other amenities and events that enhance my life. There you can see, in total there is around 64% who agree with that statement. 22% are sitting on the fence and there is a small minority who disagree.

4. Whether you trust your Local Council or not: The response here was pretty good as well, although that neutral 29% is worryingly large. I think that is something that needs to be worked on, when we go into the second stage of the campaign.

I think I will just leave it there. I have got South East Queensland and Regional Queensland breakdowns if you are interested in any of them, come and see me and I will take you through them. In the interest of time I think I will leave it there, other than to remind you that the point of this campaign was, to pre-position Councils in response to the upcoming referendum on Constitutional Recognition. That is something else that I am involved in with the Australian Local Government Association and other State Associations. We are building a communications plan. I am involved in working with the expert panel, that has been charged with coming up with the referendum question. That expert panel has a discussion paper out at the moment and they’re asking for submissions. Those submissions close on the 4th November and they would like people from the community and Councils to respond to the Discussion Paper - to actually contribute to the debate, about formulating the question that will be put at the referendum and probably at the next Federal Election in 2013.

In conjunction with Local Government as you know, there is the question on Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous People. That expert panel put out a discussion paper. Their submissions closed last Friday and they had 3400 submissions. That shows you the level of interest in the other question that is going to be put at the referendum. I think it is in your interest, to make sure that there is a lot of enthusiasm about that Local Government question as well.

Thank you very much.

Greg Hallam

Thanks Murray and Craig. I think you will have found that was very interesting. As I said, people probably don’t appreciate some of the stuff that goes on behind this - When you see an ad campaign. They didn’t mention that they had focus groups as well, to test some of the concepts, while they developed the concepts. It was a really deliberate strategy. This is exactly what the political parties do, so that is the level of sophistication that we have engaged in.

I will just make the point again. There were two different lots of polling. There was the normal Fred Rogers Memorial Foundation community attitude polling and there was some polling that asked some similar questions, but asked some very different questions. As Murray said, it is all about what people feel and think (their perceptions rather than reality). So we did some different types of questioning, about the sort of hot buttons we needed to push in terms of the ads.

Questions from the floor

Question:
Basically I picked up the bat just to try to do as good a job as I can and was not interested in politics, although it is rearing its ugly head now. One of the things I would like to know is, has there been any quantitative effort in any way, that anyone can work out how you got the perpetual 'nay-sayers' in any of these programs? There are people within my Constituency, that I have bent over backwards to try to help and it doesn't matter what you do (and they will probably do the same to the next Council as well) so, is there any way of separating the professional 'nay-sayers' out of any of this, so that you do get a better understanding of what the figures mean?

Answer:
I think that the polling that LGAQ does on the Community Attitude survey and the polling that Murray’s crew did, is weighted towards regions and it will naturally pick up some ‘nay-sayers’. If you think that any results of the polling is skewed because you have got ginger groups in the community contributing to them, that is not the case and it doesn’t come into the methodology. They certainly do agitate in newspapers, talkback radio and that sort of thing. When professional pollsters go out into the field, they are awake to any real attempts to manipulate the results.

Answer:
Could I just add, in those surveys (and you are welcome to see the results. We did send them all to you. You have all got copies of those), we break it down to what the pollsters call cohorts We can see the age profile, we can see the education profile, we can see whether they are Brisbane City, fringe Brisbane, provincial, rural, remote. We can also see all sorts of attributes about that particular person. We can pretty much describe them to you, but I suppose you already know that anyway in your own sense. All the research I have seen over the years, is that you can’t change that small percentage of people - it is very hard to get them to change their opinions.

Question:
Brad Carter - Rockhampton Regional Council
Thank you very much for that description of the polling and the results. The question I would like to ask you, is in relation to the fact that, (I guess that my reading of the public sentiment is similar and consistent with what you have described), but the question is knowing that if we put a few more swings into the park, a few more shows on at the theatre and fix a few more potholes - that that's the sort of issues that our community is looking for. How do we target our true responsibilities to really assist our community, to win confidence from the community in relation to the Statutory Requirements of adopting a Community Plan, the long term Strategic Plan of our Region, the Development of the Land Use Plan etc? All of those key things that will create the real future prosperity for our future generations. How do we adjust winning the confidence of the Community from fixing swings, to the long term strategic issues and win their confidence at an election?

Answer:
That is a good question and I suspect it is not either or, but it is about the balance, it is about the language you use in the community. So in other words, you have still got to do all your strategic stuff, but how you describe it, the language you use to describe it and it is about the weight it has in your communications. Is it the biggest thing you talk about, or is it the smallest! As I said, with everything I have seen and we have read all the polls, we have pulled all the polls together and looked at all those commonalities, tells me at the minute - chunk it down, make it as small and believable as you can.

Do all your strategic stuff, make mention of it, but it shouldn't be the thing you talk about most. It is just a question of the language and the weight you give to those smaller believable things. I think when you will hear this afternoon from someone like Bruce Hawker (who is the head of Hawker Britton and one of the
leading Political Strategists in the country), when things get really grim they call it sandbagging seats - they have hundreds of small announcables. I think the politicians have found that, if you have a big project, you actually go backward. And if you remember the Federal Election where they tried to buy seats, or hold seats in Western Sydney, it backfired on them because people thought it was unbelievable and that it had been promised before. Hopefully that answers your question.

It is about what you say, as much as what you do. If you focus the majority of your talks about the smaller knitting stuff, then you are probably telling people what they want. You have still got to do the other stuff no matter what.
Hon Paul Lucas MP  
Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State

Thanks Paul. I have just come back from New Zealand with my three sons, where I got to watch seven games of rugby in two weeks and also realised how cold, wet and windy New Zealand is. Thanks for having me here today to say some things to you. Can I acknowledge the traditional owners, the Kombumerri Nation, Paul your President, Greg your CEO, other distinguished guests, Mayors and Councillors of course and welcome all to the Gold Coast.

To say that we have had an interesting time in the last twelve months in Queensland, in terms of dealing with what nature has thrown up to us, is a massive understatement. I don't know about you, but I have always thought that in terms of doing a job in public life, it's the hardest things that are the most challenging and the most enjoyable to deal with.

During the flood and cyclone disaster that confronted this state earlier this year, I got around to forty three different communities throughout Queensland with Mayors and Councillors. I don't think I have enjoyed anything more in terms of dealing and interacting with Councils, than I have during that period of time. So many of you that I knew, but I got to know so much better working with you over that period of time. We all have our strengths and weaknesses as individuals and as indeed in our job, but the quality of leadership that I observed in Local Government at the time, was really outstanding.

One of the things that I have tried to do in my political career, as I would much rather work cooperatively with people than fight with them, much rather work for common ground than to work for things to have a blue about (though if we need to have a fight we will do it), but when you actually work cooperatively together, that is when communities actually see the benefit of their elected officials. You don't get any points by having a shot at Councils and Councils don't get any points by having a shot at States, or indeed Federal Governments for that matter and I really did enjoy working with you. If I started naming you, I would end up naming all of you in terms of that working relationship over that period. I just wanted to thank you for that.

I also wanted to make this point! You have had your discussion about your Surveys on Public Opinions - we see them about State and Federal Governments. They also indicate very clearly, that it's that cooperative working together, that outcome focused orientation. It's a bit like when your kids argue, you don't want to hear about who is right, or who is wrong. That's what constituents are like as well, they actually want to see that cooperative work.

We should not in any way, fail to estimate the importance of political leadership in these disasters, whether that be at a State or a council level. So many times we are able to get on the phone to each other and talk about issues that at a bureaucratic level (despite the best efforts of people within the bureaucracy of State, Council and Federal Governments), we are simply not attuned to seeing matters with the glasses on the eyes, like those who are elected officials do. There were so many occasions, where we could talk to each other and deal with those matters. That is the importance of Elected Government. Rather than running everything by (with great respect to them) people who are employed to do that purpose, and thank you for that.
The other thing that became absolutely, blindingly, painstakingly, obvious to me over that period of time, was that Local Government amalgamations provided Local Governments with the ability, with the gravitas, to respond adequately to those situations. In the past, what we have been able to rely on with the disasters, is borrowing equipment from neighbouring Councils and the like, (you can't do that when you have an area so large devastated). But the ability to marshal those resources across larger areas, to be able to pay staff, to be able to provide those services, that you wouldn't otherwise have been able to do. One Mayor told me at one stage (we were driving in his area; this is unrelated to the floods and the disasters) that his council could now employ Environmental Health Officers, because they couldn't previously afford to do that when they were individual councils. It was crystal clear to me that the ability to respond effectively and appropriately was massively enhanced by the size and the gravitas of those councils.

In response, we could talk for hours and hours, about the flood and cyclone disasters but we won't do that, because there are other things I want to cover. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority has been, I think, a really good example of the State setting up agencies to work with councils, to cut through the red tape. I see Steve here from Lockyer and some of the work that has been done there in terms of new housing developments there, for people in Grantham are a classic example of that.

In particular, I am very aware that it's the smaller councils that have challenges with the flood mapping and these are really quite significant for you. I know areas (Bundaberg for example) had done its flood mapping, with the councils that it acquired as part of the amalgamation, The flood plain mapping work done by the QRA in consultation with ten Councils (LGAQ, GO Sciences Australia, the Fitzroy Basin Association) is really very, very significant in that ability to actually, (not even talk about what a Q100 was), but where an area has ever in fact in known history, flooded. Using the sort of science I don't know anything about, but they know a lot about. That is all very in interesting, tactical, useful information for all of us in doing what we do.

In terms of NDRRA payments, you would be aware of the work undertaken by the State Government with the Federal Government (also with the LGAQ) and I should just as an aside, put a plug in for how hard Senator Joseph Ludwig has worked. He has worked cooperatively with the State, in relation to federal interests and the concessions in relation to NDRRA monies for day labour. We agree with you in relation to that. I see the distinction between someone who happens to be an employee and someone who happens to be an employee of a private sector organisation as an arid distinction, if it comes to whether it's an NDRRA claim or not. It should surely be whether the nature of the work is NDRRA compliant, but this is what Federal Government's rules are and the concessions at least you manage to secure, are very significant.

QRA is dealing with NDRRA claims as a result of the summer disasters, but my department is dealing with all the residual claims and as you know in Queensland we have disasters all the time. I am pleased to say that, through working very hard, that my department has been processing all of those historic claims. I don't think that there are any of them outstanding now, other than one or two that we got in the other day. We paid out about $450,000,000.00 for disaster claims prior to November 2010. I made it a very important task for us to do that.

Paul mentioned earlier, the work that we had done together in relation to conflicts of interest. There is no doubt that Local Government elected officials, have more power in relation to Town Planning matters, than anyone else in the State - with the exception of myself and the powers that I have as a Planning Minister. I have far more power than any State Member of Parliament and it is so often in that area, where the potential of the mixture of money and developing and property interests, problems can happen. On the other hand however, what we do not want are ridiculous silly claims about conflicts of interest, because any
councillor could be appropriately a member of many community organisations. Many of them might be a member of a political party. Many of them might be members of a profession! To suggest that there are conflicts of interest that can disqualify essentially the whole Council..........we had a ridiculous claim written, (well it was written by Des Houghton, therefore it was of course ridiculous) that I couldn't sign off on a Brisbane Local Area Plan, because the Labor Party owned the land and I had a conflict of interest because I was a labor Minister. Well on that basis, no Minister could sign off on the Brisbane City Conservative Plan, therefore the plan couldn't have been adopted. I mean, how ridiculous! That is not the law, that is just Des being Des. What we did, is work with you in relation to those conflict of interest provisions, to make them a lot more sensible and I trust that they will work effectively with you.

On the point of the powers of Ministers and the like, when I first came back to the Planning part of the portfolio (I hadn't had the Local Government part before), I know that you were quite concerned about the level of whether the State, would start forming Development Assessment Panels. I told you that we wouldn't do it and we haven't done it. I have kept our word.

I would just make this observation to you though! A recent incoming Conservative Government in Western Australia has established Development Assessment Panels for developments there. Over 15 million dollars in Perth and 7 million dollars in the rest of the state - with an opt-in between 10 and 15 million dollars in Perth and 3 to 7 million dollars in the rest of the State. Not much of a development, there has to be a 3 million dollar development for an opt-in, in the rest of the State. That is what has happened in Western Australia. I have kept my word to you in relation to that and in my time as Planning Minister, I have called in ten matters. Nine of those I have assessed in accordance with the original Council Officers recommendations. I have never rolled the recommendations of Council Officers in relation to one. In fact some of them I was called in at the request of the Council. I get more requests - and I can think of one that Bob Abbott asked me to call in at the Sunshine Coast. It was outside the Urban Footprint. I have got one in at the moment that I have yet to assess. It is about working together and it is about respecting your role in these matters and I do, and the Government does!

Working with Councils
One area that we have sought to work very, very quickly and expeditiously with you, is in relation to Planning Scheme amendments. Planning Scheme amendments are an important part of processing and updating what Councils' do, in terms of their rules in that area. What we have sought to do, is very much get them in and out the door very, very quickly. We have got more to do yet and I wanted to make a couple of observations about that.

First of all we will increasingly report both on State Government performance and on Council performance when it comes to the time involved in Planning Scheme amendments.

Secondly most Council's are very good at engaging with the State, even before they lob the Planning Scheme amendments. I just mention for example (and this is not an amendment, it is a Planning Scheme) the level of engagement that Toowoomba had with the State Government about its Planning Scheme, prior to it actually lobbying it on us, was extensive. They actually wanted to work through it first. Not, here is a surprise and then get cranky when it is not turned around in two seconds flat.

There are one or two Councils that are distinguished by not doing that. Similarly, the current Sustainable Planning Legislation does provide time for State to assess matters, when it comes to Planning Scheme amendments. They are reported against and I have reported against them. Unlike the Federal Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act, it doesn't allow for the stopping of the clock
when matters go back to Councils for further information. I will have a look at how we might actually better reflect that information, so that we can provide adequate performance information to people.

Another example of us working with you, relates to the major projects offers. I know how it is frustrating for developers and indeed for Councils, to make sure that State Agency referrals and the like are ones that are bought together. When it came to the issue of the Major Projects Office, we could have gone two ways. One way would have been to provide it with an approval process power much like the Coordinator General has for major projects. But again, look at what we do. What we did was adopt a procedure where by, it is a facilitator. It doesn't take away approval processes, either from State Agencies or indeed from Councils. Its role is to facilitate and to bring together, to be a one stop shop that will benefit both property interests and indeed Councils in terms of working together.

I just wanted to mention the Urban Land Development Authority, which is operating very effectively in many parts of Queensland at the present time. I should note that there are only one or two exceptions with Councils, that aren't absolutely enamoured with it. I think you will find that everybody understands the importance of having an organisation like that, bringing together that skill set. We know (certainly in some of the smaller communities), the ability to have significant senior Planning staff was beyond either, their financial ability, or indeed essentially the practical implications of having people in remote locations and the ULDA being there, (particularly in mining communities) has been a very significant assistance to those Councils in providing that skill set.

- In Moranbah we are working hard with the Isaac Council, to deliver a new housing product to a town that has long been constrained by mining leases;
- In Blackwater, Central Highlands Regional Council to increase the housing supply;
- Mackay Regional Council's joint venture partners at Andergrove;
- In Gladstone, the Premier announced a second UDA and similarly MOU's with a number of those Councils;
- The work we are doing with the South East Queensland Councils in relation to Flagstone, Yarrabilba and Ripley is also incredibly important;
- And the work in relation to Caloundra South.

Shortly, or not shortly, we just closed consultation in relation to the Bruce Highway Strategy and Infrastructure Plan and the Regionalisation Strategy. The role of Regional Planning is really, something that Queensland was the first State in Australia to get serious about. We are the first State in Australia to understand, that things happen in regions, not just in particular Council levels, or not in whole of state levels. The award winning South East Queensland and indeed Far North Queensland Regional Plans, were not just about the State Government saying, 'well this is where development should go and what particular areas and ways'. It was about a compact between the State, councils and communities, about the balance between land for urban uses, land for industrial uses, land for agricultural uses and land for environmental uses.

And by and large it has worked pretty well. In fact, when I think about the delegations I have had with councils in relation to areas under urban footprints, there has been very, very little disagreement in relation to those. In fact they have been at the margin. By and large, what it has done, is provided you with the ability to protect the integrity of your Planning Scheme against those people who think they should be able to do anything, anywhere, whenever it suits them. That is not what appropriate planning is! The State has significant finances obviously, as it is a State Government. But for some of you in Councils, getting taken
on by multi million dollar developers pulling on your Planning Scheme, the Regional Planning process provides you with those strong protections.

I am delighted that the Opposition recently uploaded a statement acknowledging our good work on SEQ and FNQ Plans. We have got seven of them and the Wide Bay Burnett one, was just adopted the other day. Of course we have got the Mackay, Whitsunday and Hinterland one out as well, which are out there for discussion at the present time. I should note that major prizes in 2005, 2006 and 2009 - the Planning Institute of Australia awarded the Government in relation to these plans.

Recently I saw some discussion from certain people (not the Mayor, I make this quite clear, not the council) in the Mackay region, about the Mackay, Whitsunday, Hinterland Regional Planning process. On the one hand it was argued by certain people up there, that it should be scrapped and the idea of allowing the Urban Footprint to do whatever it wanted to do. Then we find the other day that the argument is that, our opponents believe that the way to protect land from mining incursion is via Regional Planning processes. Well... you can't have both.

Regional Plans are a good idea! You can't then go out into one community and say they are not a good idea, then all of a sudden decide they are a good idea somewhere else. They are a good idea and we will continue to roll them out in cooperation with councils.

In relation to good quality agricultural land and mining and strategic cropping land, I want to say, that my dealings with Councils have been overwhelmingly productive when it comes to dealing with this difficult issue. It is a difficult issue in many regional and rural communities and indeed in, just about all of Queensland is concerned about the balance between mining and agriculture. But, that is a balance I think we can get right. All of Queensland should not be a mine. Also, what we need to do is have an appropriate balance. According to the ABS, the value of agricultural output in Queensland (I think in 2009) was 9.45 billion dollars. Mining was 49.43 billion dollars. That shows you the different in output.

Now, I have been in New Zealand as I said before, for two weeks. The standard of living in New Zealand is not remotely near these days, what it is in Australia. People say 'well, what is the difference between Australia and New Zealand'? Some people argue the difference, is that New Zealand doesn't have mining. If we didn't have it, then our economy would be far closer to theirs - agriculture and tourism - which are important. But, that is the difference between New Zealand and Australia. We need to get that right.

That is why the strategic Cropping Land Policy in relation to those two ultra high quality areas, has been very significant. Again, it is the first in Australia, to approach the issue of balance between interests of mining and interests of agriculture.

Secondly, the proposal for a two kilometre buffer around urban centres, from exploration is again a significant protection of community interests. I suspect that ultimately it will be a question though, of mining companies, ensuring that they act responsibly in communities. Some are better than others at it. Some need to do better and we need to work with them. One thing is for sure, when you look at that figure (49.43 billion dollars in mining output, agricultural output 9.4 billion dollars), the way that we will guarantee a future in regional and rural communities for people who want to be farmers, who we need to be farmers, who we need to be growing crops, is to provide them with the economic opportunities that the resources sector can do, if it does it responsibly. It will allow people to stay on farms. In fact, if you have a look at employment (I am not sure if I have got the figures here), in 1979, thirty years ago, there were 375,000 people working in the agricultural industry in Australia. In 2009 there were 318,000.
Because we are amongst the most efficient farmers in the world, we actually have less and less people working on farms. The challenge is, if we don't want to depopulate the bush, to make sure that we have things and reasons for people to stay there, that there are the services and that everyone is provided for. As I said, I am not saying to you that Local Governments are not being part of that. You guys are actually, I think, at the forefront of doing it in a responsible way. I would congratulate you for how you are working cooperatively on this issue.

Similarly, there has been some discussion in various areas about regions and royalties. I am glad that I can talk to a Local Government Conference of all of Queensland, because I think Cairns is pretty important too! I think the Gold Coast is pretty important too. There are not too many mines that are located in Cairns or on the Gold Coast. Does that mean that they shouldn't have expenditure in relation to their important regional challenges? There is not too much electricity that is generated on the Sunshine Coast. Does that mean that people in Emerald should say, 'we will keep all our electricity to ourselves and we mightn't send it down to you on the Sunshine Coast'? There is a fair bit of water that is stored on the Sunshine Coast. Does that mean that they shouldn't send to Ipswich where there is no water, but a bit of electricity!

What I am saying to you is: What is far more important, is for Governments to provide money to regions. Appropriate funding to regions and that is why we make no apology for spending a disproportionate amount of money in regions, compared to the South East corner. We do not want to get into the argument of what percentages are spent where, because if we do that, we then get into the situation that 20% of payroll tax comes from outside of South East Queensland and less than 20% of stamp duty. Royalties are 2.8 billion dollars compared to payroll tax and stamp duty of 4.9 billion dollars.

What I am saying to you is, what we should be agreeing on (this is what the Regional Strategy is about and the Infrastructure Plan is about), we need to spend money in regions as the State Governments and as Federal Governments do - because our regions are significant and important to us. Or else we will have Mt Isa saying 'Townsville don't mine anything, they're a port. Why should they have a royalty paid to their region, it should all be in Mr Isa'. People in Cloncurry might say 'well you know, we have got a different view of that as well'. Let's work together on that!

The Infrastructure Plan
I just wanted to make a couple of comments on that and the Bruce Highway Strategy. We will have it out in the not too distant future. Infrastructure Plan: a number of you have responded to our request for Local Authority Projects that you sought to have incorporated into the Infrastructure Plan and we will give those consideration.

There is one thing though, the theme of your Conference is 'Dare to be Different' - here is an area that I challenge you to deal with. This is the area of going out and taking some hard decisions when it comes to things like Infrastructure for the future. Don't fall pray to short termism.

Can I tell you, that with things like the Tugun Bypass and the various road projects that I was involved in as Transport and Main Roads Minister (and the Rail projects) - you will never build anything, unless you have critics! But you need to do it! The classic example is this one: Ayr/Home Hill (I am not having a shot at the Council over this I am just making a point about it). This was derailed ten years ago by John Anderson and Deanne Kelly. With all the discussion about the Bruce Highway Strategies and the issues after the floods and cyclones, the Bruce Highway at Ayr and Home Hill, goes around the War Memorial in town. If you are going to be serious about, talking about what the Bruce Highway does and where it goes and its capacity, you need to be talking about (and Gympie seem to be fine with actually saying, 'we want a bypass', they didn't need to have it going through their town), we need to actually be serious about taking on these
issues. I don't know how good your eyesight is there, but we have got local cane growers there saying, 'oh, it got derailed in 2000 and John Anderson pulled it off the agenda under a then Liberal Government. There is a big chance, if the Liberals get back in again, it will be canned again - well Amen!

If you can't stand up to people when it comes to the importance of building this infrastructure, then you might as well not be in the game. That is what I challenge you to do. To be talking not just about what project we are building today, but where we are building in five, ten and twenty years time. Where the corridors should go; Where the road should go (even if we are not going to build the road today).

Stock Group Management
I didn't really want to talk to you in detail about that, other than the fact that you would be aware that we have the most extensive Stock Group Network in Australia - 72,000km in length, covering 2.6 million hectares. Last month we introduced a bill in Parliament proposing a locally managed system, with more responsibility for managing the network given to Councils. With the significant increase in revenue to Councils over, what the State used to get. The reform will provide a fairer system for graziers and rate payers and will take effect in 2012. That is a collaborative process and I think is significant.

There has been discussion about devolution of power. I have been in many parts of the world and observed what different Councils do. In other States, Councils' do not provide water. They do largely in Queensland. In many parts of the world (in particular New Zealand and other places) Council's provide public transport. Councils take on the role of subsidising public transport. As the old saying goes, 'sometimes you had better not wish too hard for something, you might actually get it'. Not that you are going to get transport. I am not suggesting that for a moment. All I am saying to you, I think we have made a number of important moves towards providing appropriate increased powers to Councils when it comes to dealing with issues.

What I am very keen to engage with the LGAQ and indeed individual councils, is the current powers that you have, what can the State be doing to facilitate you exercising them? For example, under the Sustainable Planning Act when we bought it into law, it enhanced significantly your ability to deal with people who are non-complying with Town Planning provisions. In the past it was very difficult for you to get interim orders and those sorts of things. That was providing increased powers for you to do your job. That is what I want to know. I want to know what powers do you have, (that we could work with you more effectively) to allow you to do your job in relation to those areas of your responsibility. In fact I note in your own recent discussion paper (Post Amalgamation), Local Government revenue in Queensland being $2,111.00 per capita compared with expenditure of $1,751.00, so you’re in a net profit situation there. That will make interesting reading.

There was some discussion the other day about SPUR. I just want to quickly touch on this. Townsville Council actually collect their own debts. There is nothing stopping you, other than for port imposed fines (which are very few compared to most of the debts that you have - tickets etc) you collecting them yourself. So, if you want to collect debts for tickets, parking and all those sort of things, do it! There is nothing stopping you doing it. Don't use SPUR if you don't want to. That is what Townsville do. No problem with that what so ever. In fact, one might argue that the state tax payer is paying to (because things like SPUR obviously have costs) secure the payment of Council debts. So if you want to do it yourself, please feel free to do it.

Though I am happy to talk to you again, about what we might do together to enhance efficiency of those matters. For example: one area that is effective in relation to the collection of debts I think, is the ability to put them on rates notices. Is that something we want to have a talk about? I am more than happy to
consider it and then you can collect them via that method. Those are the sorts of things that we are happy to work with.

Thank you very much for having me here today to task with you. The events of the summer of this year threw up to us, I think, a natural disaster on a scale and intensity, unprecedented I think, probably in the world. You responded to the occasion remarkably. You did great credit to yourselves as individuals and to yourselves as Councils and communities. It was a pleasure to work with you. I think you understand that, that cooperative working relationship is something that doesn't just come. You actually have to work at it and the good relationships, the reforms that we can do, if all we do out of these disasters is say "Well that's it, got through those, now back to business as usual", then we have done the wrong thing.

The ability to:
- Look at new planning instruments that actually see how we build in flood prone areas;
- The ability to say, 'What are we doing in mapping';
- The ability to say 'Ok, we need to have a Bruce Highway that is far less prone to natural disaster, flooding and the like';

We need to have a road network that prioritises those particular issues that, are all about saying, we have learnt the lessons from these disasters. Not just about saying, 'they happened, we responded to them, forget about them'. We should never forget about them and the best way for us to demonstrate that we never forgot about them, is to actually make the changes that are appropriate in this modern world, to make it even better still.

Thanks very much!
Council Elections 2012 – What makes a successful election campaign – Tips and Tools of the Trade?

Chair: Dennis Atkins, National Political Editor Courier-Mail and panellist ABC TV “The Insiders”

Presentation on the latest US Trends –
Craig Johnstone
Media Executive
LGAQ

And comments by:

Bruce Hawker, Principal, Hawker Britton
Ben Myers, Policy Strategist, Leader of the Opposition’s Office
Sharon Lee, Poll Topping Councillor and Community Consultant

Introduction:
I will hand over to Bruce Hawker. Bruce has been in North America as well recently. Could you reflect on some of the things Craig had to say and also some of the things you saw while you were there?

Bruce Hawker
Managing Director, Campaigns and Communications Group

One of the big things that is happening over there at the moment, is the explosion of campaign financing. Craig touched on that, talking about the 1.8 billion dollars that has been spent on the recent mid-term elections. In the last year, there was a Supreme Court decision called 'Citizens United', which basically turned all the rules about political donations on their head. After Watergate in the Nixon years, there were big changes in the United States about how much you could donate, under what circumstances and requiring full declarations. Essentially, the 'Citizens United' case, using First Amendment principles (which is the right to free speech, which Andrew Bolt is very strong on now), basically turned all those rules on their head. Now it is pretty much open slather as far as campaign financing goes there.

I think we are going to see big changes in Australia, in the coming years. They have already started in New South Wales, about circumstances in which you can raise money, how much money you can raise (both for State and Federal) and I think Local Government elections as well. That is something that people are going to have to be very conscious of. I think we are not going to be going down the American path, but the clock is ticking. There are signs that in certain circumstances, we more likely thought, the big challenge for people who want to do their own campaigns at a Local Government level is, to understand the value of what they call, low dollar contributions.

That is the sort of thing Obama did, but that others have done successfully as well. That is, very aggressively targeting people, to donate small amounts of money to your campaign. So, rather than having to depend on the multi millionaires to fund the campaign, you can get lots of small donors. Whatever laws are going to be introduced, I think you are going to be quite legal in Australia. I think the smart operators at a Local Government level will be starting to think, 'how do I garner that basis of support'? Over there, it is about building a relationship with people on donation lists and continually trying to grow them. Giving
people a bit of extra insight into what you are doing, what your campaign is about and how they can relate to it. That is the sort of thing that Obama did as well and other successful campaigns have done.

Rule one of any political campaign, is really having some money to be able to put together a decent campaign. The big thing out of the States or Canada particularly, is a big expansion on what they call 'Low Dollar Donation Canvassing'. They are talking about an average of a $50.00 donation. That is one big thing that has come out of there.

Interestingly, talking about Goldwater and this conference 'Dare to be Different' - a conference I attended in the United States in 1996 in the wake of Clinton's second big victory, was called 'All Campaign's are Different, All Campaign's are the Same'. I think there is a lot to be said for that. When you are campaigning, it is very important that you inject something that is very different into it. But, observe the rules that we all have drummed into it (that Craig has been talking about). Everything Craig has been talking about today, are just tools for communicating, Communicating successfully and effectively with people. That is all it is.

On top of that though, obviously you have to have a lot of other things, including a good reason to be elected - Decent policies, which some people turn their back on, but also campaign discipline. One of the things that you will learn out of the United States, is campaign discipline is everything. In 1995 when we were campaigning for Carr's election, we had a particularly bad day and Graham Freudenberg (who was Whitlam's famous speech writer), came up to me and said "You look pretty glum". I said "Oh we have had a bad day and we made a couple of mistakes". He said "Just understand that they call them campaigns because they require military style precision and discipline if you are going to be successful". You didn't show that today, you paid the price in the way in which it was reported on television.

That is rule number one of political campaigning and it applies here as it does in the United States. Make sure you have got absolute discipline in the way in which you go about your campaign. Nut that out well in advance and some of these tools (that Craig has been talking about) will come your way.

This 'Telephone Town Hall' technology that Craig was talking about is really interesting. It hasn't found its way into the mainstream of Australian political campaigning as yet, because the American telephony doesn't really match the Australian systems as yet. So, there have been some problems in making it applicable to here. But, it is a very cheap and very effective way of reaching out to a lot of people, basically by merging the white pages with the electoral rolls. In this you have got a very powerful tool to reach out to a lot of people. When there is a novelty factor in it, it will be all the more interesting. Certainly when it comes to Australia, there will be a real novelty around it and people will be very interested.

I don't know if you mentioned it in your speech, but one of the things you can do with the 'Telephone Town Hall's', is vote. They will ask you to express an opinion on this or that and you can vote by pressing button “A” or whatever. They can collate that information online. And you are getting all this information fed back to you constantly. That again, is a very critical part of any campaign, when they have been able to get a good feed or lead on what people are saying at any one time. These are the interesting things that are coming out of the States.

You have got to be careful! There have been instances, not only with this chap Weiner in the United States, but in Australia. Our leading politician (about twelve months ago) was Tweeting and managed to Tweet an image of a young man who didn't have any shirt on (that's for sure). It was in his favourites list apparently and this took a lot of explaining before it was put to bed. Be conversant with the technology if you are going to be engaging in it. But, Tweeting is a very strong way of getting a message across to a target audience. I think it is simple as a general proposition and we should be using it more and more.
Don't lose sight of the fact (as Craig showed in his presentation), that television and news print are still the big way of communicating a message. At a Local Government level, I think that is particularly important. We do polling in campaigns all the time. I sat in on one not too long ago (in Western Sydney), where the pollster asked people (this is a focus group) how many of them read the Sydney Morning Herald. None of them put up their hands. They asked them how many people read the Telegraph and about two did. Then they asked how many people read the local throw away rag and everyone put their hand up.

Sometimes I think we lose sight of the value of these very cheap ways of communicating through journals (for want of a better description). Don't lose sight of that as Local Government people. The power in Local Government is you have some control over your local environment. Something which people I think more and more feel they don't have as they see the world spinning out of control. Your local community is something you can have some control over. Always check, what is the most powerful way of communicating a message in your local constituency - You just might find it is the easiest one, rather than the most complex one.

**Chairperson:**

We will ask Ben if he could also reflect on what Craig and Bruce had to say and what sort of challenges do you see for people running the State Campaign, which we will see early next year.

**Ben Myers**  
Policy Strategist, Leader of the Opposition's Office

I think some of what we have seen today is terribly exciting. Anybody who is interested in campaigns or communications, can't help but be excited by the technology! But, one critical thing (I think), is to keep it in perspective. For those of you in Local Government across Queensland, I would hate to think that you would try to translate what is happening in America, to your own Councils, Divisions, Wards and Local Government areas, without first getting that scale and that perspective.

I don't think the answer is as simple as setting up a Twitter account, or setting up Facebook and hoping that you will win the next election. It is far more complex than that. Having a Facebook account, having a good social media strategy, will never make up for a lack of substance, style or simple basic campaign planning. So, don't confuse today with those basics. I think that is a very important message to take out of this. There are some very exciting and interesting things and low cost ways that you can communicate very effectively, with your constituents. But, it is not going to mean anything unless you get the basics right.

From my perspective (particularly around Queensland) it is the basics. Nothing will beat actually talking to people face to face. Nothing will beat, being out there and being seen. Anybody who says they prefer an email to a handshake is probably kidding you. My message is, put it into perspective! The Americans are very good at this and very good at pioneering new technology, because they have to. Some of the Senator's and Governor's are being directly elected by populations of up to thirty odd million people. There is no chance what so ever, that they are going to be able to meet any significant number of those. So, they need to rely on this technology, which is their proxy for meeting people.

A campaign is about getting the priorities right. If you are looking at doing television (I suspect very few of you are), don't immediately say "Well, I am going to do some television, but I need to take 10% of that budget and spend it on internet advertising". There is a threshold below which, if you don't reach the number of people a requisite number of times, your television expenditure is a complete waste of money.
Don't try to nickel and dime your campaign, by spreading your money thinly trying to do everything and touch every base. It simply won't work. You will do yourself a disservice. Don't think that simply putting adds in the paper, running radio adds or doing a last minute burst of activity, will make up for some of the basics.

One of those critical basics that is so often overlooked and forgotten in campaigning, is what they call in the trade, *Name ID*. It is people recognising your name when it is mentioned, people recognising your name when they go to vote and more than anything, that is one of the fundamental things behind everything you need to do. If your *Name ID* isn't up there, if you haven't got ways of increasing your *Name ID*, a lot of this social media will simply go over the heads of many people. As will a lot of the expenditure you make on your campaigns.

Once you are getting that into perspective, I think it is also about making sure you do know who you are trying to target (who you are trying to talk to). Who are you trying to get a message out to? How much money do you have to actually spend to do that? For some candidates that is always a very tough and challenging issue because, money doesn't grow on trees. Campaigns are getting more expensive, as we are seeing from the US. To put some of those expenses into perspective I think the Meg Whitman figure of 106.9 million dollars, probably still only works out at about $4.00 or so per head, or less than $4.00/head of population.

In the next Queensland State Election, changes to the electoral laws in Queensland, limit the amount of money that the major political parties can spend. That limit will still be about $12,000,000.00 per party. When you look at a population of approximately four million in Queensland, you see that we are not far off in terms of dollars per head. Campaigns are very expensive. If you don't set a budget, you don't plan how you are going to get that money, you could well end up being in a campaign that runs out of money far too quickly, or spends its money on all the wrong sorts of things.

What you stand for and what you are going to do is also critically important. You can communicate well and you can have your budget. But unless you have got a point of difference to your competitors, unless you have got a quantifiable object or policy to vote for, people will potentially vote for someone else.

- What do you do with all of that?
- How do you implement it? How do you campaign?
- How do you present yourself?

They're the critical issues that I think are all fundamental questions to ask. Particularly before you start setting up Twitter accounts, or you start Twittering and using Facebook with a frenzy.

They are very much the issues (obviously) that will present themselves in the next Local Government Election. They are very much the issues that will present themselves in the next State Election. Adapting some of these US technologies is going to be, a very important way of making that campaign dollar go further. Unless that is done in a very strategic and calculated way, we will all end up wasting a lot of money on things that don't actually build the vote or take us forward.

While I think it is very important to see what is happening overseas and it is very important to get excited about the opportunities that exist, it is also very important to put those into perspective. To look at how they can be adapted and then to apply them, only after you have got your plan in place!

- You know who you need to talk to;
You know how much money you have got;
You know what you actually stand for;
and what you are actually asking people to vote for.

Thank you very much!

Sharon Lee
Poll Topping Councillor and community Consultant

Sharon is going to talk about what the basics are that Ben was talking about. Over the time that you were on council and running more and more successful campaigns, did technological change, impact and affect the way you ran your own campaigns.

First of all I need to say, I don't Tweet. Tweeting is not for me and I doubt it is effective for the smaller Communities and probably for a lot of you out there. I have run three successful campaigns. Each one of them has been slightly contentious in some way or form.

First of all I was a townie elected to a Rural Shire. The youngest as a female! There was a campaign run behind my back to 'Keep the Commoner Out'. That went to my advantage. It is all about jumping on media. If you haven't got to pay for it, you are out in front.

The second election, I decided to run in a Division in which I didn't live. I did that for two reasons. One for political reasons and the other because the Division seemed under represented by people that could actually understand, the lifestyle that the majority of that Division lived.

The third election was of course, an amalgamated Council. That was probably by far, the hardest and the most contentious election that I had to run.

Through all of them, I did use various forms of campaigning techniques. The first and foremost thing is, to have a plan. I don't even mean a financial plan, I mean just have a plan about the people that you want to hit (I call it a hit list). You need to know on a regular basis - who you have hit, when you have hit them and what you have hit them with. You need to keep a running tally. You need to make sure that you are touching all sorts of people. You can't reach everybody in your Community at the same time, with one article.

In the last election, my fellow candidates would say to me, "How on earth did you get four things in the local rag this week"? I would just smile. What I did was, I had four stories ready, I rocked in and said, "Ok, which one is advertising, which one is a great story for you, so which ones do I pay for"? I ended up getting four articles in and I paid for one. It is a little trick and now you all know. It worked very well.

Ben touched on recognising your name and having a Name ID! During the second campaign when I ran for a different Division, one of the candidates there actually saw me as a threat, instead of someone running beside them. So, they started calling me the Bunny Hopper. I thought 'great', this is fabulous. I grabbed a pair of pink ears and occasionally went out when I had them on. People knew who I was. I didn't have to say: 1 - who I was; 2 - what I was doing. I just had to relate to them in a way they could relate to me. Needless to say I did and I got elected.
At the end of the day, it is all about connecting. It is about connecting with people! We connect on all different levels: Twitter; Facebook; in the supermarket. Another thing we connect on (and it is a very simple thing) is the green bag. The green recyclable shopping bag! That has become so incredibly successful throughout the world, because it gives people a basis on which to connect. In your local community, people that use green bags feel that they are having an impact on a global problem. You don't necessarily have to connect in a technological way - the way that this society is heading.

I am a people person. For me, my first campaign was about local media, talking to people and I was involved in a lot of local things. So it was very easy. In the second campaign, again, that was about the media. Using the local rag, the local radio (if that is available to you), but also, it is just walking around knowing which dog fight to be at. You can't be at all the dog fights and you don't want to be. You really want to make sure again, that you have got your list. You know who you are hitting, when you are hitting them and then going back and reviewing that list.

The third campaign was the change in what is going on in the technological world. I did do a very bad u-tube. I did a Facebook. All of these things hadn't been tried, especially in my Rural Community at the time. So, they were seen as pretty good out there! The fact that I worked at a high school at the time certainly helped. I had all these kids wanting to be my friend, which was quite nice. They would go home and talk to their Mum and Dad.

But it certainly in no way replaced face to face contact. It is about personalities. It is about getting across to people in their own space. It is about being able to identify a common ground, between the people that you represent.

There is also a skill (and it has been mentioned several times by several speakers today), it is about the art of listening. We all think we do it. But how many of us are thinking about a response to people, before they have even finished talking? I really think as Councillors, we can't automatically assume that those people that elected you four years ago, still have the same requests, the same problems, the same attitudes they will have when you go for re-election. I guess, the biggest thing you need to take out of it is, actually go and have a listen. That man that was in the street four years ago, that voted for you, that had the business - today he has retired, he has grand children and his focus is incredibly different. As a Council, are you still putting your money in the right place? That is something for you to work out along the way and it is a fun journey. It is ever evolving.

As far as finding out what is happening in America and all of the other countries - when I am in an election campaign, I don't give a dam what they are doing. I just want to know how it works for my Community. It is great to hear about America, the Tweet, the whole thing. But, you know what works for you. Generally you have a basic understanding of your Community. But, they do like to be surprised occasionally. Do what works, have a bit of a go and 'Dare to be Different'. That is what gets you there in the end.

Chairperson:
I think the point that everyone has been making is technologies, techniques, and tricks that people use all around the world and in Australia. Quite often, there are new ways of doing old things. But also, they are complimentary to doing the really fundamentals, of knowing your Community, knowing what your message is and what you want to do for that Community and meeting the people.
LGAQ’s New Policy Representation and Engagement Processes Explained:

Greg Hoffman PSM
General Manager, Advocate
LGAQ

We are now moving into a session that will explain the LGAQ's New Policy Representation and Engagement Processes. The session will be conducted by the LGAQ’s General Manager, Advocate Greg Hoffman and Principal Advisor on Inter Government Relations, Stephan Bohnen. Could you please first welcome Greg Hoffman.

Thank you David and good afternoon everyone, you have had a fair bit of talking at you through the day. We are going to do a little bit of talking, but importantly, we want to seek your input to the LGAQ's Policy Representation and Engagement Processes.

As David indicated, joining me today is Stephan Bohnen. Stephan has been recently appointed as our Inter Government Relations Advisor and has been working on this project since he started with us. Today we are going to give you a progress report on the LGAQ's PREP project. More importantly we are going to seek your input on how LGAQ's Policy Representation and Engagement Processes review will actually progress.

This aspect is one of the changes that LGAQ is investigating. Paul Bell mentioned it in his speech this morning and we are going to ask you for your input into this process. We are yet to resolve any of these matters. Importantly today there will be no decisions made, there are no resolutions before you on this matter. But what we want is your input for decisions that will be made later, after we have had this continuing consultation process. Stephan and I will tag team on the work we have done to date, identify some of the possibilities and options that have been presented to us so far and then we will get to the discussion and seek your views.

So what is PREP all about?
Well, just as the PREP year for preschoolers lays the foundation for life long learning and development, LGAQ's PREP project is laying the foundations for our role in learning about understanding, building and delivering solutions for you, our members. Specifically PREP is about our Governance arrangements, this is LGAQ's member representation and decision making structures that operate at the highest level - the strategic level for our organisation. It is about our Policy Development processes. This is the mechanism for us to research, to analyse and to develop policy to represent Local Government. It is about the representation and advocacy arrangements. That is, the representations we make on behalf of our members, to the State and Federal Government. To other stakeholders and groups that it is important we engage with, on your behalf.

It is about the member and stakeholder engagement processes. This is the processes to get your input. As a member representative body, it is fundamental that we need your input to the decision-making processes, so that we can in fact accurately and confidently speak on your behalf, to whomever it is we are carrying the message.

It is also about communications. In other words, informing you about progress being made and importantly of outcomes. It is no good seeking your input and doing a job for you if we don’t in fact keep you well
abreast of what it is we are doing, how things are going, ultimately what the outcomes are and what it will mean for us.

It is about LGAQ's advocacy role, our role as a representative body on behalf of the 73 Queensland Councils.

What is PREP not about?
This is important because as we have undertaken the consultation work, the question has been asked, "Why are you not dealing with some things or others"? Well, it is very specifically focussed on the work of our advocacy and representational roles. That is the work within the advocacy stream, a stream I am fortunate to lead. There are other parts of our business as you know. This particular work is not looking at those other matters. It is looking very tightly, very specifically, at those things I have just outlined and I would ask you to keep that in mind as we undertake our discussion today.

Stephan will now give you a progress report on our work to date. This Report was sent out to all Mayors and CEO's by Cr Paul Bell a week or so back. It is also on your Ipad's. It is under IBook's, in the library under the PREP I-Report. I would like to express my thanks to what we call our Intelligence Group that have supported the PREP project. That has consisted of Mayors, councillors, senior council officers, representatives of stakeholder groups and some folk from State Government. I would like to thank them for their time. A number of them are here today and I am certainly encouraging them to have their say as we proceed through to the discussions. I would now ask Stephan to come forward and give you an overview of what has happened so far.

Stephan Bohnen

Good afternoon everyone! I wanted to start on a personal note and with a bit of a challenge. When I was asked to take on this project, on commencing with LGAQ about six months ago, I wasn't quite sure what to expect. It has been a fascinating journey, I have learnt heaps about local government in Queensland over the past six months. I must confess, there were moments when it all seemed a bit daunting. In those moments I sometimes thought back to my country of origin, which is Switzerland. Switzerland is a Federation (just like Australia) with three levels of Government. But, unlike Australia it is a very small country. The size of the whole country is about the size of Flinders Shire Council.

Do you know how many local governments there are in Switzerland? - Over two and a half thousand -and, that is after a series of amalgamations. The challenge to me and I think to all of us, is surely the task of designing engagement processes that work for all of our members (all of our 73 members), albeit a very diverse membership. This should not be an impossible task.

So let's have a look at the project! Over the past few months we have spent considerable time talking to our members, our stakeholders and our staff. The approach we have taken with our members is to give them the opportunity to provide feedback and contribute ideas, to give all of them the opportunity to do that. We have done that in two ways. Our President Cr Paul Bell sent out a letter to all Mayors on the first of July, informing them of the project and inviting them to respond and provide specific feedback if they wished.

We have also developed an online survey which went out to all Mayors, all CEO's and all members of our reference groups. In addition we have approached a representative group of councils directly for input and feedback. We have done that through a variety of engagement mechanisms. Through interviews, group discussions and through membership of the PREP Intelligence Group which Greg mentioned earlier. We
had a dedicated session of our Policy Executive at one of their meetings. All up, we have approached 33 of our Member Councils directly, which represents about 45% of our membership.

If you want to have more details about the whole enquiry process that we have conducted, I would direct you to a table which is in the Progress Report on your Ipad’s. That table summarises the whole process. I do want to take this opportunity though to express my thanks to everyone who has contributed to this process. Many people have been incredibly generous with their time and thoughts. We are very grateful for that.

So, what did this process throw up? The first point to make is, that it did identify room for improvement in a range of areas. In fact, probably the most valuable part of the whole process was the large number of constructive improvement ideas that it generated. I will talk a little bit more about that later.

Overall though, it needs to be said that our members are reasonably satisfied with the current processes. For example, over 78% of members surveyed rated LGAQ’s effectiveness as the peak body representing Queensland and Local Government, as good or very good. Obviously we would like that figure to be at 100%. But I think it is fair to say, you our members, aren’t asking for wholesale change. The quote that we have put up on the slide captures that sentiment very well ‘Don’t Re-invent the Wheel, But Grease it up a Little’.

Collectively our members and stakeholders have a very clear idea of what our role in Policy Development and Representation should be and it is about four things. It is about:
1. Representing
2. Leading
3. Facilitating
4. Liaising.

It is about representing the strategic interests of our Member Councils. It is about leading, taking up, initiating issues and rallying the support of our members. It is about facilitating conversations with you; making smart use of existing networks; about liaising with the Federal and State Governments on behalf of Councils.

One of the questions we put to members and stakeholders in the interviews, was: "What is it that you don't want to lose in any reforms that we might introduce"?

The two most common answers to that question were:

1. LGAQ's agility.
   Our ability to respond quickly to hot issues as they emerge and that of course presents us with another challenge. Our members also want us to be transparent and inclusive in our decision making. That is a difficult challenge, a difficult balance to be struck between agility on one hand and inclusiveness on the other hand.

2. LGAQ's approachability.
   The approachability of LGAQ staff! The ability to pick up the phone and talk to an LGAQ Officer (right up to the Senior Officers or the CEO), to discuss a particular issue. I think it is very clear that LGAQ's strength, is in relationships and that is certainly something that we want to maintain.
Another sort of theme that emerged from this process was this issue of reciprocity. That it wasn't really just up to LGAQ to change its processes, but it was important for our councils to engage with us as well. A lot of members talked about moving from a ‘them and us’ mentality, to a situation where the responsibility to develop Policy for our diverse membership, is shared by all.

I mentioned earlier that a lot of improvement ideas came out of this process. We have broken them into six themes.

1. There was a lot of talk about the role of the Policy Executive. That the Policy Executive had an important part in providing input, into LGAQ decision making from councils and then communicating the rationale behind those decisions, back to our Member Councils.

2. Our members want us to have a look at representation, our representation and advocacy strategies, so that they see their positions reflected in our advocacy.

3. They also want us to redefine our relationship with the State Government. For example - by perhaps, negotiating a new overarching protocol with the Government.

4. You also want us to have a look at our formal engagement mechanisms. The Annual Conference; the other conferences throughout the year, workshops etc. The message there is for a need to be more strategic, more targeted, more creative in the way we engage with you.

5. Communications with members was another big thing. The message there is that you are often overwhelmed with information from LGAQ, but in the process you are missing out on the essential. Some of the ideas that you have put to us, are already being put into practice by our Communications and Media Team. Eg: The weekly Council Courier Newsletter that has been going out to you.

6. Finally another theme was the issue of our Internal Governance arrangements. That is probably one issue where the whole enquiry process didn't point in any particular direction. It didn't give us clear instructions. So, this is an issue that we are very keen to get further feedback from you on. In order to do that, we have developed a couple of options to discuss. I will hand over to Greg soon to run through those options. This is definitely an issue, that we are very keen to hear more from you about.

What we have done is, we have started to package up some of the ideas you have put to us, into what could be a new PREP framework.

With that I am going to hand you back to Greg now, to run you through those couple of options on the Governments Structure that I mentioned earlier.

Thank you very much!

Greg Hoffman PSM

Thanks Stephan. A little bit more information and then it is time for you to have your say, your input into this process. Many of the suggested improvements that Stephan has just identified are operational, or administrative, or process related changes. They can be actioned by decisions of the LGAQ's Board and our Policy Executive and that can happen (as appropriate) anytime subsequent to the completion of the consultation processes.
However, there are questions raised around changes to our governance structures and by their nature would require an LGAQ Constitutional Change. That process is formalised by way of occurring at an Annual Conference such as this, or a Special General Meeting and that can be done face to face or it can be done by postal ballot. Timing is important here, because if we are to change any of our Governance Structures, that would need to occur in advance of the council elections in March of next year - in time for the election of the LGAQ’s Policy Executive which follows the March elections.

So we are on a timeline, in that if we are to change governance structures, we really need to determine what those changes are and formalise it through that Special General Meeting process prior to Christmas - prior to effectively closing down local government operations in December.

So ... what are the possible governance changes? The governance structure is the structure around the representation of your areas by elected members, voted into those roles by the councils that they represent and being the governing body of the LGAQ. Obviously this is a very important aspect of our business. Because if we are truly to be a Representative Body, then the processes of having the decision makers around the decision table, is an important one to ensure that you as members feel that your voices are being heard, you concerns are being expressed and considered and importantly you are getting feedback as to how that process is working.

At the moment there are 13 Electoral Districts you would be familiar with. They align reasonably closely to many of the Regional Groups, or District Bodies that exist at the moment. From:

- South East
- Wide Bay Burnett
- Central Queensland
- North Queensland
- Far North Queensland
- North West Queensland
- Central West area
- South West area
- Darling Downs.

One of the suggestions is to leave that as it is and simply look to those operational, administrative process changes, but have the representatives from those 13 Districts, far more actively engaged in the processes than may have been the case to date. Another of the suggested changes is in fact to enlarge that Policy Executive group from thirteen to fifteen. Changes that have been put to us involve some tweaking of those district boundaries, but more so, changing them to create a new Division. A new District involving Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac councils, which would see those three councils come from the Central Queensland group, to sit in a new group based on Mackay, Whitsunday. The other suggested change is to move Torres Shire, which is part of the Far North Queensland group, into the Indigenous Councils group and to increase the representation of the Indigenous Councils from one Executive Member to two. That would take the total to 15 Members on the Policy Executive. That is about increasing and improving, the representation of councils around our table. That is a question for us to consider and to seek feedback on.

Now moving into the discussion point and as Stephan mentioned there were a number of themes. Six themes in fact, indentified for improvement in our PREP processes. There are a number of questions here
to prompt discussion. I would ask you to look at them, because I would like to seek your feedback and your answers to some of those questions.

1. What you expect from your representative on the LGAQ Policy Executive - the person you elect.
2. What is the most effective means of obtaining your input into the formation of a Local Government position or Policy, to be represented by LGAQ?
3. What is the most important point you would like to see covered in any new overarching protocol between LGAQ and the State Government?
4. What is the best use of your time at LGAQ Conferences or Workshops?
5. What format do you prefer to spend your time at in these engagements, to get the most value?
6. What is the most effective means of LGAQ communicating with you? We are one of many organisations and literally thousands of people who want to get your ear at some point in time. How best can we communicate with you in that very busy traffic of communication that you are engaged with?

If you had a choice between those options I mentioned just before, which would you support or do you have an alternative strategy?

They are the questions that we have before you. We definitely and sincerely want to hear from you on those matters, or other issues that are relevant to the broad review process we are undertaking. So, it is now your turn Ladies and Gentlemen. We are keen to hear from you with your responses to those questions and related matters. Who would like to open the batting please?

Discussion

Discussion can be on any of the questions; it doesn’t have to be in order, but may be identify which one you are referencing for our purposes.

Cr Michael Brunker
Mayor, Whitsunday Regional Council

I certainly support the Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac representation. It is the group that we are in. I would like to have some meetings with our particular LGAQ representative. I understand that it is a lot of distance - in the past we used to get together and have round tables. Sending out emails is useless. It is probably something we need to sit down, particularly any big issues coming up. We need to make the time and have particular meetings. That is as I said before, it is a large group, so I certainly support the MIW having it extended and of course what you have recommended up there in relation to the Torres Strait Islanders.

Cr Peter Maguire
Mayor, Central Highlands Regional Council

Just to refresh me. The LGAQ Policy Executive is the top four positions or the whole lot?

Response:
It is the 13 Policy Executive Members. We have a group from that 13, that constitute our Board. That Board known to you as, President, two Vice Presidents and Treasurer have a role under our Constitution, to manage the business and the finances of our organisation, where as the Policy Executive’s role, is as the name suggests - bringing to our table the views and opinions of the districts they represent, as we go about the business of determining Policy and the arguments that we put forward.
Cr Dierdre Comerford
Mackay Regional Council

Just on item number 4. I always believe the organising body for conferences, has got a duty to continue to try to challenge us. So, I suppose for me it is always about the workshops. Each of us might think that we have a knowledge pool that serves us best in our community.

But when you look at the challenges we all have to face going forward for local government, then up-skilling is imperative. So you have got to continue to challenge and up-skill when you get the groups of people together. I realise you are trying to do it with this conference and all the other initiatives. I just encourage your efforts in that regard.

Response:
Yes, to challenge, interact with and extract opinions and understanding is what you are saying. How would you like to see that happen? We have a wide range of issues that we deal with. Our business is your business, so your agenda is a very broad agenda across many issues. What is the length of time that you can give, to come together to discuss those things? Is it hard hitting one day events, in your area, with your colleagues? Or, is it two or three day events in venue's where you all come from across the State? Or is it a combination of both? Is there a preference? Is there a view as to which approach suits different situations and different times?

Cr Dierdre Comerford
Mackay Regional Council

I think you have got to be conscious of looking at how the demographics lie, the 2012 election. Whoever gets elected and looking at those demographics of men, women and age groups! Because that gives you some key indicators of how people learn. So how I obtain information and how I like to learn, will be totally different to a whole pile of people sitting in this room. For some, to put them anywhere for two days is torture, someone else just wants to give me the key points. We all learn differently and I think you need to look closely at who gets elected in 2012 and aim your training, targeting, workshops!

The way you are trying to up-skill us is taking note of that. I think in the past we haven't taken too much consideration in that. So those who stay away from Conferences - just look at the CEO's who might never attend, because their learning styles might be different. Then you look at those who might come simply for the social interaction when they have had a tough year. They just want that moral support from their peers (what they will get out of a conference like this is more the social networking and that has got its merits and place). Then there are those who want to come and hear what are the buzz things happening in the bigger world - this is supposed to be the peak body where you are educating those of us who are in local government. So, it is different horses for courses isn't it? Be mindful that we all learn differently.

Cr John Hooper
Banana Shire Council

Greg, after being involved in local government for a good number of years, to me the most efficient way to get out and talk to councillors and staff is to do it in their local government. They can get to the nitty gritty of what they want to understand from the message you are bringing out and they can apply it to their situation. It is proven to me, to be the most efficient way. I know it is more expensive, but if that is what you
are talking about up there - the most efficient means of obtaining your input. Is that what you are talking about?

Response: Yes, it is that and any variations on that theme which you think is important to be aware of. So thank you for that.

Cr Brad Carter
Mayor, Rockhampton Regional Council

My issue is probably not specifically one of the points up there and it relates to item 5 in the Agenda. It is more about I suppose, the culture or the communication style of the LGAQ, with a Council like ours. I didn't want to labour the point, but as identified in the Paper the motion we put forward.

My concern was around a survey which was conducted and that information was then shared with the media – the information was probably damaging to our Council and was shared with the media, without first consulting our Council or me. I probably don't have too much difficulty with the survey and the content of it. It is the process and I felt that as a member of LGAQ (where we have a substantial financial membership), I would have expected a more professional level of communication - To at least give me the opportunity to respond, before the media contacted me and said 'we have got this survey that says some critical things of your Council'.

That is about the culture of LGAQ and I would like to think that the way you change your Executive, or your Policy Body in my view, is not the issue. It is how the organisation behaves and how it can put a level of confidence back to our Council, that we will not be used as a sacrificial lamb and that we will be treated with a greater deal of respect. So, that is my issue.

Response: Thanks Brad. I appreciate your comment and it is well made. Your comment relates very much to this issue of Member Engagement. It is ensuring that if we are going to speak on behalf of Local Government and there are implications to Local Governments, that you are first aware of that before anybody else. I take your point and it is well made and accepted by me.

Cr Melva Hobson
Mayor, Redland City Council

Recently LGAQ had a focus group with a number of us at LGAQ House. That was very effective! There were ten of us, or maybe twelve. Imagine twelve Mayors and councillors in the one room, with an hour and a half unlimited and we all wanted to have a say. There was a pressing sort of need to finish at a particular time. That was very useful for us, actually making a contribution into the Action of what you might do for new councillors after 2012. I found that very effective because it engaged me directly in experiences for example, that I had in 2008. I realise that it is difficult to do that all the way around the country, but I do recommend it, as it was face to face with a number of people, be they councillors or Mayors.

However I wonder if you have the same interaction with councillors who perhaps aren't Mayors, or those who speak a lot, or go to things (just thinking of some of our councillors). Some have interacted with LGAQ, but others probably know very little about LGAQ. So I support the idea of the small groups - if you can do
that around the State, all very well. But, I am not quite sure how the engagement goes with other Councillors who perhaps aren't actively engaged in LGAQ things.

Response:
Your point identifies the challenge we have. There are some 625 councillors across the State, with 73 Mayors included in that number.

One of the questions here is: How best can we get to you? I am talking holistically about the elected body of local government. That is where we need to either be smart with the technology and the communication options that are now available, as well as the face to face contact that you referred to. I think John Hooper was also meaning that, coming face to face with people at their place basically. It is an opportunity that we should obviously pursue to the greatest extent we can. Obviously that is a challenge in a logistical sense, but it is a point accepted as an important part of the interaction and the member engagement process. Thank you.

Cr Peter Marks
Toowoomba Regional Council

This is about discussion point numbers two and three. I just want to use it as an example! If we are looking to obtain input into some (for example I will just use something that might effect us all and say) agricultural land, that is going to effect the majority of councils across the State - maybe not so much the one's on the Coast, but they would have more of an understanding. If it affected most of them, then that would go out - I am just thinking of some way of getting some sort of response from all the Councils to come up and say that 75% of the Councils believe this is an issue.

Then you go to number three which is the protocol. Somehow we have got to come up with a way - if we have got a collective view on some government policy (it doesn't matter which government it is), but it is affecting our local or regional governments, then surely rather than just paying lip service to it, we need to be a lot more vocal in how it is going to affect us. While I have used agricultural land at the present time - in South East Queensland we have got waste management - this is a real issue. With the protocols that I am thinking about here - we really need to be able to tell them that they have got it wrong. I am sure we could take the majority of the community with us. I just don't see that happening over the last four years I have been here. I just think that maybe there is a possibility, that we could be more stringent and stronger in our response to issues that affect the whole of Queensland.

Response:
I understand what you are saying and one of the challenges for LGAQ is, with 73 members and the diversity that we know exists in that make-up of finding a position that is reflective of that view. What we are doing in the remake of our processes and in fact the session that follows this, we will break into segment groups to where we are looking to identify it in the best way we can.

Groupings of councils that may have common and identifiable interests may be separate to the other groups. There is no reason, I don't believe, that it is beyond the capacity of this organisation to reflect divergent views, on behalf of those groups of councils who have positions that might not align fully with others. That is the challenge for us, but it is doable and I think that is a point, also well made.
Cr Adrian Raedel  
Moreton Bay Regional Council

Sorry to harp on about something similar to what was just spoken about. But we have seen it in the last little while - where LGAQ has gone out and I guess lobbied, or got to a particular position on an issue. We have then done some of our own Lobbying, which I guess may have been contrary to LGAQ's position. At least that is the perception that Ministers then give us. So the first thing they then do is - well look......... we have had LGAQ in and we have had a discussion with them, then kind of leave it and trail off.

What it does, is take the argument completely out of the debate we are about to have. I just want to leave that with you as a thought. I don't exactly know what the answer is, but certainly that is the first thing they do when we go in to lobby on behalf of our own residents, as opposed to what you guys do on behalf of councils as a whole. So, if I can just leave that thought with you, it is fairly important I think.

Response:
The State Government can certainly use the ‘Divide Tactic’ to their advantage and I accept your point.

Cr Dave McMahon  
Goondiwindi Regional Council

I have been a councillor now for eleven years. Four years on this amalgamated council and what I am gathering from here is a communication process. I have not seen your Executive in our region in those eleven years. The onus isn't always upon you to come to us. We need to come to you, but I would just like to reinforce the fact that, myself personally and it might be our fault at council - that we have never seen you in our regions. At one stage we were even talking about whether we were going to be a part of the LG Online service too. We really didn't know what you were doing and that was a number of years ago now. But, I would like to reinforce what other people are saying is that the best way to communicate with council as a whole (I don't just mean the Mayor and the CEO), is to come out into our region and talk to us about what matters in our region.

Response:
Can I just ask for clarification? Is that something you particularly want of the Policy Executive Representative in person, to be there, along with obviously, LGAQ Officers as appropriate over time, or were you meaning more specifically the Policy Executive Representative?

Cr Dave McMahon:
Well I do recall a number of years ago, your President flying out and meeting with our Mayor and CEO, then flying off into the distance. I don't want to sound like I am being too negative here. Probably anybody from the LGAQ, it doesn't have to be a Policy Executive, it could be your President, it could be yourself Greg, or it could be Greg Hallam. What I am sensing form my eleven years of being on council is that the LGAQ, because you are such a diverse body and you have got to consult with so many people, is that who you have consulted with is mainly Mayors and CEOs.

Response:
Your point taken! We do engage regularly with Mayors and CEOs and perhaps not with other Councillors to the same extent and that is important, obviously.
Cr Anne Baker  
Isaac Regional Council  

I just wanted to comment on number six. Just to say that I would support option two, because I believe with the current situation we have faced in the resource communities and in our neighbouring communities, we need very specific representation - very specific knowledge of those communities at the policy level.

Cr Peter Maguire  
Mayor, Central Highlands Regional Council  

It is just a comment Mr Hoffman, to point out to people - if they want the President more often we are willing to let him leave our Council Meetings.

Cr John Wharton  
Richmond Shire Council  

Just on Paul going around - when he came to our Council Meeting it was much appreciated. I think it was quite a good discussion / debate. Our councillors could also see what the LGAQ is doing. The other councillors (not the Mayor and the CEO as you do consult with them a lot), but the other councillors were well aware with Paul’s visit to Richmond. We covered quite a number of issues in the discussion that afternoon.

But I think we want to be a bit careful, that you are not trying to spread yourselves too far. The LGAQ just can't be everything for everybody. If the Mayor and the CEO haven't got the policies that the Councillors want, then maybe there is something wrong with the Council. You can't discuss everything with everybody and councillors are all busy and are working people, (most of them). This consultation process can get out of hand and it can cost all of us a lot of money if we are going to expect the LGAQ to do everything for all of us. Sometimes we have got to get off our backsides and do a bit ourselves.

I can see this is going to get bigger and bigger and the bureaucracy will get bigger and bigger - I am just not too sure about this consultation process. The LGAQ just can't be everything for everybody. If the Mayor and the CEO haven't got the policies that the Councillors want, then maybe there is something wrong with the Council. You can't discuss everything with everybody and councillors are all busy and are working people, (most of them). This consultation process can get out of hand and it can cost all of us a lot of money if we are going to expect the LGAQ to do everything for all of us. Sometimes we have got to get off our backsides and do a bit ourselves.

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So we just need to be a little bit careful how far we are going to go with this consultation, because we are going to end up with no outcomes.

Response:  
Thanks John! The consultation we are talking about is LGAQ with the Councils. Not broadly necessarily with the community. The first question there 'What are the expectations of your representative of the LGAQ Policy Executive Member?' - quite a lot of what we have received in our process to date, is a greater level of activity if you like. I would describe it as that - with the Policy Executive person - being at the gatherings that bring you together in your place. Whether it's your Regional Road Group, or your Economical Development Group, but they are part of that, so they should be active in that process. To hear what is
being said and views expressed where necessary, convey that message into LGAQ either directly as needs be, or when they gather as a Policy Executive which meets five times a year.

There are other reference groups of course. But what's the role of the Policy Executive? If they are active / engaged in the role, then that fills a lot of the gaps in terms of the logistical implications of getting to interact with everybody. So, I think we could look to what you are saying there, in that way, as well as the visitation that occurs as it can.

Cr Lyn McLaughlin
Mayor, Burdekin Shire Council

I think one of the issues that we face is, when we elect the Policy Representatives, most of the Councils are based around a major city in the State and the vote weighting nearly always lends itself to the city representative being on the LGAQ Policy. I’ll use Townsville as an example. We have a great region working together there - with Hinchinbrook, Charters Towers, Palm Island, Burdekin and Townsville - but I think what we need to do is, people on the Policy Executive need to actually get out and understand some of the regional and remote issues. Because, when they get to the table, first and foremost in their mind is what they are experiencing.

I don’t want to talk for Alf either (from Palm Island), but I am sure when he goes to the meetings, he doesn’t have a great understanding of the issues faced on the Gold Coast, Brisbane or anywhere else. So I think part of it is, the Policy Executive need to have some education and a greater understanding of areas outside of their normal operations.

I know we can’t have 13 or 15 people travelling around the State. But, is it possible if the President’s going to Richmond, perhaps he can take a representative from Rockhampton or Toowoomba City to go and get an understanding of what life is like, by talking to the Council at Richmond. I think part of it needs to be a broadening of that base of the Executive, so that people have a bigger, greater or better understanding of what life is like outside of their own Local Government area.

Response:
Thank you Lyn! Your point has struck a chord, obviously.

Cr Margaret De Wit
Vice President, LGAQ and Councillor for Brisbane City Council

Thanks very much Greg. I have been listening carefully to what everyone has been saying. One of the great difficulties, when you think back to the changes that came in 2008 with the amalgamated Councils is the time constraints, if I look at who is on the Policy Executive - and what is involved in travelling to Brisbane for the meetings, you have got Mayors of amalgamated Councils predominately and it is very, very difficult. I am not making excuses. I am trying to work out how, (after the next election), do you make it work better. Number one is very important to me in terms of - how do we get the Policy Executive working the way that the Member Councils want. I am not sure we have quite come up with that today.

There have been a number of things said. I think that what John Wharton said, was very true and thanks John for those comments. I would love to get out more. I have done (sort of) one very far western trip with Paul Bell. But if you look at the cost, the time that is involved… but it is true Lyn, that it is the way to find out just what the issues are and how life goes on in other parts of the State. I would really welcome if anybody
could come up with a bit more, in relation to question one. I think it is quite vital for us, so that we can actually set better direction for those people who become members of the Policy Executive.

My situation is quite easy. I am Brisbane and there is only Brisbane in the grouping. The point though that Melva made, that other Councillors (if you are not directly involved with LGAQ) know very little if anything about LGAQ and I can certainly say, that is the case for a lot of the Councillors in Brisbane.

It is not an easy one to solve, but I think that question one is a key one, that we really need your thoughts (quite directly) on, how you think that link should be made between your Councils and the LGAQ Policy Process.

**Donna Stewart**  
Mayor, Balonne Shire Council

I would say the solution is fairly simple because there is such a thing as a telephone. I will tell you, I would personally welcome a telephone call from anyone of the Executive on the LGAQ. We never hear from anyone and it's been a mystery to me how our representations were made. I often see the results of a Policy that has been adopted by the LGAQ which does involve us in the South West - we have never been consulted and we wondered how you arrived at the decision.

Now it is all very simple. It is just by lifting the telephone and asking. That is how you can do that - engaging with the communities out there in the bush. I would be very happy to hear from Ron Clark or anyone. You know, "Hello, this is Ron, what are the issues out there"? It wouldn't take very long to let him know I am sure.

**Response:**  
Thanks Donna. And in fact, the discussions that are following this session are the start of what we believe, will be an ongoing process of interacting with like Councils – as in your case, Rural or Remote Area Councils, but then supplementing with that personal level of contact that you identify as important.

**Cr Kenny Bedford**  
Torres Strait Regional Island Regional Council

I support the increase in Indigenous Representation on the Executive and welcome that suggestion. I just wanted to share from my experience at the workshop we had yesterday. In answer to the encouragement we had a couple of comments ago, for expectations from the Executive. One of the things we talked about was, often as a remote smaller or Indigenous Council, we have very different issues and very different challenges - because of the geography and because of the cultural differences within our communities.

What we tried to identify yesterday was that although there were often (out of the 17 Councils that are Indigenous) alone we are often only a very small minority within the bigger picture of Local Government and the issues we face. together we all share them and we are looking for support from LGAQ about how we can better coordinate those common issues, that are common to just the Indigenous ones. Also, how we can identify, where are the differences within Indigenous and remote Councils - how they differ - how the LGAQ can help us have a louder voice in the Government Picture.
We do need to pull the session to a close now. Obviously, thank you very much for your input. We appreciate all that has been said and importantly the candour in comments made. That is what we want to hear. That is the only way that we will know what you’re feeling and what we need to do to respond.

I would encourage you to go to the LGAQ booth over the next two days. Stephan Bohnen will be there if you wanted to talk more with him about aspects, or ask questions. Stephan is there for that purpose and as I said we will within the Executive and the Board within the next month or two - need to make decisions if we are going to change the Governance Structure and the other things can follow.

I will thank Stephan and Craig, who has been helping us here and thank you for your inputs into this session. We now move into the first of our Council Forums and it is part of the different approach we are taking, in breaking up into Council segment groups, to get a better understanding of the unique needs of Councils - also to identify priorities for action.
Thanks very much to the LGAQ, for the opportunity to address you again. Could I start by firstly asking for the doors to be locked! We intend to conduct a roll call of all the Councillors who are present, because only those Councillor’s who are present, are going to get a salary review this year!

A brief history lesson! The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal is responsible (and it has been since 2007) for establishing categories of Councils, assigning Councils to categories and setting remuneration levels. As the voice mentioned a moment ago, July last year the Tribunal was renamed and its role was expanded by adding the responsibility to hear and decide, the most serious complaints of misconduct. We have been dealing with that at around eight or nine cases only, since we were established.

In our 2010 Report, we decided to grant a 2.5% increase to Councillors. We decided to maintain the same number of categories of Councils, as we had originally established back in 2007. We also decided to maintain the concept of a remuneration range, in each category of Council. I understand that that matter is to be the subject of discussion and debate, as a result of a Motion put forward by Redland Council.

Just to assist you understand why the Tribunal has put in ranges and the like in previous years - This is an analysis of Council Remuneration Levels, as a result of the resolutions passed at the beginning of this year. You can see that the yellow bar represents the minimum rate that the Tribunal has determined for each category; the red bar sets the maximum rate that the Tribunal has determined; the green is the average that has actually been set by Councillors; the blue represents the highest rate that the Councillors voted; the mauve represents the lowest. On our analysis of that data:

- in 34 Councils, all Councillors receive the maximum;
- in 4 Councils, all Councillors receive the minimum;
- in the remaining 34, the figure is somewhere between the minimum and the maximum.

The situation with Deputy Mayors, is not dissimilar to the provision concerning Councillors and the situation with Mayor’s, likewise is fairly similar.

In this coming year we will be looking at the submissions which are before us thus far. One of the things we will be taking into account is - we will be reviewing the number of categories, because the Act requires us to review them each four years. We will be reviewing the assignment of Councils to Categories. We will be determining remuneration levels again. But, in doing so we will be particularly interested in having a look at the issue of fixed rate, versus ranges! That has been a vexed question since we first set the concept back in 2007. As you saw from the slides - some people go straight to the top, some people go to the bottom and some people are in the middle.

Despite the use that has been made of the ranges, it is still subject to a fair amount of criticism. So, we will be reviewing that in detail. We will obviously be assisted by the outcome of the vote on the Redland Resolution. We will also be looking for the lower graded Council’s at the issue of a base rate and meeting
fee concept. That arises as a result of some issues identified during our research, in preparation for last years' Report. Last years' Report contains some commentary on the attendance levels of Councils (particularly in some of the Indigenous Councils and some of the Category 1 Councils), so that is something we will be paying close attention to this year.

In looking at remuneration levels in total eg: if the fixed rate, as opposed to a range concept comes into being, we will be informed by this slide. Since we first started to establish rates for the Councils, you have been impacted to a fair degree by the Global Financial Crisis and in 2009 there was a wages freeze, imposed initially by Kevin Rudd, picked up by the State Government and that impacted on Councils. In the following year 3.1% was the Remuneration Tribunal's decision and last year 2.5%.

Amalgamated Council's have had the Amalgamation Loading phasing out and the impact in salary terms is a 2.5%, 2.4%, 2.3% reduction. I would like to indicate that the increase that goes to Councillors has been, by Community standards fairly small. From the Tribunal's perspective, if we go back to when the rates were originally set in 2008, we estimated that if all of the Council's adopted the mid-point in the range in which they were categorised, then the total wages bill across all the Council's in the State, would be pretty much right on $32,000,000.00. Coincidentally, that was within a couple of hundred thousand of what the remuneration levels paid in total, to all of the un-amalgamated Council's, prior to the establishment of the amalgamation and the new Councils.

What has actually happened on the ground is that, the rates that are being paid by Council's at the moment across the State, total $35.8 million and that is 11.75% increase from where the Tribunal had originally anticipated, if people would set their own rates. So if we move to a fixed rate, the warning is, don't assume because you have received little or no increases over the last few years that, the fixed rate will be the maximum level in each category - it might not be. I will just put that out there as a warning. Of course, we haven't made any decision at this point as to what we are going to be doing. But, it would be wrong for those people who say "let's go to a fixed rate", to assume that the fixed rate will be the maximum in the range.

In terms of the discipline function (just to highlight that we are here and decide the most serious complaints of misconduct), most of those that come to the Tribunal, arise as a result of the operation of Section 171 (3) of the Act. That is concerning the release of information that a Councillor, knows (and these are the key words), or should reasonable know, it is confidential to the Local Government. The Tribunal in its 2010 Report, put these words down in relation to those two words 'reasonably know', in our view it doesn't relate solely to information discussed in closed sessions of Council Meetings. But, rather to any information which a Councillor obtains, in the course of the performance in their role as a Councillor!

So if they go to a confidential meeting, or if the CEO says something to them in the CEO's room, or the Mayor says something to them when they meet in the street one day - Councillors are expected to know whether the information they have been provided with, is confidential information to the Council. I want to stress that point! It is not only material discussed in closed sessions of Council (but if it is discussed in a closed session of Council, there can be no argument about it), in our view it relates to material discussed generally, in the course of the performance of a Councillors role.

That is all I wanted to cover and if you have time for questions, I would be delighted to take questions.

Question from the floor:
Cr Brad Carter, Mayor Rockhampton Regional Council
I probably know the answer to this question, but I would like to ask it. It is more the difficulty I have in terms of public perception, in that the requirement when you determine a pay scale, we are required to make a determination on it, as a council. I suppose that is where we have difficulty with our local media, for whatever reason. Whether they are high or low pays, they do us over every year. I suppose my question is, is there any arrangement that could be put into place, whereby we don’t have to agree to the determination?

Response:
Adrian Bloomfield
A sense of having some default position, or something like that Brad? That is something we will have to have a look at. The Legislation at the moment is set up in such a way, that it requires councils to vote each year, on the level of remuneration. If there was a fixed rate, one would have to ask the question, why there is the necessity to vote to accept the fixed rate. Perhaps we can disallow it. But, disallow it to what? There is no fallback position, so it is something we will have to have a look at.

Thank you!

Getting to Know You

Hon Joan Sheldon AM
Local Government Ethics Advisor
LGAQ

Thank you very much. I would like to acknowledge Paul Bell and Greg Hallam and say thank you for having me here to address you, at what is a very important conference. You have just heard a little of my background and also of why this position was instituted. When I was Deputy Chair of that Ethics Committee, we actually wrote ‘The Code of Ethical Standards’ for the Queensland Parliament. There hadn’t been one before that. It was brought into the House and accepted by the House. That is set up under a Statute. Part of that was to have someone who could advise on ethics and integrity, to Members of Parliament. At that stage, it was really just the Ministry (the Executive). It is now, all Members of Parliament and Senior Bureaucrats (as in heads of department).

On that basis, LGAQ (I think there was a motion at your last conference) really should have a similar person. The person who does the State Government at the moment is David Solomon, who you have no doubt heard of. He is the third in that position. There was Allan Dymock, Mr Crook and then David Solomon. I think at your last conference, a motion was passed that you would have someone like myself, who would advise on ethics and integrity in Local Government.

Obviously having been in Government myself, I do realise how important Local Government is. I also realise, how difficult it is to be an elected representative, or indeed the CEO. The perception by the public is - that they have elected you, they pay you and that they demand standards of ethics and integrity, which I think is very important for all. As you would well know, it is not just a matter of doing the right thing. It is being seen, to be doing the right thing and that being acknowledged by the public at large.

I think in this day and age, when all Politicians are regarded as fairly low life (from what I can see, and I can say that having been a former one), it is very important that we are ethical. That we show integrity, that we show in our dealings with the public, with our supporters, organisation bodies and with the many Community groups we all belong to. I am sure you are Honorary Members on committees, or patrons of a
number of groups in your Community. You need to be, you must be. That is part of your role, to represent
the groups in your Community. Those groups will also be represented around the Council Chamber. You
know yourself, the number of grants that have to be allocated.

These sorts of things can result in conflicts of interest and sometimes even matters of pecuniary interest.

In matters of pecuniary interest you would be aware, can have serious consequences. I think it is part of
the legislative requirement that, if it is voted that you do have a matter of pecuniary interest - it is
automatically sent to the CMC. Eventually it may be found, there is no basis to that. But in the meantime,
your name can be besmirched (politics is politics) or written up in the papers (the media love these stories).

Also, you can have matters of conflicts of interest. I suppose it is no secret, that this often is said of Local
Government with regard to local developers and planners. People who sometimes fund campaigns! People
who also have a daily basis of interaction with Councils, Councillors and with the Council Members
themselves, (the bureaucrats that work within the Council) and finally with the CEO, having that
governance issue.

I think it is much better in the beginning, to make sure that you know and state quite openly at Council
Meetings or Committees, whether you feel you could have a real or perceived matter of pecuniary interest,
or a real or perceived conflict of interest.

What I have been dealing with mainly, is conflict of interest so far. I was only appointed on the first of June.
It would be the first time many of you have seen me, heard of me, or know what this job is about. We are
slowly trying to get around to Council's in what is a very busy schedule. This is a very good opportunity to
speak with a wide ranging group of you. The position I have, is one of total confidence. In other words,
while I am employed if you like, (I sell my services to the LGAQ) it is a position, that is totally independent.
Part of having this position, in which I absolutely stressed to Paul, Greg and Mark (they didn't need much
stressing to), that the independence and confidentiality of this position is vital. Because, some of the issues
you might want to check, (whether you have a conflict or matter of pecuniary interest) may be quite touchy
issues, both within the Council and out there in the greater Community.

You do need to have someone you can contact, go through the position with and get some advice (if you
need it). Then move forward in that regard and know that that advice will not be used against you, will not
be used in the media and will not be used for political purposes. That is a very important tool! I know, how
important. I have been in Parliament, Government and Opposition. I have been in the top positions and I
know how difficult it is at times. Also, I know how difficult it is to find someone in who you can actually
confide and not hear all that information back (sometimes in a garbled manner).

We are also in the world of politics and people do strange things for political gain. They often do strange
tings to be elected. They do strange things to stay elected. They also, very often do strange things to get
media coverage. Sometimes, the actual individual that may be attacked or maligned incorrectly, their
career can be ruined. This is because the public have perceived this person is corrupt, is on the take, isn't
doing things the way they should be and I think it is so much better to make sure you have done your
homework first. I am sure most of you do. The contact I have had with Councillors, has shown me there is a
very high standard (I believe) of ethical behaviour among the Councillors, Mayor's and CEO's. But, we all
from time to time need advice.

Recently with regard to conflict of interest, there have been changes in the Act. Be very careful - those
changes don't minimise your responsibility to table the fact that, you either have a real or perceived conflict
of interest and that that is recorded (at meetings or Committee Meetings). But also say that to other Councillors that may be aware, that someone around that table does have a conflict of interest. Make sure that somewhere that is stated, because if later found (I have actually been dealing with one like this). Another person was very aware of this conflict of interest, made no acknowledgement of it, but then subsequently did. It has become a major issue for the Councillor involved (for both Councillors, but particularly for the Councillor being accused).

I am very easily contactable. There are many of these cards around if you would like one. Also, if you don’t know the contacts, it is on the web and also with the LGAQ. Certainly the method most preferred and that will give you the greatest satisfaction and security, is by written word - by email. If you want to find out first, if you could have a conflict or an MPI, by all means ring and we can discuss it. Then if we are moving further forward, I will ask you to put the detail, in an email, (what your concerns are) and I will email an answer back to you.

So far, emails have been a bit slow. Mainly because I think people (to be honest), may not look at their agenda all that early (before they go into a Council Meeting) and then realise – Hey, I could have a problem here and ring me up five minutes before the Council Meeting. I will do my best, but if you look in advance of what is happening, the issues you know are out there and around that table - ring me earlier. I will have your details and then I will get back to you on the issues you have raised. It is a confidential matter between you and me. I do not tell the LGAQ.

Shortly I will be putting in a report for my first four months, in which I will just note the major issues raised, have been conflict of interest along with any underlying concern that has come through, that may need change or help. But, certainly no reference to any individual, no reference to any Council, no reference to any issue.

It is really a tool that LGAQ are providing to help you. I know, I have been there and it is a help. The ethics advisor for the State Government, I know in the beginning, didn't have many contacts, but is now run off his feet. Because, people have realised this is a valuable tool. I think the LGAQ should be congratulated for providing it to you. It is there to help you. That is my position, you are my interest and I think together we will be able to work very well.

Thank you very much for listening to me. I hope to meet with as many of you as I can while I am here. I am sure we will have a very happy, fruitful and productive relationship. Thank you.

Chairperson:
After the last year's resolution to seek an Ethics Advisor position, we did ask the State Government about using their Ethics Advisor in a joint way. That couldn't happen, so we have proceeded with the conference’s request to have an Ethics Advisor. We went out and searched. We had a very good field of candidates and I think you will all agree that Joan Sheldon is going to be great for us. We wanted someone who had practical experience, had been through the whole process of elections, been a part of a political organisation, or group of people in the environment of Government and has a wonderful knowledge of ethical behaviour.

Question from the floor:
If we come to you for advice, is your advice gospel, or is there a higher authority than yourself Joan?
Response: Joan Sheldon

I guess there is always a higher authority. I hear what you are saying and there isn’t a higher authority. But, if there was a legal basis to this, then I would say that to you. Say to you, to seek legal advice and this has happened. There was another situation, which really required dispute resolution. That was moved on.

I will just advise as well as I can. Whether in fact, you could have a conflict or whether in fact you have got a matter of pecuniary interest. There may be another situation where you think, ‘How do I ethically handle this’. It is really up to you whether you take that advice or not. It is just advice on ethics and integrity. It is not written law. If you don’t like what I say, you don’t have to do it. If you ring up and say to someone “she said this, I don’t agree with that, what do you think” - that is up to you.

Question from the floor:
This will come from left field, but I am going to throw it out there anyway. I am a traditional owner in the country where I stand, in the mainstream Council. What I want to know is, will there be an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander person placed on the Panel of LGAQ, to answer questions such as mine? I can run over the fingers on my hand, how many times I have been dragged through the CMC because of a lot of party politics that goes on within the Local Government, in declaring my conflicts of interest or Cultural Heritage. I am there to stand for the whole Community and yet there are Party Politics that will go on and I sit in fear on making a judgement (yes or no) when it comes down to Council Decisions. I need somebody I can turn to and talk to.

Response: Joan Sheldon

You can certainly turn to me. In fact, Paul and Greg will tell you that. When I was interviewed for this position, (when we were talking about the number of Councils) I said, what about Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander Councils? One of my Shadow Portfolio’s many years ago, was Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.

I will be honest - I didn’t know much about it! So, I went to every Community in Queensland and the Torres Strait (and actually in the Northern Territory) and I saw the great work that Aboriginal Councils were doing, the people on them (a lot of them women) and the leadership they were putting into their Community. I hear what you are saying about Cultural Heritage and those sorts of things that are particular to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. But, whether an issue is ethical or isn’t ethical, whether you should state it is a conflict of interest, or whether you could have (say, because of land rights) some pecuniary interest, you can seek advice on that. You can get written advice and you can use the written advice if you want to. One of the things I want to do is, I would really like as part of getting around Queensland (which is a very big, it is going to take a while) is go up into the Aboriginal Communities and speak to the Councils. It may well be (and you will have to guide me on this), whether you actually have Regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council Meetings - so I could go and address people there. Certainly the service is for everyone in Queensland.

Chairperson:
Delegates, please thank Joan for being here this morning.
Mr Hayden Wright  
Local Government Members Advisor  
LGAQ

Good morning Mr President. Good morning councillors, Mayors, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is very new to me. I only commenced in this role as of (today is Wednesday) Monday. So it is very new! It is a new service which the LGAQ again (very similar to what Jane has said), is offering to its members.

If I can just read from the written word which I was given when they asked me to take this role, it says - The service will address issues relating to working relationships with other elected members, staff, community and stake holders (here are the key words) other than ethics and integrity issues, that are properly addressed by Joan - that may arise for elected member’s in carrying out their role in Local Government.

So my role is really as an elected members’ advisor, is outside of those ethical issues which are the province of Joan (ethical and integrity issues). Probably more into the pragmatic and practical issues of how you get things done and how things occur in relationships, other issues and the quirks of Local Government - be they ones which are embodied in legislation, or be they ones more of protocol, tradition and the way in which we achieve things in the Local Government business.

As it was stated in the introduction, I have got a fair degree of experience in the business of Local Government, having been around a fair while (attested to by my grey hair). But I certainly believe that I am in a position, where I can help you and provide advice. Again very much like Joan, the advice that I will give you would be on a strictly confidential basis. In the same way Joan is independent of the LGAQ in her operation, likewise and the same, there is no requirement from the LGAQ for me to detail to them, in any form (nor will I), details of any conversations I may have with a Mayor or Councillor regarding any of those issues. My only reporting will be in very general terms, where I detect there to be trends or issues that are clearly causing grief and are common to others and therefore should be the subject of further investigation, or may need some change or whatever. It is very much a confidential service to you, to be able to help you manage your affairs in the day to day operation of Local Government.

I just want to make a couple of points! Every Council has a CEO and I am certainly not wishing to place myself in a position of conflict with CEO’s. They still remain your primary source of advice. I do understand there will be occasions when you may wish to check that advice. Or you may find it difficult to talk to your CEO about it, because it may involve them in some form or in some particular issue that arises. Hence the opportunity for an independent ear and an independent service! My expectation is that I would speak to you on the telephone in the first instance and provided the matter is fairly straight forward, I would trust that we would be able to simply discuss those matters and be able to deal with it in that way - other than that by email. Certainly my intention would be (this is all yet to be tested, as I said this is just starting), my intent would be that if the matter does get a bit more complex, I would ask you to put it in writing to me and to send me an email to which I would respond.

Again, my contact details at the moment are through the new LGAQ helpline. That is the 1300 LGAQ 00 Helpline. If you ring that line and you wish to speak to me, they will give you the contact details. I do have a business card coming and when we get that it will have my email address on it. My contact details are also on the website for anybody who wishes to avail themselves of that service. I, like Joan, will be here for the next day and a half of the remainder of the conference and will be available if any Councillor does want to have a chat to me about any issue.
I would emphasise this is a service for you and I thank the LGAQ for making this service available. I look forward to the contact with many of you. Many of you I have known over the many years of my contact in Local Government. It is a great opportunity for me to give back something, to an industry which has served me very well over a long career and which is very dear to my heart.

I thank the LGAQ for giving this opportunity to me and I am looking forward to working with you over the next few years. Thank you very much.

Chair

During part of our consultation in regards to the new framework - the new way in which the LGAQ wants to work - there were a number of points raised by members (particularly elected members). They wanted some independent advice. There was a need for some independent and separate advice to be able to be obtained, in a collective way from you as elected members. We certainly listened to what you said as part of that whole consultation process in regards to the review.

This was a very strong point that came out of those we interviewed during that time. This is a new service that has been put in place because of what you wanted. It is certainly something that you raised as an important issue to you as elected members and is one that you required to be independent, as is Joan’s position as well. We are certainly recommending to you very strongly, that Hayden’s position be used where you see it as appropriate for you.

Please thank Hayden again for being with us this morning.

**State Opposition Update:**

**Campbell Newman**  
**Leader of the LNP**

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen. It is an absolute pleasure to be here at the LGAQ Conference and I do feel that I am amongst friends. I hope!

Can I acknowledge Cr Genia McCaffery the President of the ALGA, to Paul Bell your President, to Greg Hallam the CEO, to also my colleagues David Gibson who is our Shadow Minister for Local Government and Howard Hobbs the Member for Warrego. (It is great that you are both here today) and to all the Mayors, councillors and Officials that are present.

What I want to do today is set out the vision that I have for Queensland, particularly focussing on how I am proposing a new partnership with Local Government. I need to start at the beginning and talk about the state of our State. I came here 25 years ago with the Australian Army as a young officer. Twenty five years ago the feeling in the State of Queensland was palpably different. It was chalk and cheese. When I came to Queensland, this was the State of opportunity. There was a frontier feel. This was the place that dreams could come true.

Queensland was the place you could set up a business, you could grow it, you could build wealth and prosperity for your friends, your family and your employees. You could buy your first home, you could get a great job and you could have a career. All those things were possible. But, we now see Queensland today, having the worst performing State economy in the nation. Don’t just take my word for it, look at COMSEC, a
division of the Commonwealth Bank who has consistently in the last two reports, put Queensland in last place in the battle of the State economies. Behind Tasmania, behind South Australia and I say to you delegates, this is not because of the floods or the cyclone, or even the GFC. It is because of the ALP in Queensland! A Government that has been in charge for twenty of the last twenty two years, that has run out of ideas and energy and completely has the wrong philosophy as you will see, in running the State of Queensland.

In addition we have debt today of 52 billion dollars. We just sold 17 billion dollars worth of assets. You can tell I am upset about this and we should all be upset. In only four years time, that debt rises to 85 billion dollars, with interest payments of 100 million dollars a week. They have the nerve to talk about the financial sustainability and management of Local Government.

We have seen waste and inefficiency, the health payroll system, blowouts in all sorts of major capital projects, mainly the hospitals, poor service delivery and overall a pervading centralist. ‘We in Brisbane know best what is good for you whether you are in Cooktown or Roma or Charleville or Mount Isa or Cloncurry or even Noosa, we know best, we are the smart people. Well, I don’t agree with that philosophy.

What is our vision?
Here is where I am coming from:
- I want to restore hope and opportunity to the State of Queensland;
- I want to make Queenslanders the most wealthy, prosperous and happy people in Australia;
- I want great wealth built;
- Forward looking communities.

And I want to work with all of you to do just that.

One of the biggest things we need to do right now if we become the Government, is to deal with the economy. I have been talking for the last few months about getting the four economic pillars of the Queensland economy going. Tourism, resources, agriculture and the property industry. Everybody in this room probably has a role in at least two or three of those particular pillars of the Queensland economy. At the same time, the State Government that I lead, will cut down on this waste and inefficiency and will undertake, fundamental reform of the way the Government is structured and run, so that we can save money as well.

The important thing that I wanted to talk about today, was this new philosophy of running this State of Queensland. A Philosophy of Government which is about dealing with the practicalities, the realities of Queensland and that is firstly of course that it is a vast geographically diversified state. I was up in Cairns and Cooktown yesterday and we all know the distances are the same from Brisbane to Cairns, as it is from Brisbane to Melbourne. How could you possible contemplate running Brisbane from Melbourne? So how can you effectively run a centralist approach and run Cairns or Cooktown from Brisbane?

The other thing I say is, that one size does not fit all. Because of the unique characteristics of this state and the diversity and that incredible contrast between communities, Local Communities need to have a strong say in the way they run their affairs. That is why ladies and gentlemen, local expertise is absolutely vital. It is critical. So I am saying to you today, that an LNP Government, lead by myself, will be all about decentralisation and devolution of power, authority and responsibility. And I stress, (because I am not talking cost shifting), resources to those best placed to make the decisions.
Now you will hear us talk later in the campaign about hospitals, how we would run them, health delivery and other vital government services. But today, that theme is what I am focussing on in talking to, you in Local Government.

So today David, myself and the team propose to you formally, a new partnership with Local Government. A partnership that gets away from the past ten years, where you have been bullied, bashed up and patronised by the ALP. They have engaged in the cost shifting that the Henry Review talked about, well, they have ignored that and they have kept doing it. They have hit you with more and more red tape. They have piled on the environmental responsibilities from the 'Department of Saying No in Queensland'. That would be DERM. I am sure you would all like us to undertake some fundamental reform there!

There has been interference by State Government Departments, with the so called State Interest Checks where you, should actually be setting the pace, running the agenda. Then there is the pervasive and ongoing role of the Urban Land Development Authority. Let me be very clear, you're at the coal face, you serve local communities, you under an LNP Government, are going to be in the drivers seat to deliver for your local community.

Let me just go now, into what we are offering to you today.

Firstly let us talk about the Local Government Department. The Department will be there to facilitate, to obviously set some standards, but ultimately to serve and to help Local Government build capacity and get on with running Queensland. They will work with the LGAQ again as a partner.

Secondly, Local Government Boundaries. I know there are Mayors around the State that I have spoken to, who have different views on this. I simply say, I believe in democracy. Ladies and gentlemen, Local Government should be set up and structured to service the needs of communities of interest. We will have a process, a Boundary Review Commission, to actually look at adjustments to boundaries where communities are strongly wanting to make some changes.

I will be urging people from the Premier, not to enter into those changes in any reckless manner. I will actually be urging people to think about continuing with the boundaries as they are. But clearly around the state there are some cases and there are some strong community views, where some de-amalgamations can occur. But I stress, that there will be a process that will be available and that due process will have to be followed.

The third issue I wanted to cover, is Local Empowerment. I say to you today, an LNP Government will be prepared to give you as much power, authority, responsibility and resources as you wish to take on. I’ve already challenged Paul, Greg and Greg Hoffman as well to tell me on behalf of you, what things perhaps Local Government would like to do. I see that you should, particularly in remote areas, be undertaking service delivery that other parts of Australia, have undertaken by the State. I am quite happy to do that if you wish to be involved and I stress, that we won’t be pushing that onto you. We will have a dialogue about that.

I want to stress that Local Government will be responsible for building and developing local communities. You will be in the drivers’ seat, because I will always respect your views, as to what your community wants. If you get it right, I guess everyone is going to be a hero. If you get it wrong, I am going to be blaming you.
But you get the drift! I am giving you this opportunity, to take your communities forward. I want to be very clear about something else - Mayors and councillors need to be put back in charge. The current Government has created an odious Local Government Act that actually has your CEO's trying to serve two masters. They have effectively tried to make your Councils subsidiaries of the Queensland State Government. That is not the partnership that I want.

Under an LNP State Government lead by myself, the Mayor and councillors will be clearly in charge. I go so far as to say also that, I propose that Mayors should have specific executive powers. Again, I am not about forcing anything onto people, I am willing to sit down and have a dialogue on that. I say to you that, the communities across Queensland think that their Mayors have these powers right now. I believe that an appropriate way to go is, to look at the city of Brisbane Act as it was before Paul Lucas and Desley Boyle mucked it up in the last two years. Go back for the BCC, but also offer other councils the opportunities, to have a Mayor with executive powers with appropriate checks and balances from the Council as a whole. The councillors in terms of the way they scrutinise the Mayor's decisions and the execution and delivery of Budgets.

Clearly you will have control of revenue raising and rates and charges. I pledge to you today, that we reject moves that have happened in other States that have capped people, in terms of the way they can raise rates and those charges. You will have to stand accountable to your communities for your decisions, but they will be your decisions and you need to be able to make the case for whatever you do to your community.

Reduction of Red tape
A fourth area I want to talk about is the reduction of red tape. The current Local Government Act has (well you probably know better than I), highly prescriptive and unnecessary reporting requirements. These need to go! It has very harsh conflict of interest and MPI provisions. Since when was it a good idea for say (lets talk Monto), people who are involved as a patron of the Monto Bowls Club, to then be excluded from considering any statutory plan involving the Monto Community? Surely if we declare these things and they are there for the media and the community to see, that is good enough. Why do we need to have a provision where someone in the Monto Community is actually suddenly exposed to criminal charges, exclusion as a councillor, simply for being patron of a local bowls club?

Ladies and Gentlemen, this will go as well! Again I reiterate DERM will be reformed. I need to just stop here for a moment Ladies and Gentlemen, because as I go across the State, I have been horrified about the costs that they have been imposing on Local Communities. The Bundaberg Council some months ago, talked to me about a provision that was required in terms of building culverts on local roads, (which I had never heard about) which is adding tens of thousands of dollars to each creek crossing.

I look at the sewerage treatment plant upgrade guidelines and the like and all manner of provisions that are just spewing forth from this State Government, which imposes costs on you - which you then have to go and explain to your community, ultimately in terms of rate rise outcomes or infrastructure charges. We will be sorting that one out as well.

Planning and Development
A fifth area is Planning and Development Assessment. Again, Local Government will be in charge of Planning and Development Assessment under an LNP Government. We will not go anywhere near independent planning panels. We will reject the self interest of the property industry in terms of some of their proposals over the years. You will be in charge of those matters. We will have broad State Guidelines,
to try to get consistency and to obviously, ultimately achieve the right environmental and social outcomes for the state. But, you will provide the lead role.

A couple of things I need to mention: The ULDA and its powers. As many of you know, I have never supported the ULDA. Again, it was crass political tactics and game playing by Anna Bligh that set this thing up in the first place. I am not quite sure how we will deal with this to be honest. But the first thing I say to you today is that, if there is any declared ULDA area in a Council across Queensland after the next State Council Elections and you want to talk to me, if we are both there in the room, you want to take over responsibility with the ULDA powers for that declared UDA area, you have got it! So Bob Abbott, Graeme Quirk in Brisbane, Rob Loughnan out at Roma, you have got it, it will be your area to control.

With you having those ULDA powers, I see the ULDA will perhaps be turned into an agency to provide specialist expertise to Councils, to actually undertake planning work. Again, I have to say that it has been my experience that, usually it is the Local Council that is helping the ULDA out, do the job that they have been supposedly bought in to expedite. There will be a reformed Sustainable Planning Act. This must happen! And Regional Plans must be lead by you, with State assistance. Again, you in a partnership with other Councils where appropriate, will run the Regional Planning process with assistance from the State Government.

Roads to Resources Program
The final thing I wanted to mention in relation to this new partnership is, the Roads to Resources Program which we have already announced. This we believe should be handled through the Regional Roads Group process. It is about taking the rewards of the energy and coal and mining industry and putting it back into the areas where those resources are coming from. You will also hear from the LNP, more about Royalties to Regions in coming weeks and months.

So that is what you get from us.

I just want to talk though, about a few things I want from you. This is going to be a two way street. I want something else out of this partnership. Firstly I want you to consider this today, I want you to be prepared to step up to the plate and be prepared to take the responsibilities on that I have outlined today. I would like you to be part of this new partnership. But I want Mayors, Councils and the Executives of your organisations, to want to come on board, grasp this one, go for it and work with me to do it if I am the Premier.

I want Councils to play the key Economic Development role in the future of this State, with the State Government. I don't want people to say that it is just the State Governments role, because the decisions that you make on the ground, intimately affect our ability to deliver (on a State wide basis) great Economic Outcomes. So I want the Mayors particularly, to be champions of Economic Development in their communities. I want you to work with us if we are the Government, to create the most efficient, cost effective and time efficient planning and approval system in Australia. This is a big one for me. Ladies and Gentlemen I mentioned SPAR before. We cannot keep going on with what has been happening over the last ten to fifteen years. Everybody is sick and tired of it. Not just developers, but the community who want to see outcomes on the ground and who complain about bureaucracy to put on a new deck, or build a shed, or maybe do their own little small time development. We have to deliver better outcomes in terms of Planning and Development Assessment Approvals. So I ask you today to consider that, as it is an important one that I would be after.
Finally, I will be asking you all to understand that the State and Local Government cannot keep passing on costs to our community. It is hurting our economy. As a State Government I have indicated in the beginning, in my preliminary remarks that we will be undertaking reform. And I know that you have many pressing responsibilities, but I am looking in this new partnership for Local Government, to also show the community, that they are not just going to ask for more in rates and more in infrastructure all the time.

I understand the pressures, but I am looking for people to be part of working together to get this reform going. Ladies and Gentlemen, what I have done today is, I have outlined what I see as the problem in Queensland, I have outlined a bit about a vision to get the State going, but particularly I have tried to convey to you, how I envisage a new partnership with Local Government in Queensland. You are the people at the front line in Local Communities right across this diverse State that can make a huge difference, if we have such a partnership.

I want a Queensland that is full of hope and opportunity. I know that you want local communities that are happy, prosperous and forward looking. Together we can build the four pillars of the Queensland Economy. Tourism, agriculture, property and resources and together we can make Queensland a ‘Can Do State’ once more!

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

**Question:**
Genia McCaffrey has just come in as our President of the ALGA. Again you would want me to ask Campbell, what is your position in regard to Constitutional Recognition of Local Government?

**Answer:**
The LNP supports Constitutional Recognition. I have made that very clear and I regularly talk to Councillor Jane Prentice (now the Federal Member for Ryan) in terms of my conduit into the Federal Coalition. But yes, that is our position.

**Question:**
Cr Peter Macguire, Mayor of Central Highlands.
Understanding the votes from the South East Corner, for us in Central Queensland and Central Western Queensland, I believe that a couple of your people, (our members in that area) got shafted recently when you got into the position you are in. So, are there any guarantees that Rural Queensland, Central Western Queensland and North Queensland won’t be forgotten (as I believe we are being at the moment from the current Government), by you guys?
Answer:
Peter the LNP is all about the bush through to the city and if we don’t do that, we split as a Party and we
don’t intend to split. So I have self appointed myself as the advocate for the bush and I think you will find
that, (when we ultimately) if we win and we get to ultimately announce the Cabinet, you will see that there
is appropriate balance in representation across the State. You will also see some interesting Portfolio
appointments as well. That I think, will well and truly demonstrate our commitment to looking after people
across the State. I also mentioned Royalties to Regions. The LNP Convention in July voted unanimously
(700 delegates) to have a Royalties to Regions Program. Roads to Resources, is the first part of the
Parliamentary win delivering on that, but there will be more that we will be saying.

Question:
Cr Paul Tully Ipswich City Council
I think most delegates would agree with your comments about restoring power back to the Mayor and
councillors. Will that include a change to the Act which was imposed on us a couple of years ago, that we
no longer have the right to appoint any departmental head or Directors of Departments? Our only power
now is to appoint the CEO and that was stripped away in the recent amendments under the new Local
Government Act.

Answer:
My view is that as long as it is consistent with Industrial Laws and good Governance Principles, that the
ultimate authority in any Council is the Council, comprising the councillors and the Mayors. They should
have the power to hire and fire, right through the organisational ranks. That is my clear position and I
argued that with Paul Lucas and Desley Boyle when they created the odious and unacceptable legislation
that we now have in Queensland. You are accountable to the community. How can you be accountable, if
you’ve got your hands tied behind your back? You can’t even pick a team that you have confidence in.

Question:
Cr John Hooper, Mayor of Banana Shire, Biloela, Nowra, and surrounding area
Campbell Newman: I know Banana well mate, I have stopped at the creek there on a couple of occasions
waiting for the water to go down.

Cr John Hooper: We have got coal mines and power stations, but agriculture is by far our biggest income
earner. The present Government has taken away our DPI research stations. The research is going to
Emerald. I have been told that the services our cockies are going to get, is not going to be of the same
standard that we had before. Can you have a look at this area and make sure that our rural people are
supported to the extent that they should be please?

Answer:
The LNP announced an Agricultural Strategy about three weeks ago. It is on the ‘Can Do Website’. It is
quite a big document. It is a vision to double production in Queensland by 2040. It talks about the ways that
we will do that. There is a range of initiatives in there. The first one is having a Department of Agriculture
again and a proper voice at the Cabinet table. There are things like skills training, whether it be tertiary
programs, or TAFE’s, or on the job training. There is a whole lot of stuff about research and development
which you are alluding to. Extension services, not necessarily provided by Government, but in partnerships
with private sector organisations, commentary on the fact that we once upon a time used to build
infrastructure, irrigation schemes, dams, beef roads and invested in our rail network. Those things will all
happen again and I think it is true to say as well, that we will be trying to encourage people (young people
particularly), to be enthusiastic about agriculture. Finally I am keen to look at trying to get value adding
going and aggressively encouraging food processors to set up in Queensland, all be it, Julia Gillard wants to kill it with a carbon tax.

**Question:**
**Cr Brian Battersby, Moreton Bay Regional Council:**
I am really keen to hear about the Open Door Policy of Local Government that you are proposing, because the State at the moment says, “we will talk to you” and time and time again, we are fighting bureaucracy to try to get our say. The Waste Levy is just one.

**Campbell Newman:**
The Waste Levy will be repealed by us if we get into Government by the way!

**Cr Brian Battersby, Moreton Bay Regional Council:**
The other thing we get from the State - we get grant programs rolled out and we get a week, or two weeks to put a submission in. I would like to have some process that we get a real say and some more democracy back to us, because it seems to be, the State comes up with the legislation and we have very short time frames and opportunity to comment time and time again.

**Campbell Newman:**
I couldn't agree more and I wouldn't know where to start in terms of response Brian. But it is just the way this mob do business and that is why I said - bullied, patronised, beat up and frankly one of the motivators to be here (and I don't mind who tells the Premier), perhaps if they treated Local Government with more respect, I wouldn't be standing here. I just wanted to be an effective Mayor for my community and I found I couldn't be an effective Mayor and I couldn't deliver for my Community because of Anna Bligh, Paul Lucas, Andrew Fraser and a whole lot of people who have to go. We need to change the culture of the State Government. Particularly change the culture! One thing I am interested in is the BCC, as the LGAQ used to do annual surveys of the perceptions of the three levels of Government and service delivery. Every single survey for the seven years that I was Mayor (and I am not skiting about the BCC because the results would be the same for your Local Government), but Local Government always comes in higher, in terms of the community regards over the Federal and State Government. What should that tell you? It tells you, it is time for the State Government to adopt a can do service delivery, looking after the customer approach, rather than the culture we have in it today. It permeates to right across Queensland. Whether it is dealing with Mayors and Councils or people in the community - that is what we are going to try to achieve.

**Question:**
**Cr Ray Jamieson - Western Downs Regional Council:**
Campbell, earlier on you mentioned with the ULDA declared areas, you would give Council the option to take over the planning processes there after. Would you consider when you are reviewing the Planning Assessment Processes, giving Local Government similar planning powers to what the ULDA currently has? They have powers that we don’t have and that obviously streamlines their assessment process.

**Campbell Newman:**
The way I would see it right now is, we have some ULDA Legislation and we have the ULDA itself. As I understand it, the ULDA can delegate to a Local Government the Planning Work and the Local Government can actually do it in a particular area. What I am suggesting is there will be a need in communities sector, in the energy sector belt or the mineral resources belt. So you have got Emerald etc, your area out west in terms of the Coal Seam Gas and you have got areas for example, the Townsville...
CBD, there is work that Ipswich wants to do and I don't have a problem in saying, let us define certain Urban Development Areas.

So, UDA’s as the ULDA has done and saying in that area - that the council has the powers of the ULDA. Now, there is an immediate thing. We have a ULDA at the moment if we get into Government - we are saying we are going to offer the opportunities for the councils, to take over those existing UDA’s. But looking forward several years, I would like a process where a council can come to the State and say (we have just reformed planning across the State anyway and it is a lot better than it used to be, so that is the first thing we need to achieve).

I still want a process where a Mayor and council can come along after voting on the matter saying, ‘we want the Monto CBD to be declared a UDA because we have got the vision to take it forward and we are going to need these special powers to make it happen’, and I am all ears for a process like that. I hope that clarifies it.

Question:
Cr Able - Logan City Council:
Campbell, I represent a lot of battlers down there. What are you going to do about the price of water and how are we going to get back the control of water to bring the prices down? People are really hurting with the price of water.

Campbell Newman:
Graham, many people in this room from South East Queensland, know that the Mayors warned Anna Bligh, Paul Lucas, Andrew Fraser and the incompetent Stephen Robertson that this so called water reform, would cost householders dearly. We warned them of that, they wouldn’t listen, they listened to Mr John Bradley and they drove the caboose over a cliff. That is why we have high water prices. By the way, Mr Bradley also gave us high power prices as well. He is responsible for a number of things around this state.

In terms of what we need to do, we need to do four things.
1. We need to take this crazy system of having say, four bulk water entities right now and merge them to one.
2. We need to write off some of the non-performing assets.
3. We need to quarantine into bad debt, some of the bad debts.
4. We then need to spread some of the repayments over a 40 - 50 year period instead of 20 years and that will bring the price of bulk water down.

What I then expect is, the Council owned distribution and retail companies to pass on those savings, because we want to provide savings. The LGAQ's modelling work, says $80.00 per household per annum. I think that is achievable. The final step and this is my preferred option, is that Councils take over water distribution and retail again. Now some people don't agree with me in this room, I understand that, but I am prepared to sit down and talk about that. I think it is important that you do it. There are some people saying that there are very big costs involved in unraveling that part of the equation. Let's talk about that bit.

The thing is, I want you to actually be in a partnership with us, to save people money in their homes. We saw only two days ago, (because of Anna Bligh, Paul Lucas, Andrew Fraser, Stephen Robertson and John Bradley), we are spending twelve million minimum in executive pay and bonuses on all these water congo's. If you work it out, that is at least ten bucks per household, per annum in South East Queensland. So, I think it is pretty easy to find some savings.
Question:
Cr Ron Clarke, Mayor Gold Coast City Council:
Campbell, in support of your water emphasis, can you advise about the actual bulk water prices, which are still due to go up on this timetable by about another 100% between now and 2017? I know you have said that you are looking at capping and I am just wondering between, the different prices to the various Councils right now, for bulk water.

Campbell Newman:
I stand by what I said before. By merging the four bulk water companies, by having an extended period of repayment of the debt that is associated with those bulk water assets, in line with the LGAQ independent research that was done and also writing off some of the non-performing assets. What I want to do, is be able to present to your distribution retail companies, a reduced price for bulk water. The modelling that was done by LGAQ says it was at least $80.00 per annum per household. That is what I want to achieve, because I do, want to make some positive steps about cutting the cost of living for families right now.

Question:
Cr Greg McLean, Mayor, Hopevale Shire Council:
I was supposed to meet with you yesterday in Cooktown. This is in regards to the LNP. What would be your position with the MP's of this country (and I am not meaning your MP's, I am talking about Macklin and Peasham), State and Commonwealth position, when it comes to forcefully directing Council on how it should be? Changes of legislation, changes to the Act, that puts Aboriginal people in a position that we will be forever - welfare recipients.

What I am asking for is that accountability be put in place when it comes to forcefully imposing reform without working with the Local Governing Body. Last but not least, the accountability with funds that are supposed to be hitting the ground in our communities. In the last three years so many millions of dollars have been passed through welfare reform - 1.5 of that never hit Hopevale Shire Council. We need accountability.

Campbell Newman:
In terms of that, if I just go back to some of the things I spoke about, during my speech about the philosophy in general. The philosophy becomes even more important for example on Cape York, but also in some other Aboriginal Communities. There is an article in the Australian today on Wild Rivers, (if you want to have a look, I think it is on page 8) and it gives you a bit of a feel ladies and Gentlemen where I am coming from there.

Enough is enough. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people don't want to be living forever as welfare recipients. The leadership are saying that, they want dignity, they want respect, they want real jobs, they want real economic opportunity and they should have the opportunity to have the decisions of their Local Community being made by their Elected Officials, their Mayors and Councillors.

That is what we are about. My vision is that people will have the opportunity to own their own home, to own the land under which their business run or have a long term lease. These are reforms that must be undertaken. Labor has had twenty, of the last twenty two years to do this. Wild Rivers will be amended, changed (whatever you call it), to create environmental protection for Cape York that allows Aboriginal people to have economic opportunities on the Cape, whether it be involved in mining or pastoral activities. Alcohol, well I would hope that in ten years time, an Aboriginal man or woman can do their full days work at the local business. It might be the local Eco Tourism Venture, it might be the local mine, can go back to the home that they own and knock the top off a beer like any other Australian. That is what I would like to see.
That is what I am offering people, if I am the Premier of Queensland. Not welfare, not dependency, but self respect, dignity and economic opportunity. That is what I am offering.

Thank you.

**Keynote Address:**

The right stuff – what our country needs today from political leaders of all levels of government

Dr John Hewson  
An economic and financial expert with experience in academia, business, government and the financial system.

Due to copyright laws we are unable to print a copy of this speech.

**ALGA Update:**

ALGA’s Constitutional Recognition Campaign Strategy

Cr Genia McCaffery  
President  
ALGA

I might invite Professor George Williams up as well. Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for inviting me to address you this afternoon, at your conference on the important issue of Constitutional Recognition of Local Government. Today we are just going to talk to you about the campaign so far and what you can do as Council's in Queensland, to help us.

Basically we are working on this campaign with your associations and every other State Association throughout the country. We have been doing this (of course) for almost four years. Can I also acknowledge the very important role and leadership that has been provided on this issue, from your President Paul Bell - both in his role at the State and the National level!

Joining me is Professor George Williams from the University of New South Wales. George is an eminent Constitutional Expert and a well respected legal academic. We are very lucky to have George helping us on this campaign. He will be dealing with the technical issues later on in this presentation.

The failure to include Local Government, I think is one of the great omissions from our Constitution. It really highlights the fact, that our Constitution should be a document which reflects how Australia is governed today. Two previous efforts to include Local Government in the Constitution (in 1974 and then again in 1988) have failed. But, we now have a chance to get it right, with another referendum expected to be held at the next Federal Election.
The decision to hold the referendum was made by the Gillard Government, on coming to office last year. We haven’t been caught unawares by this announcement. As I said, we have been working on this for more than four years. We have been talking to (you) Councils about the Constitution. About how it works, how it needs to be changed and what would be a sensible and practical proposal for change, which Council’s and more importantly our Communities, would support. We have consulted extensively and then, the ALGA Board has determined that the best question would be ‘Financial Recognition of Local Government’. We are asking for a simple change to Section 96 of the Constitution, which would allow the Federal Government to fund us directly.

Federal Governments do this, of course. One of the programs we all know and love is ‘Roads to Recovery’. But the 2009 decision in a case in the High Court, has cast doubt on the capacity of the Commonwealth to fund us directly. Therefore putting important programs like ‘Roads to Recovery’ at risk! ‘Roads to Recovery’ is not illegal at the moment, but it is very vulnerable to challenge. In fact, Pape himself has said that it is vulnerable to challenge. We need to make sure that challenge does not happen.

Our proposal is supported by all the State and Territory Associations and we have now asked all Council’s in Australia, to pass a resolution to support this proposal. So far almost 80% of Australian Council’s have passed a resolution supporting this, including forty seven from Queensland. But, it is really important that we get that figure as close as possible, to 100%. Because, if Councils don’t support this, how can we expect our own Communities to support it?

The most recent development is the establishment of the Panel by the Federal Government. This is Chaired by the former Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Honourable James Spiegelman. The Panel has eighteen members, (a little bit large for our liking), but that is what we have got. It includes your State President, Paul Bell and myself.

The Panel will report back to the Government by the end of the year, which is a very tight timeframe. We have statements of support for recognition from the ALP, from the Coalition, the Greens and the Independents. We need to make sure that ALGA’s Proposal wins Panel support for our proposal. I have written to you recently (I hope you have all got my letter) and I have asked that you pass a motion in your Council, then make a submission to the Panel saying that your Council, representing your Community, supports that question. Please do that as soon as possible.

The Panel has issued a Discussion Paper. It has outlined four possible options for recognition.

1. *Symbolic Recognition* of Local Government - Which includes a new preamble, or statement of values. We have said that if there is a preamble, we are happy for Local Government to be included in that.

2. *Financial Recognition* of Local Government - Which would allow the Commonwealth to directly fund us and of course that is the one as a sector that we are supporting.

3. *Democratic Recognition* of Local Government - Which would require States to establish and maintain Local Government.

4. *Recognition through Federal Cooperation* - Which would seek to encourage cooperation between all levels of Government, including Local Government.

ALGA will be making a submission. We will be emphasising our preference for Financial Recognition and outlining the comprehensive process we have undertaken to reach that view. Including broad public support and support by our Council’s.
Assuming the Panel makes a recommendation that we can support and which the Government accepts, our next challenge will be to get the referendum passed by a majority of voters, in a majority of States. We know that is a big ask! No one should underestimate the challenge we face. But, this is really about assuring our Communities, that if they want to get the level of services and quality of infrastructure that they deserve and with the help of Council across Australia, each running a campaign (so each one of us will need to run a campaign in our own Community) I do really believe, that this has a really good chance of getting support.

It is now my pleasure to invite George to come and talk about his assessment of the options for recognition and the issues they raise.

Thank you!

Professor George Williams AO
Faculty of Law
University of New South Wales

Thanks very much Genia, for your introduction. It is a pleasure to be here today, to talk to you about this important issue.

The coming referendum on Local Government Recognition is actually very unusual in Australian history. Normally the way these referendums work, is the Government says, we are going to hold a referendum to change the Constitution and here are the terms - take it or leave it! Normally a sector like Local Government would be told, these are the terms of the Constitutional Change. They often may not represent what you would like, but they are what the Government are prepared to give you.

On this occasion the referendum is different. What we have had, is the announcement of a referendum without a proposal. In essence there is a great big canvas that needs to be filled in when it comes to Local Government Recognition. That leaves an unparalleled opportunity for the Community and Local Government people, to play a leading role in determining how the Constitution should be changed to recognise Local Government.

In this, I believe, there is a particular task that Local Government needs to play. That is, I think you actually need to move the debate beyond recognising Local Government. My own view is, that if Australians are asked to vote on Recognising Local Government, they are likely to vote no! I don't think Australians will vote in large enough numbers to give you that near recognition, because I think they will see that recognition as self-serving and ultimately, not serving a practical purpose. I think the job of Local Government, is to champion reform that is meaningful, practical, substantive and that you can demonstrate or recognise Local Government in a way that delivers real benefits to your Communities.

Ultimately I think, unless you can tie the agenda of Constitutional Change to benefits of your Communities, you are going to find it very hard to succeed in this referendum.

When it comes to the options for achieving those practical benefits - we can turn back to the 2008 Constitutional Summit that ALGA held and put three options on the table for Constitutional Recognition. A fourth option has now been put on the table by the expert panel that Genia and Paul are members of. That leaves us now with four possible ways of moving forward in this debate. A debate that Local Government itself has put on the agenda now, for some decades. What I am going to do in this talk is, quickly run you
through the four options. Talking about what they might mean, what the implications might be and then finish with a few observations about (perhaps) what you need to do, to win the coming referendum.

I say the coming referendum, because this is very unusual (this referendum) for another reason. Governments often announce referendums, but don’t hold them. On this occasion the Gillard Government's very survival, depends upon holding your referendum. It's written into the agreements that she has signed with the Lower House Members, whose support provides the stability that her Government needs to govern. Indeed, if the referendums are not held, then she is placed in a position of a hung Parliament, where she no longer has the support she needs to maintain her Government. It actually means, you can proceed with a level of confidence that you don't normally find in this area and proceed in a way that really tries to drive home to a conclusion, the change that you would like to see.

Symbolic Recognition

The first option as Genia mentioned, is 'Symbolic Recognition'. This would not deliver the sort of practical benefits that I have talked about. It is recognition that is primarily born, out of the debate about recognising Aboriginal Australians in the Constitution. They seek a Preamble that will put fine words at the opening of the Constitution, recognising them, their history and their place in this nation.

If we do have a new Preamble (particularly if it mentions State and Federal Government) it should mention Local Government. But I think it is very hard to press that yourselves, given that it actually doesn't deliver anything practical to your Communities. I think the real risk here is, there might be a Preamble and you might be left out. Perhaps as a defensive measure, you need to make sure that your current exclusion from being recognised as part of our system of Government is not, reinforced by being left out. Beyond that, I am not sure there is much to be said about the Symbolic Recognition option.

Financial Recognition

The second option put forward in the Panel's Discussion Paper, is 'Financial Recognition'. This does respond to a known problem and does so, in a way that does relate to real and substantive benefits. As Genia has indicated - a High Court case in 2009 said in overturning decades of established practice, 'the Commonwealth is now very limited in what it can fund with its Federal Tax monies'. Previously the Commonwealth took the view, it could fund whatever it wanted. The High Court by seven to nil said, 'that was not correct'. It is now clear, that the Commonwealth can only fund directly, those things over which it has a clear power or mandate in the Constitution.

The problem for the Local Government sector is it's quintessentially, a sector that is a State responsibility. There has never been a clear Federal power over Local Government. Indeed, a recent Federal court case dealing with Etheridge Shire Council, found that the Corporations Power (for example) of the Federal Parliament, does not extend to Local Government activities.

This leaves vulnerable, a range of direct Federal Funding Programs relating to Local Government. The best example of which is Roads to Recovery. I have looked at it carefully and in my view, if it was challenged, it would fall. But as it is currently constructed, it is not a program that can continue and it continues simply by the grace of not having been taken by the High Court. However, as Genia has also mentioned, it is in the sights (particularly of the State's Rights Campaigner, Brian Pape, who has nominated the Roads to Recovery program as his number one target for a future High Court challenge).
Lest you think this is hypothetical, the High Court is in the midst of hearing other cases dealing with similar issues. You might have heard of the Chaplaincy Case that is in the High Court, where the Federal funding of School Chaplains is being challenged. It is being challenged on exactly this basis - that the Federal Government does not have direct power to fund things that occur in State Schools and the same argument would apply for Local Government. The State's on mass, intervened in that case to argue that the Pape decision, means there are limits to Commonwealth funding. They intervened to say that those limits mean you cannot fund Chaplains. I have no doubt that the State's would similarly intervene to try to strike down Local Government, Federal funding, when the issue arises. This is the issue when it relates to Financial Recognition that needs to be fixed. As has been indicated, the fix is a simple one, in indicating that the Commonwealth can directly fund Local Government bodies.

It is a fix that I think, also holds a range of strategic advantages. Most importantly it enables you to shift the debate away from recognising Local Government, to funding the things that Local Government does, (that the Community particularly values). If I was going to run a campaign on this issue, I would be saying that this is about maintaining Federal funding of roads and future Federal funding of Community Infrastructure (like child care and a range of other activities). I would be using this as an opportunity, to reinforce in the Communities mind, why they value the work of Local Government in these areas. My own view is that, you don't have much of a chance on a referendum about recognising Local Government. But you have actually got a very good chance, when it comes to a referendum about ensuring people have access to good roads and local bodies can actually fund the activities that families need, to live good lives.

I would also say that one of our successful referendums dealt with exactly this type of issue. A High Court decision in the 1940's struck down a Labor/Chifflley Government initiative, about the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. That Government went to a referendum to fix that High Court decision and that High Court decision was overturned by a referendum on the basis that, the Community still wanted to receive certain practical benefits that the Federal Government had to that point, been providing. That is Labor's only referendum success in 110 years and it just happens that that referendum success shows a good path also, for what you are proposing.

**Democratic Recognition**

The third option relating to ‘Democratic Recognition’ is really the Rolls Royce option. This would put into the Constitution, (perhaps recognising Local Government) saying your bodies must be directly chosen by the people. It could deal with dismissal and amalgamation; it could also deal with matters of cooperation and the like. My view is there should be a chapter in the Constitution dealing with these matters. Indeed other Constitutions typically do have this information. it is a problem that we don't in this country and this aught to be put into our Constitution.

The problem though, is that this is the change that is most likely to provoke the biggest reaction from the State's. It could be seen rightly, as a challenge to their complete authority over a range of Local Government matters and as matters are currently constituted within our system. Even though it has merit, it is very hard to see this proposal succeeding. It might get up as part of a larger package dealing with Federal reform. Or perhaps, if something is put just dealing with issues such as, the direct election of Government bodies. But, it is hard to see any broad form of democratic recognition proceeding at the moment.
Recognition through Federal Cooperation

The last option, which has been created as a new option by the expert panel, with its recent Discussion Paper, is what they call 'Recognition Through Federal Cooperation'. This is referring to the fact, that there are some big problems and blind spots in our Constitution, when it comes to the ability of the Commonwealth, the States and Local Governments to cooperate. In fact the High Court has held, that some forms of cooperation are unconstitutional. You can't have an integrated court system and you can't have national regulators in certain areas. It means that there are great added costs in our Federal System of doing things in a sensible, cooperative way.

Addressing these concerns would again, have a major practical benefit. It would lower costs within our Federal System. It would reduce bureaucracy and enable cooperation in areas where it is desirable, but constitutionally impossible for certain reasons that don't relate to our current well being. The problem for Local Government is that these problems in the main, don't relate very much, to Local Government. The problems of cooperation are primarily about impediments in the Constitution between the Commonwealth and the States. It means, I think, that it is very hard for Local Government to champion this as your only proposal. I would say though, if the State's get on board and want this as part of the package, there is no down sides for you either. If this is part of the price - that the State's want this form of cooperation recognised, I personally think Local Government's should support it. But, also make it clear, that any provision talking about cooperation, also mentions Local Government as much as it mentions the State's.

It is though, a canny addition, in that it is a way of perhaps diffusing the concerns the State's might have about this proposal.

I want to finish with just a couple of brief observations about what our dire, dismal record of losing referendums demonstrates, about how you can win the coming referendum on Local Government Recognition. As you know, you need to hold a poll of the Australian people to get the referendum up. You need a majority, not just nationally, but you need four out of the six or more State's, voting yes. The good news for Queenslanders is - Queensland actually has the second highest record in Australia's history of voting yes in referendums. Your State is the second most likely, after Western Australia, to actually vote yes in Federal Referendums.

What needs to be done though, is you actually need to avoid what have been a litany of past mistakes. Usually those mistakes start with a Commonwealth Government saying, "we have a proposal and we expect you to vote yes". That immediately gets people off side. The fact that this proposal, has emerged through the hard work of Local Government over four years and has emerged without the Commonwealth setting down its own vision, is a tremendous advantage.

I think if this was about the Gillard Government's plan for recognising Local Government, you are sunk. If this is however, about a plan that the Government hasn't taken ownership of and that the Local Government sector is pushing on behalf of its Communities - that is an entirely different debate.

Here are, very briefly, the four things I think you need to win this referendum.

1. The first is you need, cross Party support. You need bi-partisanship. It is the fact of our referendums, that if any major party opposes this, you will lose. They effectively have a veto over Constitutional change. Because the Australian people will not support a proposal that they believe, is self serving of any one side of politics. No referendum lacking bi-partisan support, has even gotten close to succeeding in a National Referendum.

On this, Local Government has made tremendous strides. It was great to hear Campbell Newman’s statement this morning in regards to a question, that he would personally support this type of change. In New South Wales, the Government and the Opposition is strongly in support. Indeed a number of other important National and State figures are also in support. That said, there are challenges in places like Western and South Australia and that may be why some State specific reforms may also need to be part of the package.

2. The second thing is, you also need popular ownership. If this (as I have said) is about recognising Local Government, I think Australians will see this as a politician’s proposal. They will see it, as serving the interest of Local Government and not serving ‘their interests’. There is a great danger here that, something that is generated by Local Government will not be seen as serving the Communities, but Local Government itself must serve. One of the great strategic needs in this debate is, to link this into something that will have practical benefits for your Communities. Something they can see as worthwhile of supporting and actually diffuses their concerns that, somehow this is about providing a honey pot for people who work in Local Government.

3. The third thing is about popular education. Australians, ‘if they don’t know’, ‘they vote no’, when it comes to referendums. When we have nearly half of the Australian population not even knowing we have a written Constitution, it is a tremendous task to educate those Australians.
   - You need to inform them about the need.
   - You need to inform them about the fact there is a problem that you have a fix for. You need to explain how that fix is sensible and worthwhile, in providing the benefits we have talked about.

   It seems to be, Australians need to be able to cast an informed, confident, vote when they get to the ballot box and they need to be able to do so, in the face of what could well be a scare campaign.

4. The fourth is you actually need a sound and sensible proposal. You need to get a proposal that is:
   - Technically correct;
   - Doesn’t have any flaws;
   - That meets a demonstrated need.

   As I said, I don’t think Australians are into symbolism in this regard. They are into practical fixes, things that will make a difference over the longer term.

   Australians are also well aware, (when they do come to vote), that they are voting on something that is a long term change. You are talking about a century change, when we recognise Local Government that you should expect to be here - Not only in 2012, but 2112. That is the length of time we are talking about, when we talk about Constitutional Reform. It has got to be sound, sensible, practical and workable. I would say the work that has been done on the criteria for the last four years, puts you in a very strong position.

   Can I just conclude by saying that, changing the Constitution is very hard! It is reflected in the number of years, (under the leadership of people like Paul Bell, through to Genia), that you have spent in advocating change and are now generating the coming referendum. It is hard because, it is difficult to convince the population and their leaders, that you have got a proposal and it is worthy of the fifty to one hundred million dollars that is required to be spent on that (to actually hold the referendum).
I would say though, in your case, even though it is hard, the change is clearly worthwhile. Particularly when it comes to Financial Recognition, you have a major problem that promises to undermine your capacity to get funding from the Federal Government, over the longer term. That is a major problem for Local Government because, when it comes to your sources of funding, putting all your eggs in the basket of the States, I think is a very difficult and problematic long term strategy. The trajectory of our Federal system indicates that, the revenue base of the State's will continue to shrink and unless you have the capacity to get money directly from the Federal Government, you will be trying yourself largely to a shrinking revenue base.

I think also, with the nature of this particular reform, you can sell it as something that is about the Good News of Local Government (the things you do that the Community values). And, I think that is why, when you put all of these things together, (the history of referendums, the problems you have got, the proposal that you have got), I think this is a referendum that could be won and indeed is waiting there to be won.

Thank you!