Local Government Association of Queensland Inc
110th Annual Conference

Host: Toowoomba City Council

Official Opening Ceremony

Tuesday 29 August 2006

Held at the Empire Theatre, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba

Commencing at 8.30am

With the Official Opening by

Hon Anna Bligh MP
Deputy Premier
Treasurer
Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation
CONFERENCE PROGRAM

“Closest to the People”

Sunday, 27 August 2006
12.00pm to 4.00pm
Registration
Delegates, Observers and Partners
Empire Theatre, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba

Monday, 28 August 2006
8.30am to 1.00pm
Executive Meeting

8.00am to 6.00pm
Registration
Delegates, Observers and Partners
Empire Theatre, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba

1.00pm to 1.30pm
Executive Lunch with LGMA State Council

1.30pm to 4.00pm
Regional Roads Group Assembly (Invitation Only - RRG Chairs and Technical Committee Chairs)
Downs Room, Burke and Wills - 554 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba

4.00pm - 4.30pm
Annual Conference Briefing for first time conference attendees
Downs Room, Burke and Wills - 554 Ruthven Street, Toowoomba

4.00pm - 4.30pm
Trade and Sponsor Briefing
Supper Room, Empire Theatre, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba

5.30pm - 7.00pm
Welcoming Ceremony
Botanical Gardens, Queens Park
Cnr Lindsay & Campbell Sts, Toowoomba
Hosted by King & Company

5.30pm
Welcome to Country
Mr Brian Tobane, Jarowair People

5.35pm
Welcome to Toowoomba
Cr Dianne Thorley, Mayor, Toowoomba City Council

5.45pm
Response
Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ and ALGA

5.50pm
Sponsors Address
Mr Tim Fynes-Clinton, Managing Partner, King & Company

7.00pm
Program concludes
(Buses travel direct to Tidy Towns Award Dinner for those attending)
FREE EVENING
Tuesday, 29 August 2006

8.00am  Registration
Empire Theatre, 54-56 Neil Street, Toowoomba

8.30am  Call to Order by President

8.35am  Presentation of Executive and Office Bearers

9.00am  Official Opening
by the Hon Anna Bligh MP
Deputy Premier,
Treasurer
Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation

9.30am  Presidential Address
Cr Paul Bell AM
President, LGAQ and ALGA

10.00am  Keynote Address: “Wisdom Of The Crowds”
Mr James Surowiecki, Author, Journalist,
Brooklyn, New York, USA

10.45am  Debate

11.45am  Address: “All Politics is Local”
Mr Mark Textor QPMR
Joint Managing Director and Co-Founder, Crosby|Textor

12.15pm  Lunch
Hosted by Telstra Countrywide

1.30pm  Address: Roads and Transport Issues
Hon Paul Lucas MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads

2.15pm  Debate

4.45pm  Address: “Worklife Balance/ Relationships for Elected Members”
Ms Terry Hawkins, Consultant

5.15pm  Adjournment

6.30pm for 7.00pm  Gala Dinner - USQ Clive Berghofer Recreation Centre
Baker Street, Toowoomba
Hosted by Hastings Deering
(Dress: Coat and tie)
Long Service Certificate Presentations

11.30pm  Program concludes
Wednesday, 30 August 2006

8.40am Conference Resumes - Housekeeping

8.45am Address: “Voter attitudes towards information sources during local government elections”
Ms Dianne Jones, Journalism Lecturer, USQ
and Ms Alison Feldman, Public Relations Lecturer, USQ

9.20am Address: “State Local Government and Planning Update”
Hon Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning & Women

9.50am Debate

10.30am Address: “Seeing Like a State”
Professor James C. Scott, Professor of Politics, Yale University,
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

11.25am Debate

12.15pm Lunch
Hosted by Queensland Government

1.30pm Conference Resumes

1.30pm Size, Shape and Sustainability Report Back and Discussion

3.30pm Address: “Opposition Perspective”
Mr Howard Hobbs MP
Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning

4.00pm Debate

4.40pm Workshop Briefing

4.45pm Address: “Local Leadership In Action”
Ms Julie McCrossin, presenter “Life Matters”, ABC Radio

5.15pm Adjournment

7.00pm “M*A*S*H” (not potatoes!!) - Oakey Army Aviation Hangar
Army Aviation Centre
Orns Road, Oakey
Hosted by Jardine Lloyd Thompson Pty Ltd
(Dress: Fancy Dress/Smart Casual)

11.30pm Program Concludes
Thursday, 31 August 2006

8.45am  Workshops
        Session 1: 8.45 - 10:15
        Session 2: 10:30 - 11.45am

12.00pm  Consideration of:
         (a) Executive Report
         (b) President’s Annual Address
         (c) Hon Treasurer’s Report

12.10pm  Superannuation Board Presentation

12.20pm  Address: “Sucking The Marrow Out Of Life”
        Mr John Maclean, Ironman, Para Olympian

1.05pm  Closing Ceremony

1.15pm  Lunch
        Hosted by Powerlink

6.00pm  Farewell Dinner - Picnic Point Reception Lounge

11.00pm  Program concludes
POLICY MOTIONS

NO. 1

POLICY STATEMENT REVIEW
MOVER: Cr T Mooney (Townsville)
SECONDER: Cr G Churchill (Banana)

“That the existing Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement be amended with the following changes as drafted.”

1.2 LGAQ ROLE

1.2.3 Operational Areas

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement, 1.2.3 Operational Areas, be amended by the insertion of a new policy statement on the importance of project and grant funding for LGAQ operations to read as follows:

1.2.3.2 The operations of the LGAQ are regularly facilitated by project and grant funds from other spheres of Government. Those projects should be based on long term funding with good prospects of continuation based on review.

2.1 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement, 2.1 Legislative Framework, be amended by inserting the following policy statement opposing “one size fits all” legislation and compliance requirements:

2.1.2 Legislation/Compliance

2.1.2.1 Legislation affecting Local Government in Queensland should be framed recognising the variety of capacity, size, resources, skills and physical location of Local Governments and should not be seen as ‘one size fits all model’.

2.1.2.2 Additional compliance placed on Local Government by the State should take into consideration risk management and materiality, and the value of transparency to the community and should not be based on simply aligning Local Government with State Government.

2.3 REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 2.3.2 Cultural Diversity be amended by adding a new paragraph 2.3.2.2 and renumbering the current paragraph 2.3.2.2 to 2.3.2.3 as follows:

2.3.2 Cultural Diversity

(Add new 2.3.2.2)

2.3.2.2 Local Government recognises that its relationship with all its constituents is to be based on the principles of access and equity and acknowledges the importance of developing, assessing and implementing policy direction and programs based on culturally appropriate mechanisms for input for those affected by those policies and programs.

(Renumber previous 2.3.2.2 to 2.3.2.3)
2.3.2.3 Local Government calls on the State Government to continue to support the enhancement of community relations through the Local Area Multicultural Partnership (LAMP) program.

2.3 REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 2.3.3 Indigenous People be amended by renaming the header Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and rewording of the policies to reflect the current situation:

2.3.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

2.3.3.1 Local Government recognises the importance of the culture and heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia and also affirms its commitment to the reconciliation process between indigenous peoples and other Australians.

2.3.3.2 Local Government is committed to improved service delivery and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities and agrees to work in partnership, where appropriate, with key stakeholders to assist Community Governments and Islander Councils transition to the Local Government Act.

2.3 REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 2.3.4 Access and Equity be renamed Community Access to Council Services. This change has been made to distinguish between access and equity issues (disability) and general access by all to Council services.

2.3.4 Community Access to Council Services

2.3.4.1 Local Government recognised the rights of people with special needs and will continue to take appropriate measures to address those needs.

2.3.4.2 Local Government seeks to encourage the provision of equitable access to facilities, services, human and other resources (including information) by all members of the community.

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 3.1 Funding Assistance, be amended by inserting the following policy statement on the methodology for determining General Purpose Grants and transition to new methodology:

3.1.1 Federal Funding Assistance - General Purpose Grants

3.1.1.5 The grants methodology should be transparent and easy to understand, based upon quality data, produce consistency and predictability in grant outcomes and ensure equitable treatment of Councils facing similar circumstances.

3.1.1.6 Where the methodology changes, a transition period of 4 years with a maximum reduction of 15 percent per year, should be established to allow Local Government to absorb and adapt to the change.
3.1 FUNDING ASSISTANCE

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 3.1.2 State Funding Assistance - Grants and Subsidies, be amended by updating the policy statement regarding the maintenance of levels of State funding for Local Government, acquittal processes and duration of funding programs:

3.1.2 State Funding Assistance - Grants and Subsidies

3.1.2.1 The funding of the State Government’s Local Governing Bodies Capital Works Subsidy Scheme should be maintained in real terms at no less than the 2005 State budget level, and the specific subsidy applicable to each category of works covered by the scheme should also be maintained at not less than the levels applicable in 2005 State budget.

3.1.2.2 (unchanged) In addition to the Local Governing Bodies Capital Works Subsidy Scheme, the State Government should maintain targeted funding schemes based on the strategic importance of infrastructure and the varying needs and capacity of Local Government across the State.

3.1.2.3 (unchanged) The State Government should provide a 100% subsidy to Councils for provision of external infrastructure to State Government sites and to non-State school sites.

3.1.2.4 Acquittal of expenditure related to State funded Assistance programs should be standardised across all government agencies and should consist of the current audit processes applied to Local Government.

3.1.2.5 Project funding to Local Government should be medium rather than short term, for example three years not one year, with prospects for continuation based on review, for example: Community, Arts, cultural development, economic development etc.

3.2 TAXATION AND REVENUE

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 3.2.1 Valuation and Rating, be amended by inserting the following policy statement on the methodology for determining value of land for rating purposes:

3.2.1 Valuation and Rating

(Insert new 3.2.1.3 )

3.2.1.3 Site valuation is the preferred valuation methodology for urban properties.

(renumber previous 3.2.1.3 to 3.2.1.4)

3.2.1.4 All Government owned land used for residential accommodation should be fully rateable. The Government Department and not the tenant should be responsible for the payment of rates and charges to the Local Government.

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

“that the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement be amended by the insertion of two new clauses to read as follows:-

4.1 Human Resource Management

4.1.1 Principles and Practices
4.1.1.4 Local Government recognises that women and other significant demographic groups are under represented as elected members, managers and in non-traditional areas. In response Local Government will review policies and practices to ensure all groups within the population are encouraged and are able to access positions within Local Government. Strategies include the removal of barriers and cultures that discourage or disadvantage the full participation of all of the community into Local Government.

4.1.1.5 Local Government is committed to creating and supporting an environment in Local Government which is harassment-free for all employees and will encourage the contributions and expressions of a wide range of views, to promote equity and fairness.”

5.1.4 WATER

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement be amended by the deletion of the policy statement 5.1.4 on Water and subsequent clauses to be renumbered.”

5.1.5 ENERGY

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement, 5.1.6 Energy, be renumbered 5.1.5 Energy (due to the deletion of Clause 5.1.4 Water), and amended through the deletion of current clause 5.1.6.3 to read as follows:

5.1.5 Energy

5.1.5.1 Local Government supports the State’s energy policy framework for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction and urges greater recognition of Local Governments’ powers and capabilities in delivering on those targets set for improved energy performance.

5.1.5.2 Local Government supports a whole of government approach to ensuring policies, funding programs, civic projects, grants and legislation demonstrate consistency and commitment about improving energy performance across all sectors.

5.1.5.3 Local Governments require access to appropriate programs of incentives, and models, to improve existing technologies and change practices and plans.

5.1.5.4 The State Government should provide accessible and relevant information on energy management including information about improved technologies, planning for energy efficiency as well as government incentive programs.

5.1.5.5 Local Government support effective and consistent standards and regulations where necessary for cleaner and more efficient energy management.

5.1.5.6 Local Government supports whole of government support for regional implementation of energy management initiatives including capacity building programs, incentives schemes, regional strategies for land use planning and transport.

5.1.5.7 Local Government supports the inclusion of triple-bottom-line reporting, including financial, ecological and social targets as part of the development of Corporate Plans and Annual Reports of Councils where practicable.
**[NEW] CLIMATE CHANGE**

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement, Clause 5.1 Environment Protection, be amended by the insertion of a new policy statement on climate change to read as follows:

5.1.7 Climate Change

5.1.7.1 Local Government recognises that Climate Change will have a significant impact on the business of Local Government and the communities it represents;

5.1.7.2 Local Government acknowledges that it must adapt to climate change in a strategic way to limit the impact on its business and Queensland communities.

5.1.7.3 Local Government requires access to appropriate support from the State and Federal Governments to assist it in adapting to climate change.”

**[NEW] 5.2 NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland insert a new Policy Statement, 5.2.1 Sustainable Natural Resource Management to read as follows:

5.2.1 Sustainable Natural Resource Management

5.2.1.1 Local Government is committed to the sustainable use of Australia’s natural resources.

5.2.1.2 Local Government already contributes significant resources to natural resource management (NRM) outcomes and as such is a central player in the development and implementation of Australian and State Government natural resource management legislation, programs and policies.

5.2.1.3 Local Government acknowledges the need to incorporate NRM issues and priorities identified at a national, state, regional and local scale into its corporate, strategic, operational plans and land use plans.

5.2.2 NATIONAL PARK AND CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement 5.2.2 National Parks and Crown Land Management be renumbered to 5.2.3 and amended to read as follows:

5.2.3 National Parks and Crown Land Management

5.2.3.1 Local Government supports the establishment of a state-wide network of National Parks which is a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of terrestrial and marine protected areas.

5.2.3.2 Local Government supports genuine and comprehensive consultation with the State Government on matters that directly affect Local Governments by any proposal considering the gazettal of an area as National Park or the removal of an area from a National Park.

5.2.3.3 Local Government supports adequate compensatory measures for any adverse financial impact that is experienced as a result of the establishment and operation of National Parks, World Heritage Areas and Crown Land within their Local Government areas.

5.2.3.4 Local Government supports adequate State Government resourcing to at least match the national benchmarks of National Parks and Crown Land management authorities to ensure that appropriate land management practices are undertaken.
5.2.3 COASTAL PLANNING

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.1.3 ‘Coastal Planning’ be moved to policy statement 5.2.3 ‘Coastal Management’ and to read as follows:

5.2.3 Coastal Management

5.2.3.1 The State Government should implement the Queensland Coastal Management Strategy in consultation with Local Government.

5.2.3.2 Local Governments should be fully consulted during preparation and/or amendment of Regional Coastal Management Plans by the State Government.

5.2.3.3 Local Government will actively engage in the preparation of Regional Coastal Management Plans and the declaration of Coastal Management Districts.

5.2.5 LAND PROTECTION

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement 5.2.5 ‘Land Protection’ be renumbered to 5.2.4 and amended as follows:

5.2.5.1 Australian and State Governments should work cooperatively with Local Governments and provide sufficient resourcing to control declared or environmental weeds and pests in the State.

5.2.5.2 Local Government supports the aims and role of the Land Protection Council to provide opinion, comment or advice direct to the relevant Minister on any issues relating to land protection issues.

5.2.5.3 Local Government seeks the support of the State Government to facilitate regional pest management planning on behalf of Local Governments.

5.2.5.4 Local Government supports an equitable partnership approach with the State Government for the effective management of the stock route network.

5.2.7 INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statements 5.2.4 Soil Conservation and Management, 5.2.6 Landcare, 5.2.7 Integrated Natural Resource Management and 5.2.8 Bushlands, Waterways and Wetlands be amalgamated under one new policy statement ‘Regional Natural Resource Management’ to read as follows:

5.2.5 Regional Natural Resource Management

5.2.5.1 Local Government acknowledges the need for integrated and coordinated regional approaches to natural resource management.

5.2.5.2 Local Government supports genuine and comprehensive consultation in the development, implementation and review of regional NRM plans and investment strategies.

5.2.5.3 Local Government is committed to using its resources including planning responsibilities and links with the community to achieve mutually agreed local and regional natural resource management outcomes. Local Government does not support non elected groups overriding Local Government’s legitimate autonomy or decision-making role with respect to planning and land management.
5.2.5.4 Alignment of regional and local NRM planning and management is necessary to ensure a coordinated approach to natural resource management.

5.2.5.5 Local Government supports the current system of regional NRM bodies established under the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust with some specific improvements, including stronger links to other regional planning processes such as the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) model included in the Integrated Planning Act 1997 where it exists.

5.2.9 FORESTRY

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 5.2.9 ‘Forestry’ be renumbered 5.2.7 ‘Forestry’ (due to amalgamation of headings in 5.2.4), and amended to read as follows:

5.2.7.1 Local Government supports the establishment of private native forestry on the basis of ecological sustainable development while also providing sustainable timber resources.

5.2.7.2 (unchanged) Local Government supports the need for harvest security.

5.2.7.3 (unchanged) Local Government supports a cooperative approach with the State Government in the delineation of responsibilities and resources regarding private forestry development and operation.

5.2.7.4 Local Government supports comprehensive consultation processes between the State Government and affected Local Governments with regard to Regional Forest Agreements, their planning and implementation

5.2.10 RESOURCING

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 5.2.10 Resourcing be renumbered 5.2.8 (due to amalgamation of headings in 5.2.4), and amended to read as follows:

5.2.7 Resourcing

5.2.7.1 (new) Local Government is a major investor in natural resource management and seeks as a minimum, reciprocal investment by State and Australian Governments to enhance natural resource management outcomes.

5.2.7.2 (new) Local Government supports State and Australian Government funding programs that enable it to effectively deliver its NRM responsibilities.

5.2.7.3 (new) Variations exist in the capacity and resourcing of Local Government to address NRM issues, and therefore ongoing resources are needed to build the long-term capacity of Local Government to deal with NRM issues.

5.3.2 TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS WASTES

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement, 5.3.2 ‘Toxic and Hazardous Wastes’, be amended to read as follows:

5.3.2 Toxic and Hazardous Wastes
5.3.2.1 As a matter of priority the State Government should play an active role in the establishment of regional hazardous waste management and treatment facilities in Queensland.

5.3.2.2 Local Government supports the introduction of a practical, effective system to track wastes of environmental concern which will ensure the disposal of those wastes in an environmentally appropriate manner. Such a system must provide for increased waste producer responsibility and accountability, but not place additional administrative demands on Local Government, without adequate recompense.

5.3.2.2 Local Government supports the continued use of a practical, effective system to track wastes of environmental concern which will ensure the disposal of those wastes in an environmentally appropriate manner. The system must provide for increased waste producer responsibility and accountability, but not place additional administrative demands on Local Government, without adequate recompense.

[NEW] 6.1 PLANNING

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement insert a new statement 6.1.1 Planning and Development to read as follows:

6.1.1 Planning and Development

6.1.1.1 Local Government should be recognised as the sphere of government immediately responsible for integrated land use planning and management.

6.1.1.2 Local Government will work towards streamlining procedures and minimising costs associated with land development whilst observing appropriate community and environmental standards and maintaining a balance between commercial and public interests.

6.1.1.3 Local Government is committed to investing in technological opportunities that will improve planning processes to meet requirements under the IPA and improve community understanding and accessibility to planning information.

6.1.1.4 Local Government does not support the use of the IDAS process or planning schemes to place additional work or devolve State Government responsibilities onto Local Government.

6.1.2 PLANNING LEGISLATION

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.1.1 ‘Planning Legislation’ be renumbered to 6.1.2 and amended as follows:

6.1.2 Planning Legislation

6.1.2.1 (amended) The definition of a ‘State Interest’ should be limited to whole of State Government endorsed policy - legislation, regional plans, State Planning Policies and policy that during its development has been the subject of rigorous community review and received whole-of-government endorsement. The definition is to explicitly exclude matters relating to structure, functioning and operational processes of individual planning schemes.

6.1.2.2 (unchanged) Local Government opposes the extent of the compensation provisions in current planning legislation, and is only prepared to support limited provisions for compensation based upon certain criteria being met before councils would be liable. Compensation rights should only be preserved where an applicant can establish that they have suffered an immediate and
demonstrable loss, and claims for compensation should be eliminated where there is no substantive restriction on continuing use of the land for existing lawful purposes and where the only loss is loss of the speculative possibility of future development for some other purpose.

6.1.1.3 (unchanged) Local Government opposes the mandatory imposition of the requirement to accept privately certified subdivision engineering plans and works. Local Government believes that individual Councils must have the autonomy to decide whether or not they are prepared to accept privately certified plans and works.

6.1.3 STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CONSISTENCY

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.1.5 ‘State and Federal Government Consistency’ be renumbered 6.1.3 ‘State and Federal Government Consistency’ to read as follows:

6.1.3 State and Federal Government Consistency

6.1.3.1 All levels of Government should comply with the provision of a Planning Scheme in undertaking development. This includes obtaining and complying with appropriate approvals, payment of relevant fees and provision of required external infrastructure or financial contributions.

6.1.3.2 Contributions towards the costs of external services and facilities associated with Government projects should be the same as those imposed for similar private sector developments.

6.1.4 STATE PLANNING ISSUES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.1.2 ‘State Planning Issues’ be renumbered to 6.1.4 and be amended to read as follows:

6.1.4 State Planning Issues

6.1.4.1 [new] Local Government supports the development of a State Population Policy to provide clear guidance as to the future locations of population growth and infrastructure provision in Queensland.

6.1.4.2 [amended] The preparation of State Planning Policies and IDAS Codes must have a clear and defined consultation process to enable Local Government to ensure that the Policy and or Code are cognisant of local concerns and issues.

6.1.4.3 [amended] Local Government believes that Ministerial Call In powers must only be used in limited cases where an issue is of State significance.

6.1.4.4 [unchanged] State Government agencies must be clearly responsible for any decisions they make regarding a development application, and must pay the full cost of defending their decisions in court.

6.1.5 REGIONAL PLANNING

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.1.6 ‘Regional Planning’ be renumbered to 6.1.5:
6.1.5 Regional Planning

6.1.5.1 Local Government supports the retention of regional planning processes that have voluntary membership and are advisory in nature. However, if the State Government moves to the introduction of statutory regional planning arrangements in any part of Queensland, Local Government will support such arrangements provided they are based on a model representing a true partnership between State and Local Government.

6.1.5.2 Local Government seeks a regional planning model containing the following elements:
- Establishment of a high level regional decision making body on which mayors represent Local Governments and specified ministers represent State Government. This body to have primary responsibility for developing and monitoring implementation of the regional plan.
- Responsibility for final approval of the regional plan should be with the Governor-in-Council following consideration by State Cabinet as a proper reflection of the “whole of government” significance of managing regional growth and development.

6.1.5.3 Introduction of legislation ensuring the compliance of State departments and agencies including Government Owned Corporations with the approved regional plan.

6.1.5.4 The regional planning portfolio to be permanently linked to the Treasurer or Premier ensuring whole of government compliance with the regional plan and direct influence on budgetary decisions related to its implementation.

6.1.5.5 An annual report on achievement of regional planning outcomes to be prepared by the State Government in consultation with regional body and individual Local Government, with the report to be tabled in State Parliament.

6.1.6 INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT AND APPROVAL

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement 6.1.4 ‘Integrated Development Assessment and Approval’ be renumbered and renamed to Clause 6.1.6 ‘Integrated Development Assessment’, and amended as follows:

6.1.6. Integrated Development Assessment

6.1.6.1 Local Government supports the principle of a single integrated development assessment system.

6.1.6.2 Local Government supports the ongoing legislative amendment program to bring all relevant legislation into compliance with IPA and IDAS.

6.1.6.3 Local Government supports a Council controlled private certification of development applications but does not support the introduction of a State based private certification system for planning.

6.1.6.4 Local Government is committed to improving the standard of information provided with development applications.

[NEW] PLANNING SCHEMES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement be amended by inserting a new Clause 6.1.7 ‘Planning Schemes’ to read as follows.

6.1.7 Planning Schemes

6.1.7.1 Local Government is to have the ability to clearly identify uses appropriate to a particular area including the ability to prohibit certain types of development.
6.1.7.2 Local Government is committed to working in close collaboration with the State Government with the view of promoting a planning scheme template as good practice to the development of planning schemes.

6.1.7.3 Local Government supports the use of standard definitions, codes and other planning scheme components common to all planning schemes to improve the consistency between schemes without compromising the ability of Local Government to respond to local policy issues.

6.1.7.4 Local Government supports the inclusion of a strategic plan component in planning schemes.

[NEW] DISPUTE RESOLUTION

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement insert a new policy 6.1.8 ‘Dispute Resolution’ to read as follows:

6.1.8 Dispute Resolution

6.1.8.1 Local Government supports the creation of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to provide more effective, responsive and lower cost resolution of planning disputes.


6.1.8.3 Local Government supports a Court that is structured and adequately resourced so that Judges, assessors and support staff are obliged to proactively case manage all matters fore the Court.

6.1.8.4 Local Government supports the establishment of a Planning and Development Tribunal to determine matters relating to disputes over merit based issues.

6.1.9 INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.3.2 ‘Infrastructure Planning’ be renumbered to 6.1.9 and amended as follows:

6.1.9 Infrastructure Planning

6.1.9.1 Local Government acknowledges the strategic importance of Infrastructure Planning for the community and development industry and will seek to develop best practice in Infrastructure Planning.

6.1.9.2 The State Government should urgently resolve outstanding infrastructure charging issues and clarify requirements.

6.1.9.3 The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPSR) should be responsible for a comprehensive and coordinated program by all State agencies in supplying information to Councils to enable them to effectively formulate and amend infrastructure plans.
6.1.10 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 8.4.1 ‘Telecommunications’ be renumbered to 6.1.10 and to read as follows:

6.1.10 Telecommunications.

6.1.10.1 Local Government acknowledges the fundamental role played by “telecommunications” infrastructure in economic development and will support the efficient planning assessment and installation of telecommunications infrastructure.

6.1.10.2 Local Government is the appropriate level of government to determine the level of planning assessment to be applied to telecommunications facilities, which are identified as high impact (Mobile Phone Towers).

6.1.10.3 Local Government will work cooperatively with telecommunications providers on co-location of trenches, the laying of conduit and sharing of trench location information to minimise disruption to local communities and to maximise efficiency.

6.1.10.4 Local Government supports the concept of a system of uniform telephone charges throughout Australia to reduce the disabilities of remote locations.

6.1.11 INTEGRATED AIRPORT PLANNING

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 8.3.2 ‘Integrated Airport Planning’ be renumbered to 6.1.11 ‘Integrated Airport Planning’ and to read as follows:

6.1.11 Integrated Airport Planning

6.1.11.1 Councils which surround a major airport have a right to direct input into the operations of that airport, to ensure that transport, amenity and environmental impacts on local communities are minimised.

[NEW] ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement insert a new Clause 6.1.12 ‘Enforcement and Compliance’ to read as follows:

6.1.12 Enforcement and Compliance

6.1.12.1 Local Government supports the ability to issue on the spot fines for the development offences listed in sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.7 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997.

6.1.12.2 The State Government should amend provisions in the Integrated Planning Act 1997 to ensure that the Planning and Environment Court can hear and determine prosecutions and issue fines for offences proved and reduce the burden of proof to a civil standard.

6.1.12.3 In relation to prosecutions only, Councils costs of investigating an offence should form part of the total costs where the losing party pays the successful party’s costs.
[NEW] PLANNING TRAINING AND EDUCATION

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement insert a new Clause 6.1.13 'Planning Training and Education' to read as follows

6.1.13 Planning Training and Education

6.1.13.1 Local Government supports extensive and ongoing accredited and non-accredited training and skill development that builds capacity in elected members and Council staff.
6.1.13.2 Local Government supports the Diploma of Local Government (Planning) as a means to meet the need for additional skilled IDAS administrative staff.

6.2.1 SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland insert a new Clause 6.2.1 ‘Sustainable Housing’ to read as follows...

6.2.1 Sustainable Housing

6.2.1.1 Local Government is committed to sustainable housing which balances the environmental, economic, social, community and cultural issues of housing.
6.2.1.2 Local Government supports the need for energy and water saving measures which give councils the discretion to allow these measures and do not compromise the ability of Local Government to respond to local policy issues.

6.2.2 BUILDING REGULATION

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement Clause 6.2.4.2 (currently under Residential Services Accreditation) be moved to 6.2.2 ‘Building Regulation’, renumbered to 6.2.2.7 and amended to read as follows:

6.2.2 Building Regulation

6.2.2.1 Local Government in principle supports the building certification system involving both private and Council based service arrangements.

6.2.2.2 The State Government should improve the regulatory system to provide incentive for Certifiers to operate professionally. The reviewed system will address minor and major offences and ensure that the compliance system is efficient and appropriate penalties are applied.

6.2.2.3 The State Government should provide Queensland Building Services Association additional resources to carry out a more extensive and comprehensive role in auditing and disciplining Certifiers in a timely manner. Local Government acknowledges the important role of Building Codes Queensland in monitoring and facilitating the performance of the Certification System. If additional resources are not made available there will need to be other means for disciplining Certifiers and for managing the system.

6.2.2.4 The State Government should provide a comprehensive educations program to increase community awareness of how the Certification system works and where responsibility/liability resides. The State Government will also create a system of consumer protection.
6.2.2.5 Local Government should be pro-active in acknowledging the role of Certifiers in ensuring the building quality in their Local Government area. Local Government will also be supportive of Certifiers through providing information, administration systems and other support and through ensuring fair competition.

6.2.2.6 State Government should address the specific needs of remote needs to ensure that the Certification system works effectively for these communities.

6.2.2.7 Independent professional certification of building works should be available as an optional system for Local Governments in the same way as accredited consultants may be used at present (i.e. engineers, architects or others with appropriate qualifications) to act as Building Certifiers.

6.2.3 BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement clause 6.2.3 be amended to read as follows:

6.2.3 Building Fire Safety

6.2.3.1 Local Government strongly opposes the devolution of responsibility to Local Government for building fire safety for shared accommodation.

6.2.3.2 The State Government should provide financial assistance to offset increased insurance and other costs incurred by Councils as a result of the devolved building fire safety responsibilities.

6.2.4 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES ACCREDITATION

That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement be amended to deleted Clause 6.2.4.1:

6.3.4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc Policy Statement 6.3.4 Economic Development be amended as follows:

6.3.4 Economic Development

6.3.4.1 Local Governments should play a key role in the stimulation of regional economic development. Where appropriate, joint local bodies should be formed to assist with attraction of development opportunities to an area.

6.3.4.2 The Commonwealth and State Governments should encourage regional development as a means of relieving the pressures of urban growth in major centres.

6.3.4.3 The Commonwealth, State and Local Governments should work together to make it more attractive for private and public sector investors to supply affordable and appropriate housing and infrastructure in rural and remote areas.
6.3.4.4 Local Governments should ensure effective utilisation of the financial assistance from State and Commonwealth Departments that is available to support the operation of local development bodies and committees that promote economic development.

6.3.4.5 Local Governments should initiate, facilitate and participate in, local economic development strategies in conjunction with the Federal and State Governments and the local business sector as part of Local Governments’ overall responsibilities.

6.3.4.6 Where State Government Departments are considering major developments in Local Government areas, the Co-ordinator General be directed by the State Government, to act as liaison in the first instance between the relevant Department(s) and Local Government(s) in accordance with the Protocol between the State and Local Governments.

6.3.4.7 Local Governments recognise the effect of Council core business on the development and function of their business community. Local Governments should work to facilitate the most favourable possible environment for business, having regard to all relevant matters within their jurisdiction including, but not limited to:

- level of regulation impacting on business development
- costs of complying with documentation requirements of local regulations and by-laws;
- efficiency of local infrastructure including roads, drainage, water supply, sewerage and waste disposal;
- appropriateness of building and land use controls in relation to the needs of business; and
- the level and incidence of local authority rates and charges.

7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement be revised by the deletion of the Clause 7.1.1 and replaced with the following:

7.1.1 Capacity Building

7.1.1.1 Local Government recognises the importance of social capital in building strong healthy communities, and the need to document this in planning processes.

7.1.1.2 Local Government will use evidence based social planning processes to make communities better places in which to live.

7.1.1.3 Local Government is committed to the full participation of women and engagement of women in all levels of Local Government activities.

7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement be revised by the deletion of Clause 7.1.2 and replaced with the following:

7.1.2 Community Safety

7.1.2.1 Councils will work in cooperation with the Queensland Police Service and communities to address crime, fear of crime, and injury prevention.

7.1.2.2 Local Government will work with the State Government and all sectors of the community to assist with the identification of issues of local and regional concern and negotiate appropriate
responses that contribute to a sense of safety and wellbeing. Local Government will actively seek to engage stakeholders as part of planning and development processes as a contribution to building communities in which people feel safe.

7.1.2.3 Local Government will incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in their assessment frameworks within the planning development process.

7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement section on Youth be renamed Young People and that Clause 7.1.3 be deleted and replaced as follows:

7.1.3 Young People

7.1.3.1 Local Government recognise young people as community members aged between 12 and 25 years, whilst acknowledging the age and developmental span between a 12 year old and a 25 year old.

7.1.3.2 Local Government acknowledge and engage young people as legitimate community members and stakeholders who possess the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

7.1.3.3 Local Government, in partnership with the State Government, is committed to actively encouraging the contribution, participation and engagement of young people in the development and implementation of policy, programs, opportunities and services that directly impact upon young people exclusively or within broader community agendas.

7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement section 7.1.4 on Aged be renamed Seniors and that Clause 7.1.4.1 be deleted and replaced as follows:

7.1.4 Seniors

7.1.4.1 Local Government recognises that Queensland has an ageing population and will take appropriate measures to ensure that ageing is considered and understood by Council in servicing communities.

7.1.4.2 Local Government agrees that issues affecting seniors are important for all spheres of Government and the community and will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to encourage collaboration on addressing these issues.

7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement section on Disabled be renamed Access and Equity and that Clause 7.1.5.1 be deleted and replaced as follows:

7.1.5 Access and Equity

7.1.5.1 Local Government will work in collaboration with the State and Federal Governments and all relevant disability services groups to address access and equity issues that fall within Local Government’s jurisdiction.

7.1.5.2 Local Government will, where appropriate, develop Disability Action Plans to address issues affecting those with disability.
7.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2 be moved from the Planning and Development area of the policy document to a new section called Affordable Housing under the Community development and Human Services area, and further that the policy wording be amended as follows:

7.1.6 Affordable Housing

7.1.6.1 Local Governments will determine their own role in provision of affordable community housing.
7.1.6.2 Local Government will actively participate in forums and networks, where appropriate, that seek to establish good practice approaches to sustainable, accessible and affordable housing.
7.1.6.3 Local Government will work with the State Government to ensure adequate financial assistance and training is made available to those Councils that wish to identify the need for and the provision of affordable housing in local communities.

7.1 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement Clause 7.2.1.5 be amended to include the word *funding* as follows:

7.2.1 Planning and Resourcing

7.2.1.5 Involvement of Local Government in Commonwealth/State negotiations regarding the terms and conditions of human services policies, programs and funding offered to councils and local communities either directly or through the states.

7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement Clause 7.2.2.3 be amended by deleting the words “level existing in 2001/02” and replacing with “on an annual basis funding” as follows:

7.2.2 Arts and Culture

7.2.2.3 The State Government should continue the Regional Arts Development Fund program at no less than real terms on an annual basis.

7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement Clause 7.2.3 Library Services be deleted and replaced as follows:

7.2.3 Library Services

7.2.3.1 Local Government will work in partnership with the State Government to deliver equitable and quality library services.
7.2.3.2 Local Government will continue to work with the State Library of Queensland to negotiate and implement the recommendations from the Strategic Policy Options for a Smart Library Network Review.

7.2.3.3 Local Government will continue to lobby the State Government for additional library resources and improved library services.

7.2.3.4 State Government subsidies for library services should be regularly reviewed and increased where necessary to allow Local Government to meet the growing needs of library services, including technological advances. Additional State funding will not be used to reduce the financial commitment of Local Government to library services.

7.2.3.5 Local Government recognises the value of cooperative joint ventures between Local, State and Federal departments and agencies in delivering quality library services.

7.2.3.6 Local Government recognises libraries as areas of opportunity within the community to deliver lifelong learning, social capital and foster strategies for learning communities.

7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement Clause 7.2.4 Sport and Recreation be renamed Sport and Leisure and replaced as follows:

7.2.4 Sport and Leisure

7.2.4.1 Local Government acknowledges the need to ensure the provision of a diverse range of sport and leisure facilities, programs and services to meet community needs.

7.2.4.2 Local Government will lobby the State Government and the private sector to provide a wide range of funding and grant programs to meet identified community need for a diverse range of sport and leisure facilities.

7.2.4.3 Local Government will give consideration to the community’s sport and leisure needs when developing open space plans.

7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement Clause 7.2.5 Child Care be amended as follows:

7.2.5 Child Care

7.2.5.1 Local Government will continue to work in collaboration with State and Federal Government departments with jurisdiction for childcare services, monitor changes in Childcare legislation and Government policy, and develop a Local Government position.
7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement clause 7.2.6.2 under the heading Gaming be deleted and replaced as follows:

7.2.6 Gaming

7.2.6.2 Local Government will recognise community and Local Government concerns regarding gaming premises in and around socially sensitive locations in the community and raise these concerns with the State Government.

7.2 HUMAN SERVICES

That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement be amended by adding a new Clause 7.2.8 Liquor Licensing as follows:

7.2.8 Liquor Licensing

7.2.8.1 Local Government will continue to identify and monitor the concerns and impacts of changes to the Liquor Act and Criminal Code 2000 (Adult Entertainment) and raise issues as appropriate with the relevant State Government department.

7.2.8.2 Local Government will continue to identify and monitor impacts of alcohol restrictions within communities and regions affected by the Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) restrictions and take action where necessary.

8.5 WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE POLICIES

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland LGAQ Policy Statement be amended by the deletion of the current policy, 8.5 Water Supply And Sewerage Policies, and the insertion of the new statements as follows:

8.5 Water Supply and Sewerage Policies

8.5.1 Institutional Arrangements

8.5.1.1 Local government recognises that water is a resource that should be shared equitably across each region through institutional arrangements that best facilitate efficient service delivery and resource use.

8.5.1.2 The State Government must ensure that no community is substantially disadvantaged in terms of basic access to, and price of a reasonable supply of potable water, as a community service obligation.

8.5.1.3 Local government believes that water demand and supply planning across the State, including the establishment of adequate levels of service provision to the community, should be lead by the State Government, with active involvement of Local Government as a key stakeholder.

8.5.1.4 Where reform of current institutional arrangements is considered necessary to enhance security, sustainability and efficiency of water services, there should be full consultation with the LGAQ and all local governments likely to be affected by any proposed changes.

8.5.1.5 Local Government believes that any change in current water institutional arrangements should seek to build on existing roles, responsibilities and relationships reflecting the existing partnership approach between the State and local governments and amongst local governments.
8.5.1.6 Where regional water supply schemes across a number of Councils are necessary, Joint Local Governments or Local Government owned corporations are the preferred approach rather than a separate Statutory Authority.

8.5.1.7 The role of individual Councils in water retailing should be maintained in any changes to institutional arrangements.

8.5.1.8 Where any water infrastructure is subsumed into new bulk supply institutional arrangements, there should be a guarantee of full compensation for current owners.

8.5.2 **Funding Arrangements**

8.5.2.1 Local Government will advocate that the Commonwealth and State Governments, through COAG, must recognise the need for greater capital investment in water infrastructure to meet future needs and foster regional development.

8.5.2.2 Local Government requires openness and transparency in assigning externality charges to water providers. Externalities include environmental costs as well as water resource planning and management costs.

8.5.2.3 Local Government will advocate for the return of revenue raised from National Water Agreement imposed externality charges to ongoing investigations and planning as well as investment in future water infrastructure needs including dam safety upgrades.

8.5.2.4 Local Government will seek contributions to the cost of long term regional water infrastructure through instruments such as the development of infrastructure charges plans.

8.5.3 **Pricing Regime**

8.5.3.1 Local Government accepts that significant Local Government water retailers should be subject to price oversight by an independent body. However, retail water pricing must remain the responsibility of each water retailer, recognising the varying circumstances that exist.

8.5.3.2 In setting retail prices, Local Government recognises the need for pricing regimes which encourage efficient use of water resources. This will generally be achieved by use of two-part tariffs including, where appropriate, inclining block tariffs.

8.5.3.3 Where separate institutional arrangements exist for bulk water supply within a region, a common “postage stamp” approach to pricing is generally preferred by Local Government rather than one based on differential nodal pricing.

8.5.4 **Operations**

8.5.4.1 Local Government is committed to best practice in water use, implementation of sustainable urban water management and development of strategies to:

- reduce demand for water to improve the efficiency of use;
- reduce supply losses;
- increase the re-use of water;
- increase use of stormwater for urban and household demands;
- improve community awareness of water management issues.

8.5.4.2 Where regional arrangements for bulk water supply exist, Local Government accepts that there should be common rules set for supply restrictions and minimum service levels by the body responsible for water supply planning.

8.5.4.3 Time of day tariff structures for electricity should be available to allow Local Government to minimise operating costs of water supply and sewerage systems.

8.5.4.4 Local Government is committed to rationalising the system of water information reporting by local government to reduce inefficiencies, eliminate duplication of reporting mechanisms and improve information for water planning and security.

8.5.5 **Sewerage Management**
8.5.5.1 Local Government recognises that it has primary responsibility for the collection, treatment and disposal of effluent in urban areas.

8.5.5.2 Local Government acknowledges that effluent should be treated to a standard that prevents it from having a significant adverse impact on the receiving environment and that meets any relevant legislative requirements.

8.5.5.3 Any increases in the standard of treatment required for effluent should be phased in over an appropriate period and be accompanied by an appropriate level of State or Federal Government funding.

8.5.5.4 Local Government fully supports the beneficial reuse of sewerage as a strategy to mitigate the adverse environmental effects of releasing treated sewerage to waterways and as a strategy to achieve sustainable urban water use.

8.5.5.5 Decisions relating to the options pursued for the reuse of effluent should remain within the jurisdiction of Local Government.

8.5.5.6 Local Government supports a State Government licensing regime that is based on mass loads of nutrients released to receiving environments.

8.5.5.7 The reuse of greywater in sewered areas should only occur where Local Government can be satisfied that the public health implications and soil and climatic conditions can be appropriately managed.

CARRIED

5.4.7 FLUORIDATION OF PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland Policy Statement be amended to read as follows:--

5.4.7 Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies

5.4.7.1 Local Government believes it is a principle of ethical public health policy that mass, involuntary medication must never proceed without the express consent of the community.

5.4.7.2 Express consent of the community to fluoridate public water supplies should be sought by the State Government.

5.4.7.3 As oral health is a State Government responsibility and the State will receive a direct financial benefit from the fluoridation of public water supplies, the State Government should fully fund Local Government for the capital and recurrent costs of its introduction."

WITHDRAWN
"A" MOTIONS

Association Matters

NO.1 EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS
MOVER:  Cr R Duffy (Burnett)  SECONDER:  Cr D Edwards (Quilpie)

The President’s Annual Address will be read on Tuesday morning 29th August 2006 and needs to be formally received prior to consideration latter in the Conference.

“That the President’s Annual Address for 2005-2006 be received.”

CARRIED

NO.1A EXECUTIVE

ADOPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS
MOVER:  Cr A Bennison (Brisbane)  SECONDER:  Cr R Duffy (Burnett)

The President’s Annual Address remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on Thursday 31st August 2006.

“That the President’s Annual Address from 2005-2006 be adopted”.

CARRIED

NO.2 EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF THE 110TH ANNUAL REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE
MOVER:  Cr D Neilson (Cooloola)  SECONDER:  Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)

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

“That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2005-2006 be received.”

CARRIED

NO.2A EXECUTIVE

ADOPTION OF THE EXECUTIVE REPORT
MOVER:  Cr R McCullough (Mt Isa)  SECONDER:  Cr D Edwards (Quilpie)

The Executive’s Annual Report remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on Thursday 31st August 2006.

“That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2005-2006 be adopted”.

CARRIED
NO. 3 EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT
MOVER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)  SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)

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

“That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2006 and Auditor’s Report be received.”

CARRIED

NO. 3A EXECUTIVE

ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT
MOVER: Cr A Bennison (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr B Abbott (Noosa)

The Annual Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report remain before the Conference during proceedings and are considered on Thursday 31st August 2006.

“That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2006 and Auditor’s Report be adopted”.

CARRIED

Governance

NO. 4 CABOOLTURE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - DISCLOSURE OF SALARY PACKAGE IN ANNUAL REPORT
MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Caboolture)  SECONDER: Cr V Mundraby (Yarrabah)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland makes representation to the State Government to ensure that it is a lawful requirement for Local Government Chief Executive Officer salary packages to be disclosed in the Annual Report”

LOST

Finance and Administration

NO. 5 CABOOLTURE

RATING - LEVY OF MINIMUM GENERAL RATES ON CONCESSIONAL VALUED LAND
MOVER: Cr G Chippendale (Caboolture)  SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland again lobby the State Government for the amendment of section 967(4) of the Local Government Act 1993 ("the Act") to allow local governments to levy a minimum General Rate on subdivided land, currently specified under section 25 of the Valuation of Land Act 1944.”

CARRIED
NO. 6

RATING - POWER TO LEVY RATES ON STRATEGIC PORT LAND
MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Redcliffe)  
SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Caboolture)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to seek amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 to allow local governments to levy rates on land described as strategic port land occupied by a port authority.”

CARRIED

NO. 7

STAMP DUTY - STATE TO RECONSIDER APPLICATION ON LAND TRANSFERRED TO COUNCIL IN FEE SIMPLE ON TRUST FOR PARKLAND OR COMMUNITY FACILITIES
MOVER: Cr J Boyd (Mackay)  
SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to re-consider the current practices applied for the provision of Stamp Duty on land transferred to Council in fee simple on trust for Parkland or Community Facilities in accordance with Section 5.1.12 of the Integrated Planning Act and exempt it from stamp duty.”

CARRIED

NO. 8

MONOPOLY PRICING REGIME - MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS
MOVER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)  
SECONDER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to ensure that frivolous and vexatious complaints under the monopoly pricing regime can be effectively quashed before becoming an encumbrance on the targeted Local Government.”

CARRIED

NO. 9

ASSET REVALUATION - EXEMPTION FOR REVALUATION OF IMPAIRED ASSETS FOLLOWING NATURAL DISASTERS
MOVER: Cr N Clarke (Johnstone)  
SECONDER: Cr J Stitt (Johnstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to change to the Local Government Finance Standard such that Councils are not required to comply with the Accounting Standards requirements to revalue assets where those assets are impaired, in particular where assets have received significant damage from a cyclone and are being repaired. This type of change would avoid a qualification to a Council’s Financial Statements, that has been caused by the Council not re-valuing the impaired assets.”

CARRIED
People and Performance

NO. 10

CHARTERS TOWERS

SKILL SHORTAGES - MINING COMPANIES TO FUND APPRENTICE TRAINING
MOVER: Cr B Beveridge (Charters Towers) SECONDER: Cr F Beveridge (Charters Towers)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State and Federal Governments to put in place a levy on mining companies, based on operational workforce numbers, to fund apprentice training by organisations other than the miner on their failure to accept their obligations in this regard.”

LOST

NO. 11

BURDEKIN

TRAINING - EXPANSION OF LGAQ’S ROLE INCLUDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH COUNCILS AS A REGISTERED TRAINING ORGANISATION (RTO)
MOVER: Cr L Loizou (Burdekin) SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)

“That the Local Government Association investigate and expand its existing RTO status to allow Member Councils to form partnerships with the RTO to lower the costs of training and certification requirements.”

CARRIED

Environment and Health Services

NO. 12

CALOUNDRA

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - RECOVERY FROM STATE GOVERNMENT OF COSTS INCURRED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr D Aldous (Caloundra) SECONDER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland embark on a campaign to recover from the State Government the full costs imposed on local government through cost shifting in relation to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (and associated regulations and policies) estimated to be a net cost to local government of $13m.”

CARRIED

NO. 13

MACKAY

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - COUNCILS TO DETERMINE FEES AND CHARGES FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY RELEVANT ACTIVITIES
MOVER: Cr J Boyd (Mackay) SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Mackay)

“That the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women be requested to review the provisions under the Environment Protection Act and Regulations relating to the setting of fees and charges for Environmentally Relevant Activities to allow those fees to be determined by Council in accordance with the usual statutory provisions that apply to the setting of fees for regulatory services.”

CARRIED
NO. 14  

CQLGA/CALLIOPE

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACT - NOTIFICATION TO LANDOWNERS AND RIGHTS OF APPEAL AGAINST PROPERTY RECLASSIFICATION  
MOVER: Cr R Bichsel (Calliope)  
SECONDER: Cr G Creed (Calliope)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government for amendments to the Vegetation Management Act and Regulations requiring:–
1. notification to landowners where the classification of a property is altered; and
2. the right of landowners to request an on-site review and issue of a statement of reasons when a reclassification is made.”

CARRIED

NO. 15  

BUNDABERG

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACT - REVIEW TO OVERCOME ADVERSE IMPACT ON COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE  
MOVER: Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)  
SECONDER: Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to review the implementation of the Vegetation Management Act to ensure that the implementation of this legislation does not adversely impact on long term future planning of infrastructure by Councils.”

CARRIED

NO. 16  

STANTHORPE

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACT - REVIEW TO OVERCOME ADVERSE IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
MOVER: Cr G Rogers (Stanthorpe)  
SECONDER: Cr D Coleman (Stanthorpe)

“That Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Natural Resources Mines and Water to change the department policy for assessing applications involving vegetation clearing for reconfiguring lots and allow clearing of endangered remnant vegetation when reconfiguring lots in the following circumstances:
• the land is zoned for an urban purpose and there is an existing development commitment;
• the land is freehold land in an urban area;
• the purpose of the proposed subdivision is for a non-residential urban use; and
• there are no practical alternative sites for the committed development.”

CARRIED

NO. 17  

CQLGA/CALLIOPE

ENVIRONMENTAL NUISANCE - STATEWIDE PROHIBITION ON DISPOSAL OF FISH WASTE AT BOAT RAMPS  
MOVER: Cr R Bichsel (Calliope)  
SECONDER: Cr G Creed (Calliope)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek to have State wide legislation introduced to prohibit the disposal of fish waste at boat ramps with the exception of where there are local government approved facilities.”

CARRIED
NO. 18

WILD RIVERS - FULL CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS
MOVER: Cr R Sullivan (Cook)  SECONDER: Cr R Logan (Cook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Minister for Natural Resources Mines and Water to fully consult with local government, pastoralists and other stakeholders prior to any future wild river declaration proposals and, further, that the Minister consult with local government, pastoralists and other stakeholders prior to the issue of new draft codes for the assessment of activities in wild rivers.”

CARRIED

NO. 19

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES - ROLE OF DISTRICT HEALTH COUNCILS
MOVER: Cr T Camm (Whitsunday)  SECONDER: Cr J Lloyd (Whitsunday)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland convey its strong disappointment to the Queensland Premier and Queensland Health at the direction the Forster Report has taken in relation to regional district health council in:

1. Not recognising the importance of the role of the community on those Councils with the health professionals and district managers
2. Making sure district health councils have teeth in the decision making process with regards to prioritising the health needs of each region.”

CARRIED

NO. 20

HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES - FEDERAL FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr E Morrison (Cloncurry)  SECONDER: Mr J Page (Cloncurry)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland discuss with the Federal and Queensland Governments the opportunity for Local Government to manage the provision of medical services provided by Queensland Health and that funding provided by the Federal Government be forwarded direct to local Government.”

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr G Brandon (Chinchilla)  SECONDER: Cr K Morgan (Sarina)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland discuss with the Federal and Queensland Governments the opportunity for Local Government in rural areas to be involved in the provision of medical services provided by Queensland Health and that funding provided by the Federal Government be forwarded direct to local Government.”

LOST

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr R Duffy (Burnett)  SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland discuss with the Federal and Queensland Governments opportunities for Local Government to be involved in the provision of medical services.”

CARRIED
Planning and Development

NO. 21 IPSWICH

PLANNING POWERS - ADDITIONAL POWER FOR COUNCILS TO FUND REGIONAL RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFRASTRUCTURE

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government seeking to have a range of funding opportunities provided to deliver and/or support the delivery of regional scale recreation and environmental infrastructure.”

CARRIED

NO. 22 IPSWICH

PLANNING SCHEMES - PUBLIC NOTIFICATION TO BE PERMITTED FOR RECONFIGURATION APPLICATIONS CREATING ADDITIONAL LOTS

MOVER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Minister for Local Government and Planning to instruct the department to allow planning schemes to require public notification of reconfiguration applications (i.e. subdivisions) which create additional lots.”

LOST

NO. 23 REDCLIFFE

PLANNING SCHEMES - STATE GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAR PARKING AND INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES REQUIREMENTS

MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Redcliffe)  
SECONDER: Cr G Chippendale (Caboolture)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to require a minimum standard of one (1) car park per residential unit in developments undertaken by the Department of Housing or other State Agencies. Further, that the State Government commit to the payment of appropriate infrastructure charges should residential units be on-sold.”

CARRIED

NO. 24 MAROOCHY

PLANNING COORDINATION - IMPROVEMENT BY STATE AGENCIES IN RELATION TO TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

MOVER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy)  
SECONDER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to:
1. significantly improve the planning by State agencies in relation to transport and community infrastructure such as road and rail corridors, schools, hospitals, and emergency services, and
2. establish early community designations for this infrastructure in the respective Local Government’s Planning Schemes.”

CARRIED
NO. 25  
NQLGA/CARPENTARIA  

CULTURAL HERITAGE - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
MOVER: Cr A Clarke (Burke)  
SECONDER: Cr V Mundraby (Yarrabah)  

“The Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to amend the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 (‘ACH’) to provide for the establishment of a fund to assist Local Governments meet the costs of carrying out site surveys, cultural heritage monitoring and reasonable travel and accommodation costs agreed in Cultural Management Plans, Native Title agreements or another agreement under the ACH for essential operational and community infrastructure.”  

CARRIED

NO. 26  
REDCLIFFE  

BUILDING REGULATION - DISABILITY ACCESS REQUIREMENTS  
MOVER: Cr A Sutherland (Redcliffe)  
SECONDER: Cr R Buchan (Balonne)  

“That the Local Government Association lobby the State Government to seek the adoption of a Queensland Development Code to require that foyers and common entrances to Class 1 (Townhouses only) and Class 2 (units) buildings be wheelchair compliant to achieve greater clarity of government requirements.”  

CARRIED

NO. 27  
HERVEY BAY  

BUILDING REGULATION - CLARIFICATION OF CONFLICTING REQUIREMENTS FOR DISABILITY ACCESS  
MOVER: Cr M Kruger (Hervey Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr S Brooks (Hervey Bay)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Federal Government to direct the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) to report on Disability Standards and that Federal and State Ministers be asked to ensure that there is closer liaison and more regular referrals of cross jurisdictional complaints.”  

CARRIED

NO. 28  
BUNDABERG  

BUILDING REGULATION - REVIEW OF THE BUILDING AND OTHER LEGISLATION ACT (BOLA) IMPACT ON DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION  
MOVER: Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)  
SECONDER: Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to:-  
1) Review the impact of the requirements of the BOLA legislation on people with a disability, especially intellectual disability, residing in supported accommodation, especially where that accommodation is provided by Not-for-profit organizations,  
2) Make amendments, as appropriate, to ensure that such residents do not have to endure a reduced quality of life, and  
3) Provide financial subsidies if existing lay-outs compromise fire safety and it is determined that structural adjustments are necessary to ensure compliance.”  

CARRIED
**Community Development and Human Service**

**NO. 29 IPSWICH**

**LIQUOR LICENCING - REINSTATEMENT OF LANDOWNER APPROVAL FOR A TEMPORARY LIQUOR LICENCE ON THE LANDOWNERS PROPERTY**

MOVER: Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make urgent representation to the State Government to include the requirement for any temporary liquor licence applications on all public and private property including Council owned/controlled land require approval from the landowner prior to any application being made.”

CARRIED

**NO. 30 IPSWICH**

**CHILD CARE - DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY CONCERNING ANIMALS IN CHILDCARE CENTRES**

MOVER: Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government, requesting that a working group be formed, comprising representatives from the LGAQ, the Department of Communities, Queensland Health and the childcare industry to develop policy on the keeping of animals at childcare centres pursuant to Section 61 (2) of the Child Care Regulation 2003.”

CARRIED

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**Road, Transport and Infrastructure**

**NO. 31 COMPOSITE MOTION IPSWICH**

**EMERALD/CHROC/LIVINGSTONE/TIARO/BOWEN**

**WATER CONSERVATION - STATEWIDE EXTENSION OF STATE GOVERNMENT WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM**

MOVER: Cr P Maguire (Emerald)  
SECONDER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to extend its Regional Water Efficiency Program currently operating in the south east corner of the state to other regions and council areas suffering similar drought situations requiring the implementation of water restrictions.

And further

That all elements of the Regional Water Efficiency Program be offered statewide, namely -

- Residential rebates
- Residential retrofit program
- Business efficiency program, and
- Government buildings retrofit program.”

CARRIED
NO. 32
TOOWOOMBA

WATER CONSERVATION - COMPULSORY RETROFITTING OF RAINWATER TANKS ON CHANGE OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP
MOWER: Cr M Alroe (Toowoomba) SECONDER: Cr C Taylor (Cambooya)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to urgently consider and introduce measures which enhance the rate at which rainwater tanks are installed in existing premises, across Queensland, such measures should include where practicable retrofitting of rainwater tanks prior to a change in ownership of a property.”

AMENDMENT
MOWER: Cr P Tully (Ipswich) SECONDER: Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to urgently consider and introduce measures which enhance the rate at which rainwater tanks are installed in existing premises, across Queensland”

LOST
The original motion was then put and was CARRIED

NO. 33
TOOWOOMBA

WATER PRICING - LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION FOR INCLINING BLOCK WATER TARIFFS
MOWER: Cr M Alroe (Toowoomba) SECONDER: Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to provide legislative protection against potential action claiming penalty taxes by those Councils that may choose to use a high inclining block tariff to reduce water consumption by recalcitrant domestic consumers.”

CARRIED

NO. 34
MAROOCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING - STATE GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN PLANNING FOR SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE
MOWER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy) SECONDER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to ensure that it respects the roles and responsibilities of, and consults with Local Government in relation to the planning for and announcement of significant infrastructure.”

CARRIED

NO. 35
MAROOCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES - HEADWORKS CONTRIBUTIONS BY STATE GOVERNMENT
MOWER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy) SECONDER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to review its policy and introduce the payment of headworks contributions for all major State infrastructure.”

CARRIED
NO. 36 MAROOCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES - REVIEW OF PROTOCOL FOR FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FOR EXTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO SCHOOLS
MOVER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy) SECONDER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to review the protocol for funding works external (including carparking and bus set-downs) to schools and TAFE colleges to increase the contribution by the State.”

CARRIED

NO. 37 BRISBANE

ROAD AND TRANSPORT FUNDING - FUNDING FOR HIGH GROWTH AREAS
MOVER: Cr C Cashman (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Australian Government to alter the AusLink guidelines to focus on Queensland as a high growth State. And further, in line with recommendations of the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Sustainable Cities, the LGAQ calls on the Australian Government to provide direct funding to local government for public transport.”

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr P Giandomenico (Hinchinbrook) SECONDER: Cr A Clarke (Burke)

CARRIED

NO. 37A BRISBANE

ROAD AND TRANSPORT FUNDING - FUNDING FOR HIGH GROWTH AREAS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Australian Government to alter the AusLink guidelines to focus on Queensland as a high growth State.

CARRIED

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr C Cashman (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Brisbane)

CARRIED

NO. 37B BRISBANE

ROAD AND TRANSPORT FUNDING - FUNDING FOR HIGH GROWTH AREAS

That in line with recommendations of the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Sustainable Cities, the LGAQ calls on the Australian Government to provide direct funding to local government for public transport.”

CARRIED
NO. 38  

**JOHNSTONE**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT - DEVELOPMENT OF DATABASE TO MANAGE DISASTER RELIEF AND COORDINATION**

MOVER: Cr N Clarke (Johnstone)  
SECONDER: Cr J Stitt (Johnstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby Emergency Management Australia and the Queensland Department of Emergency Services for the creation of a database package that can be used during disaster events. The Council’s data would be the basis for the system and would also include information, such as, property damage assistance required, location of food/clothing relief centres, relocation details and accommodation requirements, Council’s Property/Rates database and mapping system. A simple database system that is portable or accessible over the internet is preferred.”

CARRIED

NO. 39  

**JOHNSTONE**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT - REVIEW OF NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF ARRANGEMENTS FUNDING**

MOVER: Cr N Clarke (Johnstone)  
SECONDER: Cr J Stitt (Johnstone)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby Emergency Management Australia and the Queensland Department of Emergency Services for the review of the guidelines for NDRA funding that currently do not permit a Council that has suffered dislocation from a disaster, to claim the ordinary wages paid to employees during the declaration period or during the response period of an event.”

CARRIED

“B” MOTIONS

**Governance**

NO. 40  

**NQLGA/DOUGLAS**

**CODE OF CONDUCT - REVIEW PANEL POOLS ESTABLISHED BY AND PAID FOR BY STATE GOVERNMENT**

MOVER: Cr D Egan (Douglas)  
SECONDER: Cr R Logan (Cook)

“The Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Department of Local Government and Planning, Sport and Recreation requesting that the Department be required to provide a pool of members able to serve on a conduct review panel and meet the associated costs.”

CARRIED

NO. 41  

**CLONCURRY**

**FIREARMS - APPROVAL FOR USE ON COUNCIL PROPERTY**

MOVER: Cr E Morrison (Cloncurry)  
SECONDER: Mr J Page (Cloncurry)

That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek a review of the requirement to have a property owner sign approval for use of a firearm on their property where such application for a firearms licence is for use on Council’s property to remove such dangers as birds, kangaroos etc. from landing or departing aircraft at Council’s airport.

CARRIED
NO. 42  
LAND MANAGEMENT - CHANGES TO TRUSTEE MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES  
MOVER: Cr R Bichsel (Calliope)  
SECONDER: Mr G Creed (Calliope)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and Water expressing concern about possible legislative amendments to alter trustee management arrangements in respect to Reserves.”  
CARRIED

**Finance and Administration**

NO. 43  
FUNDING - COMMONWEALTH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS  
MOVER: Cr T Mooney (Townsville)  
SECONDER: Mr D Parker (Townsville)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland continue to make strong representations to the Federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads for a fair share of commonwealth taxation revenue being at least one per cent of total Commonwealth taxation revenue.”  
CARRIED

NO. 44  
AUDITORS – POWER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO APPOINT  
MOVER: Cr N Butler (Etheridge)  
SECONDER: Cr G Ryan (Etheridge)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to make a regulation pursuant to Section 74 (1) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1997 that would provide for the following:

a) a general exemption to local governments from audit by the auditor-general; and  
b) requiring local governments to appoint a suitably qualified auditor by a competitive tender process; and  
c) empowering groups of local governments to act collectively in calling joint tenders for audit services; and  
d) all other provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act as they apply to local government audits shall still apply, and that the auditor appointed by local governments under the regulation shall conduct the audit as if they were contract auditors appointed pursuant to section 82 of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977.”  
CARRIED

NO. 45  
INTERNAL AUDIT – COSTS TO BE OFFSET AGAINST EXTERNAL AUDIT  
MOVER: Cr R Oakes (Nebo)  
SECONDER: Cr I Fry (Nebo)  

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to offset the costs associated with the internal audit function against the costs associated with the external audit each year.”  
CARRIED
NO. 46  
ISISFORD

LAND RENTAL - REDUCTION FOR NON PROFIT SPORT AND RECREATION ORGANISATIONS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to reduce the land rent paid by non profit sporting and recreational organisations due to increased valuations.”

WITHDRAWN

NO. 47  
NQLGA/NEBO

CROWN LAND - PURCHASED FOR COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PURPOSES
MOVER: Cr R Oakes (Nebo)  
SECONDER: Cr I Fry (Nebo)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government, and in particular the Department of Natural Resources, in relation to the excessive cost of purchasing land from the state for the purpose of providing community infrastructure.”

CARRIED

People and Performance

NO. 48  
NQLGA/ETHERIDGE

SUPERANNUATION - FREEDOM OF CHOICE
MOVER: Cr N Butler (Etheridge)  
SECONDER: Cr G Ryan (Etheridge)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Executive be requested to lobby for legislative reform to allow superannuation freedom of choice for Local Government employees.”

LOST

Environment and Health Services

NO. 49  
COMPOSITE MOTION
MAROOCHY/NQLGA/HINCHINBROOK

NATIONAL PARKS - PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF BASIC VISITOR FACILITIES
MOVER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)  
SECONDER: Cr P Giandomenico (Hinchinbrook)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to provide and adequately maintain basic visitor services including toilets, water tanks and serviced rubbish bins (and replacing these services where they have been unilaterally removed or discontinued) at National Parks, State Forests and other Nature Reserves.”

CARRIED
NO. 50

PEST MANAGEMENT - RELOCATION OF FLYING FOXES COLONIES
MOVER: Cr E Morrison (Cloncurry)  SECONDER: Mr J Page (Cloncurry)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Queensland Government to amend legislation so that Local Governments can take action to move on colonies of Flying foxes which cause health problems and property damage in residential areas.”

CARRIED

NO. 51

PEST MANAGEMENT - FUNDING FOR WILD DOG TRAPPING AND ERADICATION
MOVER: Cr G Rogerson (Maroochy)  SECONDER: Cr S Jones (Gatton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to provide funding on a dollar for dollar basis to assist in the trapping and control of declared feral animals and wild dogs and; further

That the State Government Departments work with local councils to ensure the control of declared feral animals and Wild Dogs on State controlled land such as State Forest and National Parks.”

CARRIED

NO. 52

COASTAL MANAGEMENT - STREAMLINED BEACH NOURISHMENT/PROTECTION APPROVALS
MOVER: Cr M Kruger (Hervey Bay)  SECONDER: Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the state government to create a streamlined and simpler approval system to allow beach nourishment and protection works to be carried out quickly and economically which achieve community objectives.”

CARRIED

NO. 53

WASTE MANAGEMENT - TRANSPORT OF RECYCLABLES BY QUEENSLAND RAIL
MOVER: Cr B Beveridge (Charters Towers)  SECONDER: Cr F Beveridge (Charters Towers)

“That the Local Government Association lobby the State Government to support Queensland Rail to make empty wagons returning south available to transport recyclables such as glass and plastics, to southern markets.”

CARRIED

NO. 54

RUBBISH ACCUMULATION - INCREASED POWER TO RECTIFY
MOVER: Cr J Galeano (Cardwell)  SECONDER: Cr R Bradley (Cardwell)

“The Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government for amending legislation to provide Local Government with stronger powers in relation to dealing with property owners who refuse to remove unsightly accumulations of rubbish from their allotments.”

CARRIED
NO. 55  
NQLGA/HINCHINBROOK

OVERGROWN ALLOTMENTS - INCREASED POWER TO RECTIFY  
MOVER: Cr P Giandomenico (Hinchinbrook)  
SECONDER: Cr J Boyd (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women to review the legislative power for Council to deal with overgrown urban land including both freehold and Crown land with a view to simplifying the process for Local Government to effectively deal with the issue.”

CARRIED

Planning and Development

NO. 56  
NQLGA/NEBO

PLANNING POWERS - COUNCIL DISCRETION IN RURAL LAND DEVELOPMENT  
MOVER: Cr R Oakes (Nebo)  
SECONDER: Cr I Fry (Nebo)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Department of Natural Resources Mines and Water and the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation to allow Queensland Councils some discretion in deciding the uses of the land in their own areas.”

CARRIED

NO. 57  
HERVEY BAY

PLANNING POWERS - CLARIFICATION OF TIME LIMITS ON PLANNING APPROVALS  
MOVER: Cr M Kruger (Hervey Bay)  
SECONDER: Cr S Brooks (Hervey Bay)

“The Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to change section 3.5.21 of Integrated Planning Act to state that relevant periods shall end four years, two years or as stated, after an approval is granted, unless the applicant applies for an extension.”

CARRIED

NO. 58  
BURNETT/WBBROC

MAPPING DATA - INCREASED ACCURACY IN STATE MAPPING  
MOVER: Cr B Serisier (Mundubbera)  
SECONDER: Cr T Northey (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to ensure that mapping data used for the implementation of Government legislation and policies is accurate and an educative process and program be implemented.”

CARRIED
NO. 59  
**CHARTERS TOWERS**

**BUILDING REGULATION - EXCLUSION FOR MINOR CONSTRUCTIONS TO BE CERTIFIED BY REGISTERED BUILDING CERTIFIERS**

**MOVER:** Cr B Beveridge (Charters Towers)  
**SECONDER:** Cr F Beveridge (Charters Towers)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to exclude minor constructions such as patios, lawn lockers, sheds and car to garages etc from the need to be approved by Registered Building Certifiers as at present.

**AMENDMENT**

**MOVER:** Cr P Giandomenico (Hinchinbrook)  
**SECONDER:** Cr K Morgan (Sarina)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to exclude minor constructions such as patios, lawn lockers, sheds and carports to garages etc from the need to be approved by Registered Building Certifiers and that council be allowed to appoint a registered builder within the area to certify such structures.

CARRIED

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**Community Development and Human Service**

NO. 60  
**BUNDABERG**

**GAMING MACHINES - INCREASED CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL IMPACTS AND RETURN OF TAXATION REVENUES**

**MOVER:** Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)  
**SECONDER:** Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to:-

a) Undertake research and use available data to develop a formula for returning more of its Poker Machine Tax back to the Welfare Agencies in the Communities of Origin;

b) Develop a methodology for identifying Poker Machine Numbers with socio-economic disadvantage (similar to Appendix E2 of the Case Study “Social and Gaming Indicators in 1999 Review of the Gaming Machine Act 1991”); and

c) Given more weighting to the nature and content of Community Impact Statements where areas of socio-economic disadvantage are identified.”

CARRIED

NO. 61  
**IPSWICH**

**SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES - CLARIFICATION OF STATE GOVERNMENT FACILITIES SHARED USE POLICY**

**MOVER:** Cr A Antoniolli (Ipswich)  
**SECONDER:** Cr P Tully (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc. seek clarification from the State Government and in particular, Education Queensland, regarding the current policy relating to shared use and associated agreements for state managed, specifically school grounds, sport facilities and playing fields.”

CARRIED
**Road, Transport and Infrastructure**

**NO. 62**

**WATER CHARGES - STATE TO EXPLAIN SERVICES AND BENEFITS FROM PROPOSED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CHARGES**

**MOVED:** Cr T Stevenson (Bauhinia)  
**SECONDED:** Cr R Rolfe (Bauhinia)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland write to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines & Water requesting specific information about the increased water management services and benefits that are anticipated to flow from the increased revenue generated by the new water pricing regime.”

**CARRIED**

**NO. 63**

**WATER OFFENCES - REVIEW OF LEGAL AND COURT COSTS IMPOSED FOR BREACHING WATER RESTRICTIONS**

**MOVED:** Cr S Englart (Toowoomba)  
**SECONDED:** Cr S Do ulgas (Gold Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to review and increase the amount of legal and Court costs imposed in prosecutions involving water offences under Local Government Local Laws and the Water Act 2000 to better reflect the actual costs incurred in the prosecution of offenders.”

**CARRIED**

**NO. 64**

**WATER PURCHASING - DISCOUNTED PRICE FOR URBAN WATER SUPPLIES**

**MOVED:** Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)  
**SECONDED:** Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State government to provide a discounted rate for the purchase of urban water supplies being used for domestic purposes, provided that approved water-wise strategies are being planned, implemented or in place within relevant local authorities.”

**CARRIED**

**NO. 65**

**DISASTER MANAGEMENT - CONSISTENT STATEWIDE REIMBURSEMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OF REGISTRATION COSTS OF SES VEHICLES**

**MOVED:** Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)  
**SECONDED:** Cr M Forman (Bundaberg)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to consistently reimburse local governments statewide for the registration costs of State Emergency Service vehicles and advise that Local Government is strongly opposed to the removal of reimbursement to Local Government for SES vehicle registrations.”

**CARRIED**
NO. 66  
MACKAY

ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT/MAIN ROADS COST SHARING PROTOCOL - LANDSCAPING ASSOCIATED WITH NEW MAIN ROADS PROJECT WORK IN URBAN AREAS
MOVER: Cr J Boyd (Mackay)  
SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland pursue a reasonable and consistent provision for landscaping adjacent to all new works undertaken by the Department of Main Roads in built areas throughout the State.”

CARRIED

NO. 67  
MACKAY

ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT/MAIN ROADS COST SHARING PROTOCOL - RELOCATION OF SERVICES
MOVER: Cr J Boyd (Mackay)  
SECONDER: Cr D Rolls (Mackay)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to amend the Water Act 2000 to remove the need for Councils to contribute to relocation of existing water and sewerage utility infrastructure located within road reserves where the relocation is instigated through work proposed by another agency in a similar manner to the existing situation with telecommunication and electricity utilities.”

CARRIED

NO. 68  
INGLEWOOD

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTS - INTRODUCTION OF BELLY TANKS TO CONTROL LOSS OF LOAD
MOVER: Cr J White (Inglewood)  
SECONDER: Cr L Dawson (Inglewood)

“That Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State and Federal Governments for the mandatory introduction of “belly tanks” on all new articulated stock trailers manufactured after 1 July 2007.”

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr J White (Inglewood)  
SECONDER: Cr L Dawson (Inglewood)

NO. 68A  
INGLEWOOD

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTS - INTRODUCTION OF BELLY TANKS TO CONTROL LOSS OF LOAD

“That Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State and Federal Governments for the mandatory introduction of “belly tanks” on all new articulated stock trailers manufactured after 1 July 2007.”

CARRIED

NO. 68B  
INGLEWOOD

LIVESTOCK TRANSPORTS - INTRODUCTION OF BELLY TANKS TO CONTROL LOSS OF LOAD

“That Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State and Federal Governments for funding to assist local government dispose of the waste collected as a result on the introduction of the “belly tanks”.

CARRIED
NO. 69  PINE RIVERS

ELECTRICITY CONTESTABILITY - STREET LIGHTING POWER

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to allow the supply of street lighting power to be contestable in Queensland.”

WITHDRAWN

“C” MOTIONS

People and Performance

NO. 70  IPSWICH

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY STATISTICS - DEVELOPMENT OF A REGISTER

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland develop and maintain a Register of Industry Workplace Health and Safety Statistics which should include details such as average time lost per accident/illness and accident frequency rates and that this information be accessible by all Queensland Local Governments.”

REFERRED TO LGAQ EXECUTIVE

Planning and Development

NO. 71  IPSWICH

PLANNING PROCESSES - RECOGNITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL (GREEN) ASSETS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to recognise environmental (green) assets as essential infrastructure in the SEQ Regional Plan and other planning processes.”

REFERRED TO LGAQ EXECUTIVE

Community Development and Human Service

NO. 72  CQLGA/GLADSTONE

STATE FUNDING - STREAMLINE APPLICATION AND REPORTING PROCESSES FOR SPORT AND RECREATION QUEENSLAND GRANT PROGRAMS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request that Sport and Recreation Queensland reviews the complicated and onerous reporting requirements for local governments for its Grant Programs.”

REFERRED TO LGAQ EXECUTIVE
Road, Transport and Infrastructure

NO. 73  CQLGA/CALLOPE

DISASTER MANAGEMENT - INCREASED STATE FUNDING FOR SES GROUPS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to review the level of State funding for SES Groups.”

REFERRED TO LGAQ EXECUTIVE

NO. 74  CQLGA/JERICHO

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY - IMPROVED SERVICE IN REGIONAL QUEENSLAND
MOVER: Cr M Wells (Jericho) SECONDER: Cr D Comiskey (Jericho)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government and Ergon Energy to ensure that an acceptable standard of electricity supply is delivered to in areas of Regional Queensland where supplies are sub standard or non existent.”

CARRIED

NO. 75  CQLGA/DUARINGA

QUEENSLAND RAIL - RESPONSIBILITY TO MITIGATE POLLUTION
MOVER: Cr G Howard (Duaringa) SECONDER: Cr K Cracknell (Duaringa)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby Queensland Rail and the State Government on behalf of those local governments whose communities are affected by air and noise pollution and unsightly railway facilities for a better deal for their communities.”

CARRIED
Opening Address

Hon Anna Bligh
Deputy Premier
Treasurer
Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation

Thank you very much for that introduction Paul. It is a great pleasure for me to join you today, I certainly think this is a very important conference and I look forward to hearing some of its outcomes.

Can I start by respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which the event is taking place? I am not sure what the collective noun for Mayors is, it’s just Mayors? I am not sure that I have been in the company of such a large group of Mayors and I won’t have time to acknowledge each and every one of you. Can I just acknowledge a couple of people who I think warrant special attention? Can I start by acknowledging Cr Di Thorley, the Mayor of Toowoomba, this is of course her City, and she is the host of the conference this year. Di, it is great to be in your patch, thank you. Can I also acknowledge Cr Paul Bell, the President of the Local Government Associations of Australia and Queensland; Mr Greg Hallam, the Executive Director of the Local Government Association of Queensland; Mr Howard Hobbs, the Shadow Minister of Local Government Planning and Communities; Cr Tony Mooney, the President of the Urban Local Government Association of Queensland, Cr Vince Mundraby, the President of the Aboriginal Local Government Association of Queensland; Cr Judy Peters, the Australian Local Government Women’s Association State President; Mr Gary Stephenson, the Local Government Managers Association State President. Can I acknowledge all of the other local government Mayors, Councillors, Council Staff and other guests of the Conference?

I am here today on behalf of the Premier, who was originally slotted in to open the conference for you. He has asked me to personally convey his apologies for being unable to attend. I think he has an empathic and understanding audience who know all too well the demands of an Election Campaign. He hopes you understand that he is in another part of the State today.

Can I on behalf of the Queensland State Government acknowledge the continued strong leadership of the Local Government Association of Queensland, on behalf of its members and can I particularly acknowledge its willingness and ability to work with the State Government, to continue building a stronger Queensland.

The Association, on behalf of its members, given that we are in the middle of an Election Campaign, has sought the State Government’s views on a number of issues; including water institutional arrangements, local government legislative compliance and some of the really simple issues like asbestos, fluoridation, councillors standing in State Elections etc. Can I just assure you that we are currently working through each one of those issues and we will respond formally in writing to the Association, and Paul, I hope to be in a position to do that before the end of the Conference.

Can I say that I am pleased some of my ministerial colleagues will be joining you throughout the conference and I foreshadow the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas, who will be addressing the Conference later today, will be raising issues in relation to transport funding that you will enjoy hearing, and certainly goes to some of the questions about the sort of partnership that we want to have with your members and your Association.

Can I just touch on a couple of things this morning? I thought I would start with some of the challenges that are facing governments in Queensland. I think it would be fair to say there is always an imperative on different levels of government to be able to work together in a meaningful and constructive way in the interests of our constituents. I believe that imperative has never been stronger than it is now. Increasingly, we are facing challenges that simply cannot be resolved by one level of government alone.
Some of the most pressing issues that we are confronting are managing the population growth, or in some cases in some of your areas, the decline of the population growth; providing the necessary infrastructure such as roads, social services and a sustainable supply of land and housing to meet those areas of high population growth; ensuring sustainable water supplies and other services. Obviously these are significant issues and require a consistent and integrated regional response that pools the collective skills, resources and will of Local Government with the State Government. The challenge for all of us is to balance the needs of those communities with the long term priorities and economic development of regions as a whole. This I think requires all of us, to develop new ways of working together. It requires us to think how we can leverage our infrastructure investments in key areas such as transport to get the maximum economic benefit for all and for the benefit of the region.

In some of those areas I think we are seeing some very important progress and I would like to think that some of these issues will be at the forefront of your mind as you go through the deliberations of this Conference. Clearly, issues such as population and infrastructure will be close to the top of the agenda for many of you. The south-east Queensland Regional Plan and the Blueprint for the Bush are the State Government’s headline strategies to manage local growth within regional frameworks, through partnerships with local government.

We know that Queensland’s population has now surpassed the four million mark with growth predicted to continue at rates well above the national average in some areas for at least the next twenty years. Maintaining our quality of life, maintaining a liveable environment, maintaining the very things that people came here for in the first place, will be one of our biggest challenges. Providing the necessary infrastructure to support that growing population, in some well established areas effectively retro fitting some of that infrastructure, will no doubt be a key plank in some of those plans. So too will ensuring sustainable development of the State’s most important resources, particularly water and land.

The plans, the south-east Queensland plan, our south-east Queensland Infrastructure plan and our Blueprint for the Bush outline investment in key areas such as transport and freight, water, energy, ICTs and other areas of social infrastructure that are all aimed at ensuring the prosperity of the regions of Queensland. These plans are all major initiatives but none of them will come to fruition without the very strong partnership with local governments, and particularly through the LGAQ who have had significant input into each of those plans and have provided very strong leadership in our thinking in the development of those plans.

Councils have a very major role to play in driving and delivering the outcomes presented in those policies and plans. I am pleased that LGAQ is a member of the Executive Partnership Group for Blueprint for the Bush and that will be an important touch stone on emerging local issues as we start to roll out those projects.

In regards to the SEQ plan and the infrastructure plan, can I acknowledge the relevant councils are all currently working on your own local growth management strategies and structure plans for the projected growth in your local areas. While I know it is still very early days, I know a number of you are already making positive headway. Can I acknowledge that it does involve issues that are often very difficult politically at a local level. I have to manage them along with my representatives from the Brisbane City Council in my own area, and I know some of the issu es we are grappling with in terms of our neighbourhoods, are replicated in neighbourhoods, suburbs and regions right across the State.

Can I say that there is much to be gained from a strong partnership across those levels of Government as we do the communication and consultation about infrastructure projects. A good example from the Brisbane area I think would be the Airport Link project, where both the Brisbane City Council and the Department of Transport are working cooperatively as they go out and talk to the community about the project. Community consultation has been coordinated to provide the public with an opportunity to view the concepts of the project together and to give a complete response. We are a long way from securing total community support for that project, but I do think that working cooperatively has assisted the community to understand why the project is necessary, what it will mean to them and how we can mitigate some of the impacts.

Let me say a little bit about water. It’s a bit hard to come to Toowoomba and not talk about water. I wanted to start by acknowledging the very difficult situation that the Toowoomba Council has faced and is facing in relation to water, and to acknowledge the very strong leadership the Mayor has shown on
some of those issues. I think that the circumstances that have played out here in Toowoomba demonstrate just how difficult this issue is and just how many things all of us will have to try and grapple with as we try to find the right solution for each particular region that is affected.

There is no doubt that we are in the grip of the worst drought in the south-east corner than we have seen in this area for more than a hundred years. It is having and will continue to have a very strong impact on our water supply. But that drought is being exacerbated by continued effects of climate change and we are all having to think whether you are currently in drought circumstances or not, we are all having to face the reality that Queensland will have inevitably longer, hotter and drier summers for the foreseeable future. Couple that with the pressure of population growth, particularly in the south-east corner, and you can see what critical issue water has become. Many councils are facing extreme shortages, Toowoomba, as well as others across south-east Queensland and in many of the State’s rural areas. It might be fair to say and to acknowledge, that some of the councils in our rural areas have had to cope with these sorts of circumstances much more frequently in the last one hundred years than the south-east. I think some of the plans we are putting in place, take a leaf out of the book of some of those councils.

In the south-east we needed to take some decisive action and have put together a very comprehensive water plan to address the issues of water supply, water demand and water security. We have introduced new regulations requiring councils and their water supply businesses to undertake a range of actions to help meet the water needs of the region.

I wanted to say in this company, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge that it wasn’t easy to get to this position. We did have our ups and downs on the path to securing the current cooperative arrangements but I do want to say that the State is very, very pleased to be in a position to be working hand in hand with the Mayors of south-east Queensland to deliver some of these projects. They are not going to be easy, and we will all have to work as I have talked about in the transport area, we are all going to have to work with the local communities to ensure that they understand why these projects will occur and understand if there is a negative impact on some of them, why that is and what it is about.

If we are to truly manage our water supplies into the future, clearly, one of the things we will have to address together is the mindset that has developed over a long period of time that sees water storages in a parochial sense in one geographic area. Clearly, our water supplies are going to fluctuate between regions and if we are going to be in a position to successfully supply water, we need to commit to a water grid that will allow us to move water around, so that we can move water from where it is stored, to where it is needed. Those water storages will continue to fluctuate in terms of which ones are full at any given time. Rainfall patterns are changing and catchments areas are changing. We do need to start thinking much more about water in the way that we think about electricity, and that is, it belongs to everybody and we move it around so that everybody gets the supply they need. I don’t under estimate that task and I do understand how passionately many of our constituents, whether they are State or local government how passionately they feel about their own dam, their own water supply and how difficult it is to have that discussion in some of these communities. We certainly look forward to continue to work with you to have some of those discussions in our communities.

Can I also thank those councils who are actively participating in partnership with us in a water rebate scheme that is allowing more and more householders to adopt water wise and water efficient devices, and to put in place home water storage facilities such as water tanks where appropriate. It is that sort of behavioural change at a grass root level, that we are confident will start to have a long term affect on water demand and that obviously is going be of some assistance as we start to plan water supply.

In terms of the sort of relationship we believe we need to have as a State Government with the local governments of Queensland, can I say that we value a very strong and open relationship, and we do believe that open relationships have to be robust and we don’t shy away from the fact that from time to time we will disagree. I believe, and our Government believes that a relationship where State Government and councils simply agree on everything all of the time, is not actually the best way to get the best outcome for local communities. Different levels of government have different relationships with those communities, they have different areas of responsibilities and we do actually have to have arguments. They are good, and we should see them as good but we should also have the political maturity and sophistication to be able to have the argument without it destroying our relationship and the ability to move to a constructive way forward after having the argument. I think that is the nature of
our relationship that our government has enjoyed with local government. We certainly have not noticed you being shy in coming forward with issues that you feel strongly about, and we would certainly hope that, that continues long into the future.

We are very pleased that we have been able to put in place an Australian first in terms of the relationship between the State Government and the councils of Queensland. We have, as you know, put in place an Australian first Protocol that clearly articulates the roles and responsibilities of both parties. It was signed by the Premier, the Minister for Local Government and Planning and the Local Government Association of Queensland in March this year. This signing was a much stronger agreement that will highlight and elevate local issues to ensure they will become priorities on the State agenda.

We have committed in terms of ensuring an open dialogue, that twice a year there will be formal meetings between councils, the Premier and relevant senior Ministers. The first meeting was in fact scheduled during the Election Campaign and was put on hold as a result of that campaign, but we certainly hope to be in a position after September 9 to be attending that meeting. I would hope that whoever wins on September 9 will take this Protocol forward, and it will be become a standard feature of the relationship between State and local governments in Queensland, regardless of who occupies the treasury benches at any level of government at any given time. Rescheduling that inaugural meeting, is in my view, very likely to occur regardless of any outcome on September 9 and I do hope that there will be success and demonstrable outcomes so that we can stand up at the next LGAQ Conference and say as a result of this Protocol, as a result of this process, these are the issues that we have managed to work through, that we might not have otherwise been able to reach some agreement about.

Can I just conclude by wishing you all the very, very best in the process of your deliberations throughout this Conference, it is important I think that the councils do have the opportunity to get together formally. I do expect that we will get some feedback from the Conference. I understand that there will be many issues raised and I would hope that you would bring those forward both formally and informally to us, so if there are areas that the State Government needs to look at or rethink that we can do so. I hope, as I said that after September 9, I, along with some of my ministerial colleagues will be in a position to be part of the ongoing dialogue that helps us meet some of the challenges that people expect us to meet. While we do have to have disagreements, and while they are an important part of the democratic process, I know that there is one thing that everybody in this room will agree on and that is, the people that we represent expect us to work together in their interest. I know there is a strong determination in this room to make that happen.

Can I just conclude by saying good luck, enjoy the Conference, May it be as productive as you hope it will be and it is my great pleasure to officially declare it open.

Thank you.
Presidential Address

**Cr Paul Bell AM**
**President LGAQ and ALGA**

Mayor of the host council of Toowoomba Cr Di Thorley, Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the Hon Anna Bligh, Mr Howard Hobbs, Shadow Minister for Local Government, ULGA President Cr Tony Mooney, ALGWA State President Cr Judy Peters, LGMA State President Mr Gary Stevenson, other distinguished guests, colleagues in local government, welcome to conference 2006.

I’ve got 15 minutes of your time this morning and that’s all I’ll take.

At the outset, let me thank the Mayor of Toowoomba Cr Di Thorley her fellow councillors and staff in nominating to host this event. Toowoomba and the Darling Downs is a wonderful and historic part of our state’s history and a great place to visit.

As you all well know, we are in the middle of a state election, so unfortunately the Premier couldn’t keep his appointment to open the conference but very kindly arranged for his much more attractive Deputy, Anna Bligh to carry out those duties. You are very welcome at this event Anna. Unfortunately, our Local Government and Main Road Ministers are not able to set aside the time that they normally do to take delegations due to election commitments. I do understand the Director-Generals will be taking delegations - but none the less, all of our state and federal parliamentary colleagues are very welcome at this event, for whatever time they can afford us.

I ask that all the first timers to an LGAQ annual conference please stand so that we can both recognise and welcome you. Give them a big clap, colleagues.

It would be remiss of me not to recognise the great many hardships the weather has thrown up at us over the last year and the great efforts councils are making on behalf of their residents to respond to the forces of nature.. Huge cyclones and historic droughts were the order of the day! For all our technology and sophistication as a society, we are still largely beholden, to the elements.

This morning I want to talk about three basic themes; LGAQ working hard for your council on the future; LGAQ fighting each and every day to protect and promote councils interests and last but certainly not least, LGAQ, sticking close to you, our members, throughout the year.

Now, to working on the future; I must say that I’d rather work on it, than have it working on us. Colleagues one of the things that have distinguished your current LGAQ Executive is its ability to focus on the medium term, what’s up ahead. Not flash grand plans, but sensible practical improvements that will benefit councils.

Obviously the Size, Shape and Sustainability or SSS agenda is a great example of working on the future cooperatively, sensibly and pragmatically. I am delighted beyond belief that 104 of the councils here today have joined in this voluntarily process. Well done. In the presence of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, I want to very genuinely thank the State Government for the $25m they have put on the table to support this process. This will ensure that those councils are the masters of their own destiny.

I especially look forward to our two hour SSS feedback session tomorrow and commend you all on your efforts to date.

Friends with the advent of LG Infrastructure Services (LGIS), LGAQ has brought the future forward. This group we created in a strategic alliance with the Queensland Treasury Corporation currently has $1.35b of work or 80,000 consulting hours on its books. LGIS has added great value to councils and will provide a ready made vehicle for those councils who want to deliver their infrastructure needs on a regional or even state-wide basis into the future. The same can be said for LG ONE, the LGAQ’s innovative council financial management software program, the perfect platform to deliver shared services.

Of course, later in the program you will see the launch of QPG - LG Shared Services, another joint venture offering to assist councils to prosper into the future, improving service, saving money and addressing the skills shortage crisis.
LGAQ has all the basis covered by anticipating change and providing councils with tools that equip them for the future. But of course, it’s not all about new products and services. I can proudly say, that after two years of campaigning for a simpler better Local Government Act I have succeeded in getting the State Government to agree to review the Local Government Act. Indeed, it was in the LGAQ’s 10 point election policy plan and both sides of politics have agreed to that review. Hopefully, the one size fits all approach will be consigned to the scrapbook.

Then of course there has been our work on Backroom to the Boardroom and LG Asset, forward looking programs which have been put in place to assist councils with their emerging infrastructure maintenance and renewal needs. Again, congratulations to the many councils participating in these two important initiatives.

Federally, the ALGA, funded through LGAQ and other state associations, has set the scene for a brighter future for councils, with the signing of the IGA on cost shifting in April this year, COAG recently agreeing to look at council finances in 2007, and the all party all house resolution recognising local government set to pass through federal parliament very shortly. Of course, a lot of credit also has to go to our Federal Minister Jim Lloyd - thanks Jim.

Most importantly your Association has done a poultice of work on industrial relations and skills shortage issues so that we can offer maximum assistance to councils over the next few years.

On the WorkChoices front, we have produced templates, papers and guidelines to assist council through the complex maze, as well as conducting extensive education programs right around the state. LGAQ has coordinated a national response for the need for a national local government award, enjoying a regular dialogue with the federal minister for Workplace Relations.

In terms of skill shortages LGAQ is addressing the issue on multiple fronts. Firstly, through our involvement with the Local Government Skills Councils, a group whose work I commend to you; then there are programs to attract migrant workers; the Q Grad scheme for undergraduate recruitment; a program to retain older workers; LGAQ introduced TAFE certificate level four courses to address skills shortage and; a soon to be released program for school based leavers. Sitting over the top of all these initiatives is the 20 month half a million dollar LGAQ advertising campaign to better position Queensland Local Government to attract its fair share of workers in a very tight labour market. You will be hearing more of that campaign in the next month or so, indeed you will be asked to join in.

In terms of the daily fight for and on behalf of councils, our bread and butter, LGAQ did an enormous amount of work over the past year to protect local government’s interests in relation to the CMC Inquiry. We fought hard, got a touch up for our troubles from the Chairman in his final report, but did you our members proud - LGAQ was unflinching.

Earlier in the year LGAQ created Australian legal history by successfully appealing the decision to permit the distribution of a computer game promoting graffiti and violence against council workers, not to mention stoushes with the State Government over fluoride and asbestos. When the going gets tough, the LGAQ gets going.

Water has been at the top of our list, this time last year we released ‘Protecting Our Urban Water Supplies paper. For the second year in a row the LGAQ managed to defer new water charges on bulk urban water supplies to councils, saving $20m over the last two years. We also fought a pitched battle alongside the SEQ Council of Mayors to stop a referendum on adding treated effluent to the water supply being tied to the 2008 council elections, and the blame for that region’s water crisis being unfairly laid at councils’ feet.

On the roads front we have done well; a full extra year of R2R paid in the 2005/6 financial year and an additional $127 being secured for the strategic component of R2R. Jim Lloyd gets another bouquet here too. I am very hopeful that during the State election campaign we will get some more good news on the road funding front, especially Road Alliance money.

On top of the federal money, the State Government’s $700m local government capital infrastructure subsidy program kicked off on 1 July this year. In terms of planning issues we fought very hard to defend
councillors’ right to make planning decisions. Believe you me the development lobby want you out of that role. Rather than be sitting ducks for the developers to take pot shots at councils, LGAQ more recently has returned fire, putting their performance under the microscope, and they don’t like it.

Under the terms of the new State/Local Government protocol I signed with the Premier earlier this year, I am required to report to this conference on progress under the protocol. The LGAQ Officer Bearers were set to meet with the Premier and other senior Ministers on 9 August for our inaugural Protocol Ministerial meeting. The meeting got postponed, so there you go, there’s my report.

Finally, I come to the fundamental tenet on which the LGAQ has turned for over a century sticking close by our members. For the LGAQ to be able to do all the things we do, the active engagement and support of our members is critical. We engage with you our members on multiple fronts. I am proud to say that I personally visited half the councils in Queensland last year and will continue that practice; LGAQ consults you to death, even when you don’t want to be consulted some times!

Over the last year LGAQ asked for council input into issues of the day 120 times to be precise, as well as holding summits on critical issues such as WorkChoices and the EPA Roles and Responsibilities review when it was paramount to hear your view in person. Then there is the Customer Care program where your CEO gets rung or contacted by LGAQ senior staff every six to eight weeks. Add to that the nine policy reference groups, online chat rooms, specialist conferences etc and you have a very good picture of how engaged LGAQ is with its members.

However, on many, many occasions you seek us out first. During the last twelve months, LGAQ received on average 850 phone calls a day, 140,000 actionable emails, 5800 items of correspondence you sent, and an all time record high 5050 industrial or human resource management issues from you. Do we know where you live and what you’re thinking? You bet ya!

For me the one telling set of statistics that drives home the worth of being part of LGAQ is that one activity alone, just one, LGW, has returned $1.8m more back to members than the LGAQ levied in total subscriptions over the past three years. That is, you paid $6.1m in subs and got back $7.9m in special dividends. Multiply that result across the whole LGAQ operation and the value of membership is inestimable!

The next twelve months is significant for the LGAQ as it marks 110 years of our existence. When you are on a good thing, stick to it.

In closing, can I thank my fellow LGAQ Office Bearers Crs Ann Bennison, Bob Abbot and Brendan McNamara for their great help to me during the year. A pat on the back also for the rest of the Executive and the LGAQ staff for their efforts on your behalf over the last year.

Colleagues and friends let’s make the most of the next three days together in the interests of the communities we serve and the great state of Queensland.
Keynote Address: “Wisdom of the Crowds”

Mr James Surowiecki, Author, Journalist
Brooklyn, New York, USA

Due to copyright laws this speech was unable to be published.

Address: “All Politics is Local”

Mr Mark Textor QPMR
Joint Managing Director and Co-Founder Crosby|Textor

Thank you for that warm welcome. I am very glad to be here at this event and very good to see some passion in some of these debates, a passion that is sometimes sorely lacking in other forums. I think prejudice is a terrible thing. When I hear the word that someone has come from Canberra, particularly since my topic today is “All Politics is Local”, what the hell would he know?

In my defence, as you may have heard, I am originally from Darwin. I was looking at those amendments and some of the odd typo that may have gone up and I remember in my first every job relating to local politics. I was a former economist, a perfect blend of literacy and numeracy, and I remember working for a bloke by the name of Marshal Perrin who had just taken up the Chief Minister ship of the Northern Territory. He was also at the same time, not only Chief Minister, but Minister for Lands and Planning, a rare combination in politics. He called me into his office and said “Mark, there has been a big development, after years of delay and acrimonious discussions with the traditional owners of a particular area, we have secured some land to build a flood mitigation dam in Alice Springs. What I would like you to do Mark, is because you have a background in marketing as well as PR, I would like you to design a little pamphlet to celebrate this achievement”. (By the way this thing still isn’t built). I thought I would have a crack at that, so I designed this pamphlet. I was fond of rhyme at the time, so the pamphlet read “After years of delay, the flood mitigation dam is under way” pretty good eh? I got this approved by Marshall, got it printed up and by 9pm that night, (the printer was running hot as we were going to deliver it around Alice Springs the next day), I looked at this pamphlet and noticed there was a small letter missing in one of the words on the front of the pamphlet. It said “after years of delay the flood mitigation dam is under way”, no more watermelon floods. It was a pretty harsh introduction.

The other thing I want to clear up, as you can see I am wearing a Pollster’s hat. As you can see I am fond of hats and when people hear the term pollster they immediately think of those fellows in the newspaper that publish polls of who is in front and who is not and polling with decimal points and percentage marks. I think it is a great tragedy that people feel that such complex issues such as international oblique; security threats to our nation and indeed to the other end of the scale, the aspirations and hopes that people in your communities have for their areas, their sons and daughters, their communities, their regions and the sort of issues that you have just been discussing, such issues of such emotion and complexity can be measured by the decimal point and the percentage mark. Hopefully what you will look at today as a way to breakdown some of that complexity into simplicity.

I used to work with a fellow called Richard Worthling who was Ronald Reagan’s pollster for 16 years, eight as California Governor and eight as President. He used to say he had an interesting career change - he used to be a former economist and turned into a pollster. He said to me “I used to make money by making the simple business of making money complex as an economist, but now I have to make the complex business of public opinion simple”.

We have been given a simple topic. The topic is “All Politics is Local” and that’s the focus on this occasion. Is this true? Is politics really local? The truth is important. As one politician said to me once, the truth is important; one should experiment with it occasionally.

I have been a political pollster for 15 years, done campaigns in the UK. Our company was engaged to run the last campaign for the Conservative Party. I have run campaigns in Fiji, the United States, in Thailand and in every State and region of Australia just about. In doing so, I have heard all the phrases. Tip O'Neil’s phrase “All politics is local” the phrase “Politics is all about leadership” the phrase “State Politics is irrelevant” the phrase “Local Government is becoming irrelevant”. None of these are strictly
true on its’ own account. Of course, there are many considerations in electoral politics and we will go through some of those considerations in terms of how it plays across States, local and even federally.

My first experience with the power of local politics over all other forms of politics was actually in the 1993 Federal Election. It was an interesting lesson. You will recall in that election, that it was the election of Fight Back and that was John Hewson’s interesting and creative approach to politics where he presented a number of quite radical policy proposal towards the Australian Electorate all over Australia. Of course it involved a 15% GST on every Goods and Service, including on cakes. It included very substantial changes to welfare reform in the way that not only was it remitted, but also in the way it was policed. He also proposed quite marked changes to IR reforms and he had a number of other economic reforms in there including coming on occasionally the reforms of the Ports. All in one bundle he was proposing some of the changes we have seen over the last ten years. It was quite a radical document. It was so radical in fact that one punter described it as a 183 page suicide document.

Interestingly enough, something that is not often recorded, and something that you might not know, in the key marginal seats in that electorate, the generic vote, that is the vote for the party rather than the vote for the local candidates, in the marginal seats that would have delivered Government, was on our numbers, as released to a Press Club soon afterwards by Andrew Robb, the Liberal Party numbers were actually slightly ahead of Labors. On name vote, that is when you name the local candidates in those marginal seats, which was the battle ground for that campaign, the Liberal party on that occasion was behind and therefore failed to gain marginal seats and lost that election.

Although the fight back and the GST in particular created enormous electoral difficulty for the Coalition on that occasion, the real thing that really won them the difference and won the battle for the Labor Party was the strength of local representation. Above and beyond the important national issues that everybody in the mainstream media wanted to talk about for four weeks. That was remarkable. It ended up being called the “Jim Snow” effect. Jim Snow was the member for Eden-Monaro. As you may know, whenever a Federal Government Eden-Monaro will swing and vice versa. It’s a regional seat that starts from Queanbeyan, just outside of Canberra and goes all the way down to the coast - quite a remarkable seat.

The “Jim Snow” effect was quite remarkable and was mirrored across Australia in regional seats in Queensland, NSW, South Australia and elsewhere. The “Jim Snow” effect was one of, you could dislike the policies of Labor federally but the local member would be some what separate to that. Jim Snow on occasion would get stuck in to his own party, he would write strong letter of complaint on occasion to various Ministers in parts of Government and his own Government, and so he was defined as a good local member. Most people in Eden-Monaro thought that he was fighting the good fight. Most people in Eden-Monaro thought he was one of them and given all that, he couldn’t be blamed for any negative impacts of the broader issues like economy and so that were had on the people of Eden-Monaro. In fact to get over this remarkable power of local campaigning, the Coalition had to adopt a tactic that had been used overseas which was to say “whatever you think of this fellow, a vote for this fellow is effectively a vote of endorsement for the Federal Government at the next election”.

That is a fairly radical campaign step for the purposes of campaigns to overcome what is purely the connection of the community which is the equity typically of Local Government. I don’t know whether Tony Mooney is in the audience today, but the next example of the power of localism comes in Mundingburra. Of course you will remember the Mundingburra by-election because it was famous as it was concurrent with the effective ending of Wayne Goss’ electoral majority. The concern in Mundingburra at the time on the public and internal polls of both parties, that people had used the seat in question as a stepping stone in some else’s career book. The Coalition at the time selected a candidate by the name of Frank Tanti. It was interesting that Frank Tanti based a barrage of media attacks. You might remember that the 7.30 Report down in Canberra had an interview with Frank and got stuck into him about his lack of knowledge about the separation of power etc, etc. It was quite a powerful attack. Notwithstanding the popularity of the other local candidate Tony Mooney, (he was a substantive figure in politics) Frank Tanti’s vote went up every time Canberra attacked his credibility. Why? He might not be the most knowledgeable person in the world, but he was a local candidate. It was in fact attacks on his own ministerial credibility and options that lead people to believe hey I have some really serious and substantive issues that I need to be addressed in my local community, I want them addressed, they haven’t been addressed, people have potentially used this seat as a stepping stone to power, I want somebody who will fix local issues, to use the words of one of the people arguing the
motion beforehand. Would Frank Tanti become a Minister, no probably not, but that is precisely why
they voted for him. In fact television commercials at the time presented alternative politicians as
sharks who wanted to use Mundingburra for their own electoral ends.

Lastly in terms of a salient discussion about the power of local politics from a federal perspective and to
demonstrate how important localism is both sides of politics at a federal level is this. The 1998 Election
was the second election on the GST and it is the only national election ever won, to my knowledge, by a
government proposing tax on everything. Every good, every service traded anywhere, the only campaign
ever won in the Western world on that basis. We again saw the power of localism. The campaign saw a
very fierce battle over the GST. The GST was the number one issue on Election Day. This is where the
subtle comes in. People may have gone into the booth wanting to express some concerns about the GST,
not necessarily to oppose it, let’s be careful about this. Nevertheless enough of them wanted to do so to
change the Government from Liberal back to Labor. Many did walk into the booth wanting to do
something to the GST. But the GST was not on the ballot, and an electorate like Lindsay in NSW Jackie
Kelly was on the Ballot. Given she was seen to be a person who worked hard for her entire term, given
that she was a person that was seen to achieve something, in terms of getting projects under way, they
voted for her and not against the GST.

We have seen similar scenarios in virtually every State where there might be issues of the day against
State or Federal Governments but because of the power of localism swings have been avoided or
neutralized.

On a theoretical basis what is it that people see in you as local representatives or indeed any level of
local representation being the local federal, local state or the local councilor. Essentially there are two
things that people look for, what I call “for and with”. The “for” is basically for one of a better term
“office facilitation”. Of course you might help facilitate connection with business, help facilitate a
problem with the local utility getting sorted out, you might facilitate getting better connected with
another level of government in terms of giving them the right number to contact at Federal or State
level. The facilitation might also come from a councilor arguing on an individual basis for a special grant
for a hospital from a Federal or State MP for example.

There have been a lot of politicians, who have done a lot for the community but did not want to get their
hands dirty, so they were quite powerful and quite effective but they didn’t want to mix with these
buggers. So they have been unelected.

The second requirement is not only to do things for the community but to show you actually give a damn
by being their at the Parent Teacher night, by being there at the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, by
spending four hours in the sun on Clean Up Australia, by showing an interest at sporting events. Of
course, you can do both and still lose.

There were two members of parliament, one state, one federal in a particular region that with the
support of their community and media, protested against the testing of bombs at the Mururoa Atoll all
those years ago. Great community support for what they were doing, great media support for what they
were doing. They opposed the bombs and then their campaigns bombed. Why is it? There is a third
requirement. There is a requirement rationally from your constituency for you to work on salient local
issues that is, the issues of importance, not those things even though they may give a head nod too, that
really don’t have any relevance to them or their family.

What we have also found is a new development. There is now a fourth issue, and traditionally this is the
realm of federal politics but it is going now down the line, we have found too, more and more assessment
on the same level with state and local politicians and representatives. In an uncertain world, and given
that people don’t really have enough time to fully appreciate all the things you do and all the details you
stand for, that they will take a bet of surety against the uncertainty of the world, by having some
semblance of knowledge and some feeling about your character. They want to know that politicians and
representatives of the community are doing the right things, yes, but for the right reasons. More and
more, voters want to know about the journey you have been on as a representative to get to a point
where you are supporting and opposing an argument. So the stories we heard just before about the
circumstances that you have seen with your own eyes, leading to your position on this health
amendment, for example, are very important to voters. It is not just important internally, it is
important externally to know that you just don’t support a position, but you do so for good reason and
you do so, because you want to be aware of some of the stresses and strains of what the community has been going through.

Generally, they want to know something about your angle. Are you caring? Are you visionary? Are you honest? Are you strong? If you are not so strong, are you effective? Do you share their values? Each representative will have a different role. It is the values of the communities that we want to talk about next.

One of the things that is not often stated, particularly by pollsters, is why an issue is important, not what the issue is. You often see in big polls that health is important or education is important, or international affairs are important. The question that political analysts ask is somewhat different. It’s, do not explain more about the issue because I understand that it is important. Why is it important to you? Here is where the unique qualities of Local Government might come to the fore. If you are talking about an issue such as roads, crime, utility service delivery or water, that issue will operate at four distinct levels. The first level is the stuff they talk about to you on the street; the second level is the consequence to them as a member of the community; the third level is the emotional consequence that brings to them and the fourth level is that they will have some value that is important to them. I hesitate to talk about values. My mentor use to say to me “beware of politicians talking about values”. When I talk about values I don’t mean family values for example. What are family values? I don’t know what family values are, but there are certain things that a family values. Children value a sense of belonging; children value a sense of security, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of self esteem, belonging to a family unit. Those are things that a family values. I will talk more about that next.

When you are talking about most issues these days, one of the things that has changed is the way people view issues. Australia for the most part, is a more confident and dare I use that word, an aspirational place, but it still has some specific requirements of representatives such as yourself. Why is an issue like service delivery or state of the local park important? It is important because people are working harder than ever. Whether it is recovery from a cyclone, whether it is in a city, the establishment and getting ahead and making sure you can afford your mortgage. They are doing more and more for their family. They are protecting their family financially; they are protecting their family’s wealth; they are working harder than ever; they are working later; they are abiding by the rule of law why others don’t; they are putting in the hard work; they are going to the community groups; going to the rotary function; they are going to Clean Up Australia Day; they are doing their part. All they expect is a bit of reciprocal behavior from government. I am doing my part as a member of the community, I am respecting the law, why don’t you recognize the house that I built and which I have raised a family needs to be respected too? The area which I have built a home and family needs to be up kept needs to be kept clean, needs to be kept safe by governments. I would like to be able to walk back from the local shopping centre, with my wife and not be accosted by thugs; I would like to go down the local park with my child and not see obscenities scrawled in graffiti across an Anzac monument. Not a very sensible set of aspirations on behalf of the voters.

Indeed in every issue that we have a look at nationally, you can see how they can see that issue through a local context. For example, if you have a look at the economy and economic management. Well, voters have had a pretty good franchise really, if you look at it cynically, which I don’t necessarily. But if you look at it cynically, they have had a pretty good franchise. A Federal Government known for its economic confidence, raising money and keeping the economy strong. State Governments have been known for their ability to spend money. Where that franchise might have gone wrong in relation to the comments some people made earlier, is that you expect State Governments to spend that money on services. Even on issue like tax, they say hey where is the value for money on my taxes if indeed Local and State Governments are not spending it appropriately?

On the environment, people today are talking about the impact on local communities of a lack of water. Even the issue of National Security has a local element. Look at Sydney, race riots in Sydney brought home the personal consequence of not feeling safe in the streets, of broader national security and immigration issues to some. The BCA recently did an advertising campaign talking about infrastructure reform. Now people know what that term means in local and economic effects, in terms of roads, in terms of small businesses being able to get goods delivered on time. Welfare and community services used to be just a moral debate about national responsibility, but now in terms of welfare and services they now talk about the efficacy of urban services and other services delivered at local government level. On health, we have seen more from this debate in the 80’s and 90’s about health systems to a
debate to whether federal funds should be mandated to local government areas, of which there is some support in the community I have got to say. On water, again, they are even aware of the nuances on the issue. If you had a focus group any where in Australia, including regional Queensland right now, they would say one of their concerns as eluded to by an earlier speaker, is the fragmentation of services to local areas.

A classic example of the impact of national issues locally, is actually in relation to the effects of natural disasters. Today is a year since Hurricane Katrina devastated the historic town of New Orleans. Critics said if you recall the flooding should never have happened that the government knew. Some said that the levy at all levels of government, federal, state and local, was not up to the job of protecting the city of New Orleans, and so it was proven. In the immediate aftermath of that, the United States Government and Local Government were criticised for failing to respond adequately given the plight of its citizens, especially the poorer. Twelve months on, thousands are still living in trailer parks around the United States. The localised consequences of the disaster in the south-east were talked about across the United States in relation to the Government’s failures. Indeed the people are now questioning the Government’s general competency in the United States as the result of a particular local issue.

Cyclone Larry brings across another effect of localism of how politics has intensely local origins. That cyclone wiped out your banana crop. In Canberra I have seen bananas at $18.00 a kilo, unthinkable to a Queenslander and definitely to a bloke from Northern Territory. With bananas so expensive, the talk about demand, turning elsewhere to other fruit and vegetables, pushing up the CPI on the basket of goods, this was without a doubt a contributor or influencing factor in the debate about the Reserve Bank pushing up interest rates to dampen the economy after its last meeting. Bananas fall, interest rates go up. Of course, now you see some massive economic arguments based around the applicability or otherwise of the CPI thanks to the banana debate. In otherwise, for example, obscure contribution to local council by a bloke called Mark Latham in relation to his period as Mayor, which would never have seen the light of day, suddenly became the subject of at least two television advertisements by the Liberal Party at the last election focusing on his financial credentials as a result of that. If you remember the line “If you can’t run a local council, how can you run an $800billion economy, good luck”. So what is your franchise? We have talked about the Federal Government’s equity being its ability to manage the economy and to provide a stable environment in which to plan for your family’s future and protect the nation through defence. The States theoretically are the ones that spend money on essential services like health and education. What is the role of Local Government? Well people have various distinct expectations whenever we have looked at this. The rational expectation is they expect certain services, the quality provision of utilities, waste water and so on. They believe that local government is best placed to think about very specific planning and population issues that affect their local area which might then affect their quality of life as committed citizens to that area. The third is to protect and update the environment. The impact of this is very significant. I then digress to one point.

Let’s take an obscure debate like the obesity debate, which you think may have no influence on you as Local Government, you would be wrong. You would be wrong because when you ask people, ok what is the food debate all about. What is the obesity debate all about? They say, ok, fat kids predominantly and you say well tell me more about it. They say, well it’s about fat kids and we have three choices. We ban ads, or we limit the food that they have, in which case they will smuggle chocolate bars to school, or we give them more exercise. State Government and a lot of people are telling me that it is my responsibility, that I have part responsibility. The Food Industry might be doing their part by giving me lighter foods, the television industry might have a code of practice, but I have a role to play and that role is to exercise parental responsibility, I will play my part. I will play my part by exercising my choices. What are my choices? My son Max has to exercise more. Can I suddenly get home two hours earlier to be there to play with him in the park? Do I have that choice, no, my roads are jammed. Can I send him on the safe bike way to school instead of the road? No I can’t suddenly build a bike path. Can the local park suddenly be built safer so that I can spend quality time with my son? No, so governments must play their part. Do I have much choice of whether Max actually exercises or sits under a tree at ostensibly compulsory school physical education, not much! I don’t have any control over that. Don’t tell me about my responsibilities unless you start to exercise yours. There they have certain expectations, particularly from State Government but also in Local Government in protecting those environments and promoting those environments that allow even issues like health, for you to have a decent quality of life for your children.
We touched on the rationale, but there is lastly, the thematic. What do they believe with Local Government in terms of your advantages over other levels of government thematically? Well, they expect you to be more responsive. Theoretically, you are closer to the people in terms of easier to get in touch with; you knowing the local community to know your way around the services and getting the problems solved. That is their first expectation, so more in touch - more likely to understand local needs in terms of future planning for my area that I have invested in for me and my family. Lastly, they expect Local Government to be more practical, to have very practical solutions to a sometimes obscure set of plans from other levels of government. The bottom line is, given that you are more responsive theoretically to community concerns, given you are more practical, their question is simple. What are you doing as a Local Government to protect the lifestyle of my area? Given that you out of anyone are likely to be more responsive, given out of anyone that you should have a more practical set of plans for me and my family to protect our lifestyle now and into the future.

Thank you.
Address: Roads and Transport Issues

Hon Paul Lucas MP
Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Thank you. I actually have my rugby referees tie on this morning, in fact on a not so pleasant note we might spare a thought for those young lads who lost their lives coming to Toowoomba for a rugby match. There is nothing more tragic than young lives being lost on the road. In fact I want to talk to you today, about the young driver’s policy that was released about a month ago regarding 17-24 year olds; things like supervised driving for 100 hours, restrictions on the number of passengers in your car on the first year of driving, ban of mobile phones in the first year of driving and the like. The purpose of talking to you about those things today, no matter where you go or what you see, you are confronted with youth motor vehicle accidents.

Thank you for inviting me. Can I acknowledge my State Parliamentary colleagues that are here, elected representatives and delegates and the like. The theme of this conference is “Closest to the People”. I enjoy coming to Toowoomba, I did some study up here at USQ, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Toowoomba at this point in time, and particularly the Darling Downs, are on the verge of enormous growth opportunities and transport and roads will have a significant role in working with you to deliver those opportunities.

You will have noted in the media recently that the Federal Government have announced that they have given us $10million for the PPP business case for the Second Range Crossing. I am delighted that Ian Macfarlane did that; we actually asked for that in 2004, and they announced it in 2005 and we got the cheque in September 2006. We got it at least, but we are two years behind where we could have been if we got it earlier. However, I am looking forward to delivering on that project because the opportunity for not only road safety, but to get traffic through a high capacity road down to Brisbane from the Downs is a wonderful opportunity but is one that will be amazing, the benefits of it.

Just in terms of our budget, as you all know we have the strongest growth in Queensland of all of Australia and whilst it is growing in the south-east corner, I am particularly delighted to note our strong growth in other parts of Queensland. In the past we have agreed that it is a real challenge for us, for our regional and decentralised economy. It is a glass half full argument. It is also a wonderful opportunity for us in terms of our regional economy. It makes the place easier to run in the future because we are so spread out and where we will have our key industries, so it will make it easier to service. Massive urban conglomerations are in no body’s interest. That growth is really gratifying.

$1.98billion will be spent on the road network from Torres Strait to Tugun and I think that is a 58% increase on last year’s budget. Our budget this year is bigger than NSW road construction budget; their budget is $1.59billion and bigger than Victoria’s at $1.1billion. Indeed our State capital budget is bigger than NSW, ours is $10.5 and their’s is $9.5 or just on $10. That gives you an idea on the expansion that has been undertaken at Queensland at the moment. If you want to look at it, at per capita basis, we spend twice the amount that NSW does, and two and a quarter what Victoria spends.

Last year I spoke on the outcomes of Alan Morton’s and Alan Layton’s study into roads for the LGAQ. The report noted that an extra $1.1billion dollars annually in real terms for Queensland roads from 2006-7 to 2008 -9 than was budgeted in 2003-4. That budget and this is last year’s budget, has delivered a substantial increase in road and transport funding across the State. Your own report has noted what we are delivering a 58% increase on last year’s budget. Remember I said to you, this year’s budget a 58% increase on last year’s budget. I quote “state sourced road and public transport capital funding included in the 2005/06 budget totals $1.4 billion and that represents a real-terms increase of $703 million per year (102.4% increase) over what was available in 2003/04”.

President Paul Bell wrote: “The LGAQ commends the State Government for its efforts and encourages the Federal Government to increase its efforts in tackling SEQ major transport issues and what he described as the parlous state of the national highway in this State”

A little bit more on the State v Federal funding, the SEQ Council of Mayors also looked at the issue. One of the problems people need to understand with Queensland and this is always an issue with the
Commonwealth Government, regardless of their political persuasion, that this State exists north of Caboolture. There are a lot of people who live north of Caboolture and west of Ipswich. We are actually very keen on the people who live to the south of Caboolture and the east of Ipswich as well, but this State has an enormous population outside of those areas. Sometimes there is a real tendency down south to not understand that what will actually contribute in terms of the economic wealth of this country.

That also means because of our decentralised nature, our national highway task is very, very significant. Queensland has 28.8% of the travel task on the National Highway System component yet we get only 24.1% of the Auslink funding for the national network. Victoria has 13.55 of the travel task and receives 22.1% of the Auslink national network funding. If you have a look at how we are going with State and Federal funding, you will see we are working up those fundings. We have ensured that 100% of our registration funding goes towards roads. We had 91% guaranteed, but we actually collect $846 million in registration and spend $1.5 billion of our own money on roads. We pay almost twice, what we collect in registration goes towards funding. On the other hand 17 cents Commonwealth fuel funding goes towards roads. People in the Gold Coast pay $330 million a year in federal fuel excise. There has been no major federal road funding projects announced in the Gold Coast since 2003 when we got the announcement for the Tugun Bypass.

I should probably say this. I think the challenge for all of us in dealing with the Federal Government, is to get them to the table of planning. The first corridor of study under Auslink was the Cairns - Brisbane study. What that has done for the first time, is look at it from an integrated sense, on what we need to do, not mark our levels, but what we see as the important issues for the corridor. Before we can get the Federal Government actually spending money on the planning, it naturally forces enormous frustrations in the community because even when they actually do finally get around to give us some money, you then have to go through a process that sometimes will take some years of doing the planning, corridor identification and corridor acquisition. At least, for example, with the second range crossing in Toowoomba, you know the corridor is there, we know where it has to go, and it is all right to go on it. You know when you go to Sydney, that wonderful road that M5, out the back of Sydney, that corridor was protected some 30-40 years ago.

One of the real challenges, and one that I want to take up with the Federal Government, more and more (and I suggest you do this as well), is what are we thinking about rural communities, regional centres, the bypass road of the future. Are we doing the work to identify it now? Are we doing the work to protect it from planning now? If you have to rely on that as well as the people responsible for land assessment, we have to work together now so that when the money does come, you don’t have a World War III with the local community or whoever else about where we can build it. In fact, the interesting thing about being Transport Minister and Roads Minister is not so much even marshalling the funds. I look at that as a challenge of course, there are limited funds, but we have been successful of getting more and more. It’s actually then going through with the community to actually make sure you are dealing with the issues of who doesn’t want a road here, or who has bought a property and didn’t know there was a road going through there, and the like. The great thing that all of us can do, the State Government, the Federal Government and the local authorities is to actually get down and do that horrible acquisition and corridor identification earlier on. I think that should occupy our minds.

In terms of building partnerships, I just want to mention a couple of things. One of the things I have enjoyed as Roads and Transport Minister is working with a number of councils here, urban, regional and rural in terms of delivering together on really good projects. I think it is a lot of fun working together. In fact Robby Dare who was here before, I might actually go out and learn how to catch yellow belly. I’ve never caught yellow belly before, nor have I ate it, but I am willing to try. For example, some of the stuff we have done with Bill Ludwig or Bob Abbot, Campbell Newman, or the Gold Coast City Council. I could name 40 councils where it has been fantastic working together to ascertain common outcomes, that’s really good. That’s again when people look at us, and by us I mean political representatives whether they are State, Federal or local, they are not too interested in arguments about things, they just want us to deliver. If I put on stuff for you to do, naturally you have to protect the ratepayers interest just like I have to protect the tax payer and I have to do that, with respect, for the Commonwealth as well.

We have already started the early works under the Gateway Bridge, that’s in partnership with the Brisbane City Council. It is easy to get money out of them than the Federal Government, I might add.
We will have the contract for the Gateway signed up in mid September. That proceeds well. That is important to many of you here too, because it is a major trade route for many communities.

The Jericho-Yaraka rail line, I would like to thank the local councils there, especially Vaughan Johnson who is always a pleasure to deal with in terms of Yaraka. I spoke to you about that rail line last year, played the DVD to you so I won’t talk to you about it again. Subsequently we signed an MOU with Livingstone Shire Council in relation to the Yeppoon rail line including money for cycle ways and $2.5million for a bulk loading facility for the local pineapple farmers. All the pineapple farmers were there, they gave me a very nice big pineapple. We were really happy with the outcome we got for them which, once again, something that was worthwhile doing.

I just want to talk about something that will be attractive to you. After this year’s Budget there was a significant response to key issues raised with the State Government by the LGAQ. In the same media statement Paul wrote about the MR’s LGAQ Roads Alliance initiative “Although the LGAQ notes and appreciates the $14million for the Main Roads, LGAQ Roads Alliance initiative, the association will be seeking a further $6 million ...to bring the funding to $20 million a year”. You wanted $20 million a year; you are getting $25 million a year. That is an additional $11 million a year that we will put towards, what I think has been an exciting program, again working with you guys on the higher order roads and the lower order State controlled roads. I would thank you for the maturity you have shown in dealing with us in relation to that. One of the things that this will help us do, because we know in Queensland, with our rural road network and the number of run off crashes and the like that we have, will help us significantly improve with shoulder sealings, culvert replacements and the like which can all be the cause of accidents.

The other thing I wanted to mention to you on a road safety issue, it is not directly related to infrastructure, but I will encourage you to do it. In about May, many of you may have heard of a program called “Electronic Stability Program ” or Electronic Stability Control” German technology that operates with the ABS system which makes the brakes on the car far safer, depending on the order that the computer tells it to do it, 20-30% reduction in fatality crashes. That has enormous potentials in a State like Queensland, run off crashes are big things.

The good news is from September this year, Holden and every model of Commodore will now have it as standard. I noticed Toyota didn’t avail themselves of the opportunity with their new Camry. I believe, Ford will probably do it, but I have not heard officially, with all their Falcon models. Queensland Transport and Main Roads have taken a decision that all cars we buy will have ESP available and that class will only be ESP cars. In other words, if the Commodore is the only six cylinder car that has ESP, then we will buy all Commodores. If other manufacturers don’t like it because they don’t put a value on ESP, then bad luck to them. If re-elected I will be writing to you as partners of ours, asking you to consider that in your fleet buying. The Federal Government can make design laws but that can take some years to happen. I think with people power and purchasing power you can make it a far safer fleet for your drivers as we can for your staff. I will be encouraging you to think about that, but as I said to you in September this year Holden has ensured that all Commodores will have that for it. Although seatbelts and airbags reduces the severity of an impact, ESP can in many cases stop the crash in the first place so you save in relation to insurance premiums, damage plus excesses because you can actually avoid a crash in the first place, let alone the injury. I invite you to work with us in relation to that in the future.

I turn to regional commitments $2.5billion in rail infrastructure, rolling stock and ports to manage the growth in demand for coal. The demand for coal will increase by 41% between 04/05 and 09/10. In 1988 Queensland Rail celebrated hauling the 100 million tonnes of coal in a year; I think this year I think it is 170 million tonnes in the current financial year.

In July, we announced the mandate with Atec, Dawson Valley Railway, Industry Funds Management and Xstrata Coal for the so called Southern Missing Link, so they now need to go further with us to put the contract in place for the coal. In fact, I was talking to Jeff Seeney this morning about how much coal was actually out there, and there is an enormous amount of coal out there. Why is that so good? It’s great in itself because it is a job and there are royalties and all that sort of stuff. What it will do, if that is built, what we are planning to do with Queensland Transport is to actually make a dual gauge line, not build a dual gauge but dual gauge capable and then when the Federal Government decide to build a
Brisbane - Melbourne railway, (it will really be a Toowoomba-Melbourne railway in the first instance),
that will be a standard gauge line, then there will be the opportunity to plug that into the Southern
Missing Link which means potentially containers can come out of Gladstone. It is not likely that you will
ship them from Gladstone by sea instead of going to Melbourne, because it is the same cost to take a box
to any port in Australia, but think of this. If you have road transport presently from Melbourne or South
Sydney that needs to go to North Queensland, instead of going all the way up the Pacific Highway, or the
New England Highway and up the Bruce Highway you could possibly send them up by rail all the way to
Gladstone and either take them north or south from there having taking enormous volumes off the road.

This will happen on the back of the coal business; that will set up the business case to build the Southern
Missing Link but by some extra strategic investment we might then be able to encourage that. Once you
have got standard gauge there, you have got relatively inexpensive labour opportunities in councils that
are very keen to get people there, with a lifestyle with relatively cheap land and that offers big
opportunities for those communities located along that stretch. This is a way that we can work together
and I am very excited about doing that. The Northern Missing link is a bit different because I don’t
think there is much between those two lines in terms of industry issues but it’s really a coal only thing up
there.

The Regional Bridge Renewal Program is one that I was really delighted with $350million to replace more
than 470 obsolete bridges. That is important to us, not only because we need to replace old bridges and
we have limited supply of timber and you don’t want to use them on a bridge if you can use them
somewhere else. Some of the timber in the Hornibrook Highway is able to be reused on single one way
bridges, but in any case, this gives us the opportunity to lower high mass limits and remember what I said
to you in the past, that the beauty of the Regional Bridge Renewal Program, instead of replacing one
bridge here, one bridge there, one bridge there, we are replacing them together. What does that do? It
makes it cheaper for the contractors but it then allows us to roll out a system in terms of higher mass
limits on a particular road. Your higher mass limits are only as good as your weakest bridge, so when a
brand new concrete bridge is built with only a timber bridge a kilometre up the road, that doesn’t help
anyone. Why is that good? That then helps primary producers and business who want to get more
efficient use of freight and so the gains go on and on about that. I am pleased to announce the next 15
bridges today, with only two of them in Labor electorates - 6 in Callide so Jeff Seeney has done very
well, 1 in Warrego, 2 in Mirani, 2 in Gladstone, 1 in Darling Downs, 1 in Fitzroy/Callide, 1 in Charters
Towers and 1 in Cook.

I just want to finish off by making one point that I think is really worthwhile making in terms of whether I
think we should be considering things for the future. 64% of Australians live in capital cities. Not that I
am not interested in talking about capital cities, but the figure is much, much higher in urban centres.
Of course you have Toowoomba here, but a whole string of them up the Coast and indeed, further inland.
I think one of the real problems we have at the moment, is the federally exited policy.

Once upon a time there was discussion about the role of Federal Governments in relation to urban
communities. That simply does not exist any more. The original design of the electric train that Joe
introduced into Brisbane in 1978 was financed by the Whitlam Government. The Building Better Cities
Program allowed the standard gauge line to the Port of Brisbane. There have been a whole lot of
programs that have done that. I do think we need to encourage our Federal colleagues on both sides,
because I don’t think it should be a political debate, the issues in relation to urban living, more. The
reason that matters is because so many of us in rural communities are dependent upon what happens in
those urban communities in terms of their efficiency and productivity in service centres.

I’ll give you this example. If we can build a road that cuts ten minutes off a journey, that’s twenty
minutes a day, five times a week, that’s almost 1 ½ hour a week. That’s a significant saving to people,
for the self employed to earn more money, or you can spend more time with your family. But you know
when there was those big arguments about cutting the 40 hour week, 38 hour week, 35 hour week, by a
couple of projects you can do that, and you can do that with out costing people any money. The benefit
is there for ever. It doesn’t have to be paid for next year like a tax cut does. We all need to encourage
all levels of government more and more to take a systems approach to what we build, what we can build,
and what the benefits of that will be.

I mentioned before about the high mass limits and the systems approach that we can do with the
Regional Bridge Program. That is an example of the things we can do. I have spoken to you before at
previous conferences about the rail run up the coast of Queensland that can improve the economics of rail, less vehicles on the Bruce Highway, safer for the communities, more inclination of people wanting to do business up there. I spoke to you all about the Southern Missing Link. What we need to encourage people to do in all levels of government is to look at the systems of what we can do. It’s not just building a road; it’s what forays from doing it. What is the benefit for commerce? What is the benefit for the community?

Thanks for having me here. As you know there is an Election Campaign on at the moment. I hope that I am re-elected, that’s up to the people of my electorate; whether the Labor Government is re-elected is up to the people of Queensland; whether I am a Minister or not is up to Caucus and what job I do is up to the Premier. Having said all that, I tremendously have enjoyed being Transport Minister over the last few years. I want to thank my departments for the wonderful support they have given me it has been a pleasure to work with them, their dedication, their professionalism, their hard work.

I also want to thank yourselves I really have enjoyed working with all of you. We may have had one or two arguments along the way, but I tell you what are one or two arguments against 200-300 great stories? To actually go out to your communities and see the enthusiasm of your workforce, of your communities has been wonderful. We are enjoying great economic times in Australia at the moment and to see people make the best of those good economic times, working together to make them even better so that if in the future things are not as good as they are now, that at least we have made some hard decisions, some sensible decisions to make it even better for our kids and our grandkids.

Thanks very much.
Address: State Local Government and Planning Update

Hon Desley Boyle MP
Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning & Women

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. I am really pleased to be here. I have clearly already made a mistake this morning. I was gossiping outside and drinking free coffee from the State Government, on the government stand and I should have been in here listening to that previous presentation. I came in on the end of it. I could have got some good tips.

I am being particularly troublesome in my electorate of Cairns at the moment for the Cairns City Council. I saw David Farmer somewhere last night and I had to duck behind a pillar in case he grabbed me. I have got about 300 corflutes all over the streets of Cairns and some of them may not be exactly in the right places. It is a dreadful business isn’t it? Some of you know what it is like. Fancy driving around your patch, looking at pictures of yourself by the side of the road. It is a dreadful thing that we do to get these wonderful jobs in the end.

Of course the problem is, as I was saying to the media, when some people were complaining about the visual pollution and the danger to driving, by being distracted by these signs and others were busy drawing black teeth on them or painting, turning us into pirates and so on. People were all woof woof woof in the first week of the campaign. I was doing some interviews on other things with the local TV station and they said to me, well there are complaints and you have been in this business a long time and don’t you agree that the signs should be, if not pulled down, limited and got out of the way a whole lot more? I was busy saying, nonsense, have a bit of a sense of humour, it’s only a couple of weeks, and we all do it, if you don’t like them, don’t look at them. As I said that, from a big tree above me, a bird went splat right down the shoulder and put me right in my place, just in case I thought was getting too big for the boots. I think the lesson actually from that is that the environment wins every time. We might come back to that a little bit later.

May I recognise the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathered and pay my respects to their families? I recognise also some very important people who are with us today, that is pretty much everybody, but particularly including Cr Paul Bell, Greg Hallam as the leaders of the LGAQ; Howard Hobbs is here, or certainly was with us last night and will be again with the conference later today, the shadow minister, singing along he was last night too. I was going to keep a bit of an eye to see if I could spot him on the dance floor. In order to see whether Howard might be dancing I went up there and pretended to have a good time and danced around myself but I didn’t notice him.

May I also recognise Cr Di Thorley, a courageous Mayor, we all know that, who has provided tremendous leadership in this area of Queensland and this is one of her successes over the years in terms of community projects. May I also recognise Cr Tony Mooney, the president of the Urban Local Government Association, Vince Mundraby from Yarrabah, the president of the Aboriginal Local Government Association, the Australian Women’s Local Government Association Queensland President Judy Peters and not at all to be forgotten that organisation on the rise in terms of oomph, the Local Government Manager’s Association and Gary Stephenson in particular who is the president; to all Mayors, councillors and council staff it is lovely to be with you.

I do want to chat with you about what is still on the agenda. Where we the State Government, whoever is in State Government and Local Government need to go next. No doubt the pressure that you are under is going to continue. It is not going to go away. The demands, the expectations for services, for accountability for you to somehow keep the rates steady while you provide more services, plan for the future, get the infrastructure such as water and sewerage in place is just going to continue. That dynamic means the world of Local Government is going to stay tough and pressured. There is no doubt about that. It is in my view, tougher than it has ever been before, much tougher. The scrutiny of the media is greater than it’s ever been before and your community is much more competent in various ways at complaining or engaging or demanding from Local Government. They are much less accepting, they are keeping a close eye. Heaven help you if you start doing things they don’t like, they are going to make their views known to you and very clearly so. That makes the world of Local Government, certainly pressured, and certainly difficult.
It does mean, therefore, if you accept that, that a lot of what you are doing with your decision making is striking a balance. A balance between doing the job that a lot of people have elected you to do and that they think this is what you are there to do. For example worrying about those pot holes, making sure the library is open at the right hours, fixing up the play equipment in the city’s park when it is looking a bit run down, being there for those important functions around the community. That is what still I would guess most residents in local government areas think that you are about, keeping a good order on the run down, being there for those important functions around the community. That is what still I would strive for.

I notice that LGIS is here and that they are hopefully on the program. They do provide a good way of assisting you with your major capital works spending, making sure you are getting the financials right, but hopefully helping you also with how you can may be combine forces with other local governments towards securing the services of good companies that can provide that infrastructure for you in the past in such a competitive environment in Queensland where the costs are spiralling and where the competition to get the attention of companies we need to build that infrastructure is huge.

One of the other big pressures that come’s with that is the pressure on you to really have your data in good order. No more is it going to be good enough in the world of local government for each 157 councils to decide what data they will keep and in what form they will keep it. More and more we are needing to make sure that everybody is gathering the same sort of data that is compatible and comparable and that needs to be available through systems that make sense across your own council but also it makes sense and can talk to each other from council to council and may be even council to State Government and vice versa.

I was having a flick through the motions before your Conference and noticed a particularly good one, I thought, depending on your view. I do not want to pre-empt your decision about it, if it has not yet been discussed, that is the motion from Johnstone Shire Council and may I recognise Neil Clarke and Joanne Stott. I know they are both here from Johnstone Shire, I don’t know if other councils are. If you are to say which council has had the toughest time this year, there would be no doubt that Johnstone would be on the top of the list. They have none the less done some wonderful work in terms of disaster recovery and their motion particularly relates to data systems that will really work and will inform a response should a disaster occur. That will allow a centralised tracking of what has happened on a particular property, what different kinds of works need to be done, whose doing them, with what program so that there can be a much more coordinated and informed response via a good data management system. I hope you all will consider that in a positive frame of mind.

I might talk to you for a moment; it reminded me in looking at the motions before you, that there are quite a lot there in relation to the natural environment and natural resources as there should be. You are major managers of our natural resources. There are those who still say to me, it’s a bit of pity in putting environment, local government and planning together. I still say in reply that you are wrong. It is a unique opportunity, well I hope it won’t be unique, maybe it could even go on, but it has been at least a special opportunity to have the chance to put planning and environment closer together in Queensland than they have been. Regardless of whether or not they are at State Government level, I encourage you in your councils to do it that way. If we have really good environmental plan, it becomes easy by having it up front, knowing what our natural resources are, what our bio diversity area is, what are the green areas that must be set aside and looked after, how we are preserving the integrity of our environment. Having answered those questions in your council area, in our areas of responsibility they are picked up in the planning scheme and it is legible and clear for everyone, instead of having what we still have too much of EPA running behind, trying desperately to say, be careful, don’t do that, be careful of this and being a kind of nagging voice too far down the track. We need the environment built in to our planning in the first place informing where we go, rather than being a kind of nuisance add on at the end.

I did see here last night, two very important councillors, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor from Douglas Shire Council. I don’t know if many of you would have noticed but they have had, and have just brought in, as
a council, their new Integrated Planning Act scheme. It has been as difficult a scheme as you could possibly imagine, in a very diverse shire, with very different interests all the way from the Daintree, to cane farms, to the development and glamorous Mecca that is Port Douglas and everything else in between. They have done an excellent job of steering some road down the middle that is sensitive and responsive to and protective of the environment while allowing development and yet keeping some controls on it.

It is really hard, and it is only going to get harder while I am giving you this big heavy news. You know it I saw it in your motions. You have got a policy position particularly to follow further, with the State Government about climate change and the impacts particularly on coastal communities. For the next term of the State Government, that’s a major issue that through the local government and planning portfolio, as well as through some other portfolios - natural resources and mines, environment certainly, state development even, housing even. Local Government and the State are going to need to have some very serious discussions and make some joint arrangements.

Whilst I was flicking through, I did notice other wonderful motions too, you have got some really good things to debate. On a different topic in terms of the skills shortages in Charters Towers and wanting to talk about Mining Companies and apprentices. I endorse their direction in that regard.

On the planning story, where are you up to? You are doing pretty well, do you realise that? 84 planning schemes as of 1 July had received State Government approval. 84 out of the 123 IPA schemes that have to been in place, so two thirds of the way there. On 1 July another 20 schemes are expected to be in place by the end of next month, so they are coming in thick and fast. There is only about five or six that are really dragging the chain and we are all doing our best to assist them to get them in place. We need then of course, to get on with the priority infrastructure plans. The Department and I have recognised that you haven’t been given enough guidance as to how exactly you need to do that. We haven’t modelled for you the way to make that a much easier process. There are some pilot programs to get some models, if you like, to get some priority infrastructure plans in local government areas of the State under way.

You know the IPA discussion paper is out there. I am pretty pleased with it, I would have to say. It’s a good discussion paper, it’s thorough, but it is thick and weighty, not so much necessarily in terms of the numbers of pages, but in terms of the numbers of serious suggestions for ways that we can make your planning schemes more compatible, much more legible for non planners to understand, much smoother in terms of timely management of development applications or even of planning scheme amendments and much better and clearer ways of dealing with community concerns, hopefully as early as they arise. Being able to deal with them well, and having them managed and fixed if you like. Community views are taken into account and informing development without the need for consternation and protest, lawyers, planning and environment courts further down the track. I do encourage you to take some time to have a look at that Discussion Paper and make sure that you are giving us your comments.

For the next term of Government there is no doubt we need to do more on regional planning. That is coming at us from various angles. That is coming at us in terms of the experience, SEQ has had with the SEQ Regional Plan, which I think is one of the greatest achievements of the Beattie Government, I would have to say to you. It may not be perfect, but it is a very good plan, a balanced plan. I am concerned during this Election Campaign, there is some discussion, reported by the media, so I am presuming that it is correct, that the Coalition may be talking about opening up the boundaries of the plan of calling in to question some of the areas we have set aside for Green Space and I hope Howard Hobbs will address that with you in his presentation this afternoon. I would from my own point of view, warn against it, and encourage you all in your own areas to take your ability to plan wisely, very seriously indeed.

Understandably those that are developers will all want to build as much as they can, that is their business. That is quite fine there is nothing wrong with that. That doesn’t mean with the cash registers ringing, the dollar signs in our eyes we should rush at it unwisely. We don’t have to in the State of Queensland, we have got huge growth and it is spreading out around Queensland. It is really important that yes, you welcome opportunities for development and growth, but that you consider them wisely, that you make sure that they are going to be in good order in terms of the council’s ability to provide infrastructure, sensible planning, impacts on community, lifestyle and of course impacts on the environment.
The development industry, individually, but particularly through peak bodies like the Property Council and the UDIA say to me, we don’t expect open slather, we will ask for it, but we don’t expect it. What we do want from the State Government, from Local Government is clarity, what can we do and where can we do it? What we want then from you is to deal with us quickly, so we know. If you are going to say no, say no, don’t doodle around for a year or 18 months and call for this, call for that and not come clean. Tell us what we can do, be clear and be certain. I think that is fair enough on their part as demands, I don’t think it is fair enough for us as people in government to give them open slather and not protect that balance in our community.

They are some of the things still on the list that have to be done in this next term of State Government in cooperation with Local Government. A lot of other things are still in train too. We are making some good progress in terms of Aboriginal councils transitioning to full Local Government status. We have learned lots from it. You may be interested to know that the key problem for most of the Aboriginal councils in terms of them delivering the same program, the same standards as other councils is getting good quality staff. In fact their problems are not much different to the problems that many of you have too.

The Island councils of course are coming closer to deciding on their model for full Local Government status and we should expect that to be sorted by the end of this year. You would know that there is some electoral reforms to come, following substantially from the Gold Coast CMC inquiry, but some also following from the Department’s work and consultation with you and the broader community after the last Local Government election.

We have the PINs Discussion Paper out their now giving councils on the spot fines for building offences and I would expect your comments to be more in terms of finessing how we go about it rather than whether we go about it. I hope you will agree that is going to make it clearer and quicker for you all to take action should there be building starting at five o’clock in the morning in a residential neighbourhood, or whatever kinds of fences that you do need as you have told us are more effective and immediate way of dealing with such offences.

We do need to do more still to encourage women in Local Government on the elected member side but also to move up through the system into seeing your officers positions and to eventually have a higher proportion, I would hope of Local Government managers.

I think that some of the changes that are going on in my Department are welcomed. I don’t think it, I know it, and I hear it from you all. Michael Kinnane and his team are doing a great job in leading the Department into a more responsive mentality style of Local Government; making sure they are available, know your councils, know what is going on, get some best practice models in place to guide you with the changes ahead as well as advocate on your behalf. Michael is on holidays, sort of, this week. He has been on holidays, sort of, for the last three or so weeks. Calling a State Election in the middle of his holidays hasn’t helped him. Irresistibly he has rung Phil and me and others from around the country, saying “I just thought of this, I just want to make sure this has happened” and so on. He will actually be back at work next week and sends his regards. We have the Department here in good force, if any of you don’t know that and need to speak with them.

I would like to finish up with a little bit in the way of some reminiscence I suppose. What has been the best part of being the Local Government Minister in the last two and a half years? The worst part is that I have gone so fast, I haven’t had time, as much as I would have liked too, to stop and enjoy it, to smell the roses along the way. Every now and then it hits me, what a great job this has been and how lucky did I get. After the Premier called me the last time, after the election; he calls people in and says, you are not allowed to tell anybody, but he discusses which ministry you should have. I wasn’t in any position to say great when he said Local Government and Planning. We didn’t know about the environment portfolio at that stage, but I went out, the eyes were wide. A few people come up to me and said you have got Local Government and Planning, when it became public and you could see they were saying “Oh well”. I thought bugger you sweetheart.

Do you know there are still people in the State Government that don’t know how special Local Government and Planning is? Do you know they have not woken up to the fact that the Department of Local Government and Planning, is not like the Department of Transport or like Health, as hard as that
might be, or Police? It is a whole level of government. The breadth of it is huge. The importance of it is tremendous. Don’t you ever, when some State or even Commonwealth Government people look down their noses in any way at you, let them get away with it. You are running a whole level of government closest to the people and you are doing a magnificent, not perfect, but a magnificent job most of the time.

One of the things I have loved about it, I have to tell you is like last night, is the Local Government conferences, the get togethers and the networks. The conference dinners are legendary, have always been. I remember them from my own years and last night was no exception. These conferences, don’t you let your residents get narky about the money for you to attend, these are really important. The business you do is tremendous. It is how you find out what everybody else is up to, what the game is, what the pace is, what you are not doing, what you should be doing, what you are doing well. It is how you get the energy again to go back to provide some more leadership and stretch your resources, your efforts, your council that bit further. There is so much that is going on well.

Might I compliment you and I mean it absolutely sincerely, certainly to the LGAQ, but particularly to all of you on the progress of SSS. When I had said bravely some time ago, we have got to have some reform, doing nothing is not an option it would be best if Local Government came up with the answers. Instead of having as has happened in some other States, where the State Government has decided, whack here you are, these are the changes that are going to be made. What about if you take the leadership, what about if you tell us what changes have to happen. The LGAQ have sensibly said yes, that should be in an informed fashion with the proper studies and the facts on the table. You are going great guns at it and I think it is an absolute compliment to you that we are in within reach of Local Government making its own decisions, leading its own reform in the State of Queensland. I do encourage you to continue but compliment you. At my last knowledge, which is a few weeks old, there were some 97 councils lining up in 15 different groups to work on the SSS program.

Coming to the end, I need in a sense to say, hasn’t it been wonderful? But I need to apologise. I got my staff to count up how many councils have I actually seen. I had this ambition that I would get to all of them, the whole 157 and I didn’t make it. I got to 95 councils, which is not too bad I suppose. Of those, a large number of them are in the Torres Strait through those Islands but there were some still on the main land in Queensland that I didn’t visit. That is not too bad I suppose. There were however, very many of the councils that I didn’t directly visit that I met in deputations in Brisbane or elsewhere at conferences or in towns around the State. There were only 20 councils that I didn’t meet with at all and I am sorry to whoever those 20 councils are, I have got my staff to keep a list. If life turned out as I would like it and I was back as your Minister those 20 councils would be on the top of my list for the next term of Government.

Ladies and gentlemen it has indeed my great privilege to be your Minister. Whatever happens next I will always be your staunch advocate, you can know that for sure.

The protocol Stage Two is where I want to finish up. It is an excellent protocol. We were about to have our first major meeting when the Premier decided to call the Election so it hasn’t commenced in that sense. It is an excellent protocol. There are those that have said we shouldn’t need it, if the State Government had done the right thing by the Stage One Protocol, if you considered Local Government, you consulted Local Government, you were genuine about working in collaboration then we wouldn’t have needed Stage Two. That is true if we were perfect you wouldn’t have, if you were perfect we wouldn’t have. That would never be so.

The State Government perspective, for a lot of state members, back benchers, those that become Ministers and those that don’t have a lot of connection with Local Government; their busy schedules, their pre occupation from a State perspective is going to mean that from time to time there will be state departments, whether through public servants or their political leaders, who make mistakes, who don’t understand, who don’t consider enough the world of Local Government and their impacts. That is why we need the Protocol, the LGAQ, the Urban Local Government Association, the Aboriginal Local Government Association, and all of you as individuals to say “hang about, you should have thought of this, you should have come to us, and what about the Protocol? And we better have some meetings”. That relationship is so important, not perfect, but you are right, we need to make sure we aim for that ideal of collaboration at all times, proper consultation, proper coordination. I have to say to you at times, local government doesn’t understand the demands and perspective of State Government and you
too, are obliged, surely, to do your part. In any case I have no doubt that our new protocol arrangements will work very well in the next stage and your local government minister should, and will be, I hope, right in the forefront of making that happen.

Thank you very much for your tremendous support and friendship. It has been a great two and a half or so years with you all and I look forward to knowing you all again in the years to come.

Thank you.

Address: Worklife Balance/Relationships for Elected Members

Ms Terry Hawkins
Consultant

Due to copyright laws this speech was unable to be published.
Good morning everybody, I am sorry, for us that is, that we have to follow Wickety Wak. I am not sure if we can live up to it. A big thank you to the organiser’s of this conference. The last time I had anything to do with the Local Government Conference, I was a media officer, so I was a little bit busy and the conference was held here in the City Hall in Toowoomba, many years ago. Thank you to the organisers for inviting us along today to share the results of some research which we are reasonably proud of and very happy that the people of Toowoomba contributed too.

Without further ado, I would like to take you through some background just to start. My name is Dianne Jones, as you have heard a lot about us I will not go in to any more detail I would like to introduce my colleague Alison Feldman.

Last year the Federal Government flagged significant changes to Australia’s media ownership laws. Changes that would allow a single media company to own a television station, two radio stations and a newspaper in the same market. Australia is already one of the most concentrated media landscapes in the world. For example, four major media companies control about 80 percent of the newspaper titles in Australia.

According to the Federal Communications Minister, Senator Helen Coonan, the new media laws will make our media groups much more globally competitive and much of the coverage of the implications of these new laws has focused on the big end of town, with the likes of what might happen to Rupert Murdoch’s News Ltd or the Packer family’s PBL or the Fairfax Companies publications such as the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and the Financial Review. But Australia, as I am sure I don’t need to tell any of you, also has a very large rural and regional media market base.

Senator Coonan has given several assurances since 2005 that a diversity test would protect diversity and maintain those local media and their content in rural and regional markets. How would this happen? There would, she says, be a rule ensuring that at least four separately owned media companies operate in a city such as Toowoomba. What does this have to do with local councils and therefore yearly elections?

Well, who owns what in metropolitan, regional and rural media we believe is important and certainly relevant to the people who live in those areas. People who elect local government representatives, people who aspire to be local government representatives, and of course, people who are local government representatives. Ideally a range of media with different owners would provide a diversity of information, sources and view points about the people, the personalities and the politics of local government. If there are changes in media ownership laws, that could affect the coverage of councils like yours, which your conference theme says is ‘Closest To the People’. Changes in media ownership laws might also affect how people, who are seeking information in times of elections about candidates, receive those messages but it could also affect how people who are aspiring to local government office put their message in front of the voters, and this is what we will be talking about for the next fifteen minutes or so.

Our research has looked at what information sources voters’ use in the lead up to a local government election to help them decide who they are going to vote for. We were interested in answering that question because of what happened in the 2004 elections. Your Association, for example, reported that there was a very high turn over rate in councillors across the state. It was linked in part to greater media and public interest in council issues so our research focused on Toowoomba, because here three sitting councillors lost their seats.

In Toowoomba there were 33 contenders for eight councillor seats and three candidates for the mayoralty. Several candidates got minimal coverage in the local media; many promoted themselves, some were spending, we here anecdotally anyway, up to $20,000 on their campaign. One of the most
novel approaches, we think, was sitting Cr Sue Englart's commercial which was broadcast on local radio station Sea FM aimed at voters. The target audience for Sea FM is 18-34 year olds. Apologies to Sue, we weren’t able to warn her in advance but I am sure she is a good sport. Sue Englart was re-elected she got 20,000 votes, and then her ad went on to win a major radio industry award in 2004. You could say it worked twice over. With media coverage and ads, of various shapes, sizes, duration and across various media, the media and candidates must have thought there was an audience to reach out there. We wanted to find out if they were right.

We surveyed around about 500 of Toowoomba’s 52,000 eligible voting people and we asked them about which media they used to get information from and also whether the media they used influenced their decision about who they were going to vote for. Let’s have a look at our results.

The responses tell us the most popular medium for information about the local council election was the newspaper. The newspaper was used by almost 40% of the respondents in the survey. However, a significant number of Toowoomba voters took what we are calling ‘bypass’. One third turned to non mainstream media for their information, saying that they used other sources. For television and radio, the news is not so good. Between them they couldn’t reach 20% of our respondents. A stand out result here is the degree to which voters avoided main stream media in seeking out information. Since other sources scored such a high rate of use, we thought it was good to have a look at what those other sources are. We find that more than two thirds of voters who used other sources, looked to brochures, leaflets and letter box drops to get their information from. The next most popular source of information was acquaintances and word of mouth, and that was used by around 1/5th of participants. The less popular sources of information were ‘How to Vote’ cards and direct contact with the candidate.

Now it is all very well to look at what media people use or do not use but candidates who want to get their message across to voters shop around for media that target particular age groups. I suggest this may have been the motive for Sue’s ad on Sea FM. She got an ad produced which was targeted at 18-35 year olds. Here is what we found as far as age groups are concerned and their consumption.

There were six age groups that we asked people to tell us how old they were. We divided them into 18-24 year olds and we see that other sources of information that is brochures, pamphlets, letter box drops, direct contact with candidates or talking with acquaintances about candidates was the chief source of information that was used by 18-24 year olds. For 25-34 year olds we see a tie between the local newspaper and other sources. In both instances, in 18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds, roughly one third used other sources or in the second category the older group they used the newspaper and other sources. Moving on to the next lot of voters, the 35-44 year olds and we see that the newspaper is a clear preference for this age group. Just over half of voters in this age group looked to the newspaper as their principle source of information. For 45-54 year olds, it is also the newspaper which is the most popular, again around the half way mark as far as its use by that percentage of voters is concerned. In the older age group 55-64 year olds, again a clear preference for the newspaper and the same for those aged 65 and above.

In summary, when we look at the most preferred media by age group, we can see a clear preference for the local newspaper by people who are aged 35 years and over. However, in the younger age groups, particularly in the under 25’s group, which of course includes some people who were voting in a local government election for the first time, are the sources that appear to be a force to be reckoned with.

We know that the local newspaper still gets used by most age groups. That is what the data showed us. We thought it was really worthwhile exploring further, what happened to those other traditional media? The newspaper is not the only media that has been used and frequently. We tallied up the data and as the table shows, you can see the favourites by age groups and the media less likely to be used by each age group. We see some surprising results for candidates who might be considering using more traditional media. According to these results, it might be folly for example to try to get to older voters through using TV advertisements or news story. These results also seem to explode the myth that young people embrace technology. Look at the internet usage among those aged 18-25 and indeed those aged 54 years and under.

Earlier we recorded a high usage of other sources by voters, one third of them. We thought it was worthwhile unfolding the story within this one third, so that we could understand it a little more. As this table tells us, other sources were heavily used by young voters and middle aged voters. Older voters, to
our surprise, were much less likely to use things such as brochures, ‘how to vote’ cards, direct contact with candidates and word of mouth to inform their vote.

I would like to share with you another set of results about what impact the media had on voters’ decisions in 2004. We asked this question because the media are often touted as having a major role, or playing a major role in election outcomes, and as I mentioned earlier, we know that some council hopefuls, in Toowoomba anyway, spent up to $20,000 on their campaign. This raises the question of what influence, if any, did local media have on Toowoomba voters decisions?

From an overall view we can look closely again by virtue of age groups. In keeping with the overall result we see one third of voters in the 18-24 year old bracket, claimed that the media did not influence their vote. Remember, this is the same age group that preferred other sources as their chief source of information about election candidates, so this result is probably not all that surprising in that context. For 25-34 year olds we find that almost half of the voters in this age group say that the media had a small influence on their choice of candidates on Election Day. Now, this is the age group where the most preferred information sources were a tie between the newspaper and other sources of information. For 35-44 year olds, for the first time we see a high percentage of voters who say that the media had a large influence on their vote. From a candidate’s point of view, I think that raises that interesting possibilities. For 45-54 year olds, this is the age group with the highest number of voters whose decisions about who to support were influenced by media coverage; or you might say it is the age group with the highest number of people who actually admitted that they were influenced by the media. Almost three quarters of this group say the media influenced their voting decisions. For 55-65 year olds, in this age group we see so far the highest percentage of people who claim that the media did not influence their vote.

So does media influence perhaps decline as age increases? Let’s have a look at the over 65’s and based on this data, we might conclude that this answer is yes. This group of older voters, it seems, is the most resistant to media coverage when it comes to choosing who to vote for. Now the cynical amongst us might say with age comes wisdom.

For those candidates in local council elections who feel the media will substantially change voter opinion, be it good or bad publicity, these results tend to tell a different story. Now there is also the chance that voters were not being entirely truthful with us in answering questions on how much media coverage influenced their vote, but there is definitely a trend worth considering.

Also worth a second look are those voters who said the media had no influence on their vote. Again these people may not have been entirely honest with us. If they were, they are telling us that 1/3 of them, irrespective of their age, are impervious to, or take no notice of the media when they decide on whom they are going to vote for. The hardest to get to and to influence are the seasoned voters, those in the over 65’s.

As we come full circle, we feel our study has some important findings for various stakeholders in local council elections. First, what respondents have told us suggests that local mainstream media, irrespective of who owns them, may need to have a close look at their performance as providers of information that shapes public decision making. Secondly, if you are a candidate, there are different conceptions of how to reach voters with your campaign message. The media is not the only way to go, and some mass media, for example the radio, seems less worthwhile than others, particularly for specific age groups. Third, other sources, those alternatives to the traditional media allow candidates for the first time to think about ways they can communicate with their people, using messages that they have more control over. You can design your own brochure, pamphlet, all of that information so you have more freedom to shape the message in a way in which it reaches your publics. You don’t have to necessarily go through an editor or a journalist or have a strong news angle to everything that you do in your campaign to reach your publics. Candidates have a new independence, so it seems. I would like to challenge you and think ahead a little bit further. Perhaps pose a couple of controversial questions that you might like to consider.

I think that we are at a time when we need to consider modern technology, what is there and what might work? As our study has shown us we need to approach modern technology with a different lense, so to speak. Our perceptions were that the young voter would have been the very active voter on the internet searching for information, yet we found it was the much older voter who was using that median. While
we may have some general understanding on how people use new technology, we also have to place that along side how they use it to gather information to inform their voting decision. That is a very different way of looking at how people use the media and of course a whole new range of technologies that we have not yet explored such as SMS messaging, logging and so forth.

Reaching the seasoned, the jaundiced voter, it appears is one of the greatest challenges. They are less influenced by the traditional approaches that have been used in campaign messages; they are less likely to be influenced in their vote, in the ways that have been used in the past. We have to look at them with fresh eyes, ways of connecting with them. Perhaps the most controversial question I shall leave with you is that do candidates really need media managers? Do we need to focus all our energy on those traditional media that we have been using in the past for which media managers have great expertise? Or have we moved to a new era where you might need your media manager to work with the media in the uncontrolled news stories that might happen or do you need a specialist who can help you craft those messages in this new era of liberation that have been invented for you. These and other questions we all ponder a little while longer.

We thank you for the opportunity for sharing our story. I think it has revealed some interesting findings that have turned some of our conceptions upside down for a little while.

Address: Seeing Like a State

Professor James C. Scott, Professor of Politics, Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

Due to copyright laws this speech was unable to be published.
Size, Shape and Sustainability Report Back and Discussion

Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ
Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen.

The LGAQ conducted a Special Conference in May 2005 on the future Size, Shape and Sustainability of Queensland Local Government. The SSS Special Conference Communiqué states that, “LGAQ is to report to the Annual Conference in 2006 on the progress of the Size, Shape and Sustainability reform agenda”.

So here we are. The next two hours will provide a complete overview on the progress of the triple S agenda. You will hear from your colleagues, your association, professional peak bodies, state government partners and a couple of the review facilitators.

Most importantly, we have allowed 30 mins, for you to engage with us about your thoughts - good, bad and indifferent on the process. I know Local Government has strong feelings about SSS, so I am expecting you all to participate.

I will act as Chair for this session. But before we kick off, I think I might take this opportunity to provide you with some thoughts:

- Queensland Local Government has the most independent and well resourced Local Government sector in the nation.

- However, sustainability is an issue for all Councils, from the smallest rural shires, to the largest urban city Councils. In fact, sustainability is a national issue for councils. Just look at the work that has been completed or is underway in South Australia, New South Wales and West Australia.

- As leaders of local communities, YOU have the responsibility to consider not only the current needs of your communities, but also their long term needs.

- The Association initiated the SSS project in response to the pressures and demands facing the sector, but also to ensure that any potential structural changes would be determined and controlled by Councils.

- The LGAQ’s Policy Statement reflects this principle by way of its position on “no forced amalgamations”.

- SSS is based on the premise that YOU will be responsible for key decisions and ultimately the adoption of any agreed outcomes and changes to be implemented.

- In line with this commitment, YOU agreed at the special conference that any reviews should only be undertaken on the basis of an agreed framework that among other things:
  - Is open and transparent
  - Provides for the objective assessment of the review options identified by the parties
  - Is not based on a preconceived outcome

- That means, everything is on the table during the review process - the outcomes of the sustainability assessments, the QTC financial reviews and any other information relevant to the review.

- Additionally, YOU agreed to investigate the merits of ALL options, including amalgamations.

- At the end of the day, I think you’ll agree that the process needs to stand up to scrutiny, it needs to be comprehensive, it needs to be rigorous, it needs to be credible and it needs to be fair to all the participating councils.

- I believe Queensland Local Government can achieve this!
We will hear later about the number of Councils participating in the SSS review process - needless to say, it has exceeded all our expectations.

Although we have a long way to go, to get to this point has been a tremendous effort, and on this note I would like to publicly thank;

1. The members of the Sustainability Reform Advisory Group consisting of the Department of Local Government and Planning, the Queensland Treasury Corporation, the University of Southern Queensland, the Aboriginal Local Government Association of Queensland, the Local Government Managers Association and the LGAQ.

2. The Queensland Treasury Corporation for their commitment to provide Financial Sustainability Reviews free of charge to all Councils participating in SSS - a truly valuable input to the SSS process and in dollar terms, approximately $1 million worth of work.

3. The Office of Economic and Statistical Research for their contributions to the QTC financial sustainability review process.

4. The Local Government Managers Association for their continual participation, contribution and words of wisdom.

5. The officers at LGAQ, Greg Hallam, Greg Hoffman, Simone Talbot and Bryce Hines.

6. The Department, especially Minister Boyle for her continued support and commitment of $25M under the Regional Collaboration and Capacity Building Program to assist Councils conduct their SSS reviews.

7. And of course, YOU, Local Government, for taking the first step and agreeing to commence the process.

We thought to kick off the review today we would get you to look at a video on size, shape and sustainability.

That was a snapshot of what has been happening from a number of people who have been involved, certainly in making sure the process is delivered you asked for it to be delivered.

We thought after having a look at the video we having a look at those perspectives of those people who were part of that video, we might go through some of the review, their perspectives and we asked for people to come forward to give us their view on how things are moving forward. We have Cr Tom Woods, Mayor of Waggamba Shire Council representing the Southern Downs Review Group, Mr James Gott, Chief Executive Officer of Dalrymple Shire Council representing the North Queensland Review Group and Mr Tony Klein, Executive Officer, Maranoa and District Regional Organisation of Councils representing the MADROC Review Group of Councils. We asked them to give us a presentation on how they have seen the SSS process move forward from May 2005. I will ask Cr Tom Woods, the Mayor of Waggamba to come forward and give his perspective so far.

**Cr Tom Wood, Mayor, Waggamba Shire Council**

Thanks for the opportunity to speak at this. I didn’t think I would have any more to offer than people in the audience but I thought I would follow on from where we were with that initial conference back in May last year. Just a quick brief on where we were and why we would have been included. For those that know Waggamba is a doughnut council down on the border. Doughnut councils have been a topic of conversations for some period of time in Local Government. There have been good stories and bad about how little doughnut councils get on. Ours is a case of doughnut councils getting on. There have been times when the relationship might not have been as good but over recent years it has been very healthy and we went to that conference to outline some of the things we were doing. It was more in the
resource sharing area that we were speaking and just making the point, you can get on if you really want
to and if you put the community ahead of your own egos and own self interest, that is probably the
lesson out of that.

What we had done just prior to that, some 18 months prior, we called on Scott Mead to see what we
could gain from amalgamating and resource sharing. He did a very detailed report and one of the
indicators he used, has been used in this present format. What he did recommend was that we form a
joint steering committee to facilitate resource sharing. We went away after that conference and did just
that. We got our boards, cultural centre board, library committee, we built an indoor sport centre
50/50, and we were sharing a lot of things. A lot of other things were on good will. There wasn’t a
complicated criterion it was just a case of yes we should help, how much, it was if we were using the
facility, then yes we should subscribe.

After the Size Shape and Sustainability Conference we went home and put this Steering Committee
together. We then found resource sharing started to get harder but we proceeded with it. I am making
the point as you go forward don’t think you are going to solve being an independent council by resource
sharing. That is not sharing the services, this is resource sharing. You probably have more things to fall
out about if you are not careful. There a so many things that change, staff changes etc so the resource
sharing changes and you have no say over that. There are so many things you can’t build into when you
start getting into some one else’s patch because you start to build these formalities of where you are
going to build the future. To my mind that is a word of warning from where we have been.

Having come back from that, we said right what we have to do is to try and get whatever change is going
to be made, give ourselves a timeline to try and meet otherwise, if there is no timeline there is no end.
We did that and got ourselves a facilitator. It was more of a case of Goondiwindi and Waggamba talking
along those lines. Joan White of Inglewood spoke to the Minister, and was told to get a group together.
The group of Stanthorpe, Warwick, Inglewood, Goondiwindi and Waggamba got together, we met in
Inglewood, and we all agreed on how we would go about that. We also had a good group of five CEOs,
they got on extremely well. Peter has been the coordinating the CEOs but not the controller, they had a
process of how they would get the facilitator. That then got passed through by all the councils and along
came Simon Smith. We are very pleased with Simon. We have done the initial review stage,
Goondiwindi is done, Waggamba is done, Stanthorpe is done, and I think Warwick and Inglewood is close.

The facilitator has kept in touch with our councils, he has spoken to the staff when he was getting to the
draft stage of the initial review and he has done that with all the councils. At that point, in our case he
has spoken with the two council CEO and Mayors together. He has spoken to individual councils so that
everyone understands the process and once we were happy with the process, happy with the outcome,
we then on two occasions put a report to the community and the CEOs Mayors and facilitator met and
decided that whatever was said from one council would be said by the other council so that we are
delivering the same story, the same outcomes, for the same reasons. Individuals can put their own slant
on it later on if they wish, but it is important that the two councils represent a view that was agreed on.
At the end of the day we want to keep all the communities together.

We are now at that stage, where we are meeting with the comprehensive review staff, just Goondiwindi
and Waggamba because as I said earlier, we are a doughnut council. We have got our issues to deal with,
outside the Public Review, because we are part of that doughnut situation. We have done our Terms of
Reference, we are now applying for funding and we are going to move on to that stage. The other
councils that are not quite there yet, will it is for them to keep up, not for me to tell them what to do,
but at the same token, we owe it to each other to speak with the appropriate Mayors to remind them if
you think their council is lagging behind because at the end of the day, they will delay the whole
process. No one can move forward until they are all there. We have done that, and it’s not done with
any malice, we asked them to get on with it, because at the end of the day it needs to be done. That is
where we are at this stage, and we are looking forward to the comprehensive review and going forward.

What we are looking at under that is major amalgamation, major boundary change, we have had resource
sharing, it is still on the list, we have been through it, I don’t think it will be looked at in depth any
more, but it will be looked at and also a joint enterprise arrangement that we have heard about over the
border. Where do we stand? We stand with a very open mind but by the same token you have to have a
mind and I believe that you must express your mind. We feel that Goondiwindi and Waggamba will be
amalgamated. How do we feel about that? Yes that is where we are going but we have got to involve
the community, the town has got to feel part of that decision and that is the process that will take place. We have spoken to the facilitator about how we will do that and without any interference from council in the first stages, so that people can have their say without being intimidated by the Mayor and councillors.

That is where we are and when people ask me where is it going? That’s what I indicate to them but we are still having the process. That is the doughnut one, but we have the bigger one to go, the review of all those other councils. Whether there is going to be a major boundary change there, we will have a look, if there is a possibility of amalgamation we will have a look at that too. We have got to keep an open mind and what I have got to do and what everybody else must do in this process, I believe, is to keep yourself out of it, its not about your future, it’s what is best for the community because at the end of the day what we must not do, is divide our community, that is the most important thing. A divided community becomes a non functional community and those are the ones that really suffer all because a couple of leaders or a couple of councillors had a bit of a problem with who is going to be the boss or some such thing.

That’s where we are, it’s a great process. I must congratulate the LGAQ on initiating it and also the department. It is well thought out they have done a lot of work on how to score. Are we happy with our scores? Yes we can accept our scores, it’s all fairly self explanatory and it’s a bigger picture. I think what we are probably doing is getting ready for a bigger move later on down the track, and that’s when everything that I have spoken about today will become a little bit more in focus. So we are just getting ready for the next stage, but we had to do this one first.

Mr James Gott, Chief Executive Officer, Dalrymple Shire Council - North Queensland Review Group of Councils

Thank you Cr Bell, thank you to the LGAQ for the invitation. I am employed by Dalrymple Shire Council and Secretary of the North Queensland Review Group of Councils. To provide a brief history. Dalrymple Shire has an area of 70,000 square kms; a population of just fewer than 4,000 people, its northern boundary is extended to the coast meets Cardwell and in the South, south of Mackay. Its economy has been very heavily grounded in beef production and gold mining. There have been some periods when both of those industries have been buoyant, healthy in periods, mostly one or the other have been slightly depressed there have been occasions when they have been quite depressed. Like Goondiwindi and Waggamba, it is described as a doughnut shire with a city of Charters Towers quite within its bounds. Charters Towers has a population of 8-10,000 people in an area of 40,000 square kilometres. I would argue that all of this is a mere geographic bag of Tulle, not a baguette or a sticky bun, however.

Dalrymple Shire is no stranger to the significant structure reform. In 1927 the Rural Commission of local government boundaries was established and it thoroughly examined the region. In 1928 reports on the rural commission were put in place which recommended the amalgamation of Charters Towers City and Dalrymple Shire. Incidentally, that same rural commission recommended the abolition of Gympie. In 1929 the Labor Party got in power and that amalgamation didn’t occur. In the early 90’s Charters Towers City and Dalrymple Shire were again in focus with the EARC Mark I and the EARC Mark II. The PEARC, the Parliamentary Electoral and Administrative Review Commission process did not resolve in amalgamation or structural change.

There is no surprise, therefore, after the review of the National Competition Policy Reforms, the Department of Transport and Regional Services Submission to the Federal Cost Shifting Inquiry, House of Reps Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration Submission and the releases of the 2004 General Assembly concerning reform, that Size Shape and Sustainability question would be entirely relevant to Dalrymple Shire and ergo to our region and to our Regional Organisation of Councils.

As at 14 March, Dalrymple resolved that it would execute a Memorandum of Agreement, together with the other North Queensland ROC members to adopt and progress the SSS Framework. It agreed to use a single consultant as the independent facilitator and to continue to research and develop council’s position relevant to the reform process.

At the ROC Special Meeting towards the end of March 2006, the organisation resolved to appoint an independent review facilitator and to sign an MOA, which of course has been done. Since this time the members of North Queensland ROC, Charters Towers City Council, Burdekin Shire Council, Dalrymple
Shire Council, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Thuringowa City Council and Townsville City Council have pursued the review with quite some vigour.

The review of course, has been used to examine a range of factors including councils improving efficiency, by working more closely to developing smarter solutions to service our communities. Thus far, the review process could be styled as running on two parallel lines. Firstly the evaluation of indicators, other than the Queensland Treasury Corporation Financial Modelling exercise. My view is that the councils have applied themselves to the LGAQ Review Framework methodology so as to derive a scoring rationale and produce a vulnerability opportunities and strength scoring table in a very robust way. The councils’ consideration of the various attendant matters has produced a lively and well informed dialogue which I believe has been and continues to be entirely useful in widening and continuing and furthering management and governance thoughts.

Having spoken to the other ROC members, I formed the view that the process has produced some expected and unexpected benefits. Those benefits might be broadly defined as serving structural and organisational analysis and criticism and in serving a new communications network both individually and between those councils. An identified shortcoming of the framework, however, is that certain limitations appear to the extent that some of the responses are quite limited, occasionally to inclusions which are not intrinsically married and to exclusions which are not in fact discreet. To over simplify that what I mean to say is that the framework adopts some rationale where one could by blonde hair with blue eyes and brown hair with green eyes and not one of the other obvious combinations without having regard to the bald guy with red eyes. However, notwithstanding that criticism I would argue that process has indeed provided an excellent management and governance tool and it will continue so to do.

The second of the parallel tools is to see the population, the analysis and the interpretation of the QTC model. The members of our ROC have been in steady contact with the QTC as to the refinement of the model. I believe that 5-6 versions of the model have been released. The one that Dalrymple has agreed upon and populated is version 1.5. Whilst the complete analysis and interpretation of the model is unfinished, it has also produced some very positive results. In terms of adding a varied perspective of challenging and criticising some of the pre existing views, producing new data all together, the process has had substantial value. The various councils have identified here again, certain limitations or short comings, particularly classification of assets and dealing with the appreciation or otherwise of those assets, however, these limitations I would argue are not sufficiently important so as to destabilise the integrity of the process.

The ROC members have generally spoken very favourably as to that which has can be and almost certainly will be gained from the exercise. Here we are substantially on our way through the review, albeit marginally behind our original schedule. On the balance I would suggest that substantial benefit is there to be gained and will be gained.

On closing, I will use that dreaded word, however. I would observe dramatic structural reform is a highly vexatious and highly emotional issue. We still don’t have convincing much less conclusive data from any of the other jurisdictions including, but not necessarily limited to the NSW experience, Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand and so on. There is a dearth of any real and critical proof that robust structural change has produced substantial and sustaining benefit or otherwise. Any contention that the entire investigational exercise lies within the realm of marginal cost benefit analysis, economies of scale, and tolerable rate levels is only valid if the conventional wisdom as to economics as to those cost benefits analysis holds up. I don’t believe we have any current evidence of that either. I would argue most robustly that any structural change of import must not be measured against a narrow gauge and that the full spectrum of social logics rather must be applied. To put it in Rick Farley’s words, you just can’t dumb it down and God in her infinite wisdom loves variety.

Mr Tony Klein, Executive Officer, Maranoa and District Regional Organisation of Councils - MADROC
Review Group of Councils

When Simone asked me to attend the conference and give a presentation I asked her what do you want me to say? She said to give a presentation from a co-ordinators point of view. I probably can’t add a value to what has been said by the other speakers, but I might give you a perspective from a co-ordinators point of view.
I am actually employed by the Maranoa and District Regional Organisation of Councils as their manager. The Maranoa and District Regional Organisation of Councils, acronym MADROC and I know when our chair Cr Stewart, when we first formed the ROC she was not impressed with that acronym at all, particularly as she was chairing it. But one thing I have learned over the last three or four years as MADROC people have remembered us, it has had its advantages. All seven members of MADROC form the review group, Balonne, Bendemere, Duaringa, Bungil, Murilla, Waroo and Roma Town Council. It is interesting that the three speakers today all have doughnut councils amongst us. The centre of the region is approximately 500km west of Brisbane, with a population of 21,000 people and is expected to grow by only 0.2% over the next 20 years. That is compared to State’s anticipated 1.5% growth over the same period. Our Local Government areas range in population from 1000 to 7000 people. We have an area of 96,000 square kms which is almost half the size of Victoria. When we talk about resource sharing, all that type of thing, we do have some issues there as do many other review groups of councils of this size.

Our economy is heavily reliant on primary production. In fact about 1500 of our regions 2700 enterprises are primary producers. Basically we are geographically big, relatively small in population and rural based. The only thing we really have in common with many of our urban cousins is that the weather is damn dry at the moment.

On top of this those statistics and information, basically I will give you some perspective and highlight some of the things that may come out of the SSS process that might make perfect sense to Maroochydore but might not make perfect sense that all for Mitchell. However, I personally believe whether you are from Thuringowa or Thargomindah, the SSS process is a very sound one. It is just the outcomes that might be different. I would like to commend the Association for the work they have done in relation to the SSS and in particular from a co-ordinator’s point of view, it is a great template to work with. You just basically follow the instruction. It has been very good.

So the history of our SSS Review process. Our group of councils was confirmed in February of this year. Our MOA was signed on 28 March, the independent review facilitator was appointed on 4 May and the QTC engaged by all councils in May as well. Our project plan budget developed and funding was approved on 14 July. Our initial review processed commenced on 17 July. We are well and truly into it, and it is progressing really well.

Just a couple of things that I feel have been important in our process and it depends I suppose where individual councils are in this process, as to whether this will be of any help to you. One of the things that were important in our process was the selection of the independent review facilitator and the process that we used to make that selection. We asked each of our councils to short list their top three, as per the kit, the list of 20 odd in the kit and then we got them to score 3,2, 1 and basically we did it on a big white board and culled it down to the top four selections. We invited each of those four to do a presentation at one of our meetings. Unfortunately two of them couldn’t make it due to work commitments and the two that we did interview were actually our two top picks as well, so we didn’t miss out there. I think it is important we did that, mainly because it gave the opportunity for all the review group of councils to have an opportunity into the input of the selection of those independent review facilitators and I think that is showing some results now.

The other thing that worked reasonably well for us was the independent review facilitator undertook presentations to each of our councillors, not just our CEOs or our Mayors and I think that is a critical point that you need to keep in mind. Ultimately it is the councillors that are going to make some decisions later down the track and I think they need to be comfortable with that independent review facilitator and I think all of those that have had it have given us positive feedback in relation to that.

The other thing that I think has helped us as a review group of councils is the open mindedness of our member councils. I say that genuinely, I know there is always politics involved, but from a co-ordinators point of view I see some really good stuff come out of what we are doing, mainly because people put egos aside and are really going into this process with an open mind and are ready to consider all options. Cr Wood was talking about that before and I think that is absolutely critical. You may have preconceived ideas, but I think it is important that all options are considered.

A couple of things that might slow us down, or hinder us, are the QTC. It is not a QTC issue, it is a council issue. The financial review undertaken by QTC is fairly intense and a fair bit of time and effort is required by the CEO and two staff to input that information. I think QTC are turning it around as quickly
as possible. I think it is probably up to us as councils to make sure we provide that information as quickly as possible because that is really going to be pending on the possible progress of this whole process. Just as an idea, one of our councils commissioned someone to come in and do that work for them. That way, they did not tie up key staff for any great length of time. It was fairly painless and fairly cheap to do that process in that way. It’s not a criticism John, it’s working out pretty well I think, and it’s just getting that information to QTC that is the slow bit.

The other issue I think, we need to be very mindful about the media. I think we can get some mixed messages out there. I think there is not much of a story in shared services but there is a hell of a story in amalgamation. I think that is all the media generally want to talk to us about in that process. I think suggest for people just starting this process you need to make sure you have your media protocols in place as soon as possible because it can send some mixed messages out there.

I just want to leave you with some comments made at our last Review Committee Meeting made by our chair Cr Donna Stewart, which I believe sums up the attitude with which we are going into this process.

“Over the past couple of weeks I have been giving a great deal of thought to this process, some times with eager excitement and sometimes with trepidation. For the seven local governments to come together around this table indicates the tremendous amount of good will and trust that has grown between us all. I am sure that this path will have many twists and turns and at times we will not be united in our opinions. There may be some quite large gaps in what we think. Please do not lose common sight in the goal that we all share and that is, I am sure you will agree, ensure the long term sustainability and viability of our respective communities”.

Mr Phil Clarke, Deputy Director General, Department of Local Government, Planning Sport and Recreation

Just before I start to make some comments about Size Shape and Sustainability can I join with many of the previous speakers in acknowledging the traditional owners and elders of this land in which we meet, I think it is important. Can I pass on Michael Kinnane’s best wishes whilst I am here? Many of you will know Michael is on leave at the moment. He figured there was going to be a State Election and thought it was a really good time to go on leave. As the person left behind holding the baby, I can tell you that was a really good decision on his part.

It seems to me that my comments about the detail of SSS would be superfluous to the comments already been made, so I won’t go down that track. Although those folks in my department who have been putting a lot of effort into working with you, with the facilitators, with other agencies across the State Government, and indeed in particular with the LGAQ, I certainly don’t want to downplay their role, they have made a fantastic contribution. The enthusiasm within the department for this initiative is really quite exciting. I acknowledge very much that the initiative came from local government itself and the department’s role in all of this is very much as a partner and a supporter for the initiative.

This pre dated Michael and myself, so we certainly don’t take credit for getting it up but we are very much interested in being involved and we are going to take credit for some of the successes that come out of it, I can assure you.

I would just like to agree with some Paul’s comments as well, in terms of the views of other jurisdictions and the Commonwealth in regard to the Size, Shape and Sustainability Project. I represent Queensland, on behalf of the department, the government from time to time, in National forums and talk to other jurisdictions and colleagues, it is really clear that this initiative is being watched very much across the whole country as providing models for partnership and engagement. It is providing a view of local government and the commitment of local governments to their communities. I have not heard it expressed in those forums that I have been in, in recent times where it really does demonstrate the commitment of local government to its communities. The commitment from all the various players demonstrated quite ably by our speakers and the case studies that they have outlined, that the commitment by all our elected officials, senior officers in local government and other stakeholders to actually put in their interests of the community in the pre eminent position to undertake all of the various reviews and discussions. I guess from my perspective as a recently returned player to work in local government, is a very humbling experience to be part of that. On a very personal level I congratulate everybody for being part of the whole thing and I am just absolutely delighted to be part of the whole thing.
I cannot actually go on make the comments that Paul has committed me to make in terms of the State Government’s and the department’s position without making the disclaimer comment about caretaker mode. I will make a whole series of comments, you as being colleagues and friends will of course not hold me or the future government to any of these things should they not come to surpass into the future because of the outcomes of 9 September. I think much of the discussion that has gone on through this process, overcomes any of the political considerations that might come out of the State Election. There is a great deal of good will across the whole of the community. I suppose I make these comments with a fair bit of confidence, irrespective what the outcomes of 9 September are and a great deal of achievement will still flow from Size, Shape and Sustainability.

The perspectives I would like to make are very much about partnerships. We see this, we acknowledge the role of the LGAQ and you as leaders of local government talked into getting Size Shape and Sustainability up and indeed the fantastic amount of work that has been done to put structure, system and process around Size, Shape and Sustainability.

The comments that have been made, I think, are illustrative of the fact that the process is extremely comprehensive. From our perspective it is very inclusive, we acknowledge absolutely the voluntary nature of it. To be very honest I hope that the early successes of Size Shape and Sustainability will encourage those who have got concerns about the Size Shape and Sustainability Project and in the end it will be unfair to say that all councils will get the opportunity to participate in Size Shape and Sustainability in an appropriate way.

We came into the project with a great deal of good faith and right now as we sit, certainly do not feel the need for the department to be steering, cajoling or anything else with the project. It has been marvellously directed and run by the participants, by the groups, by the facilitators, and in particular by the leadership of the LGAQ and by the staff in the Size Shape and Sustainability Group within the department. There is no concern, on our behalf at this point and I don’t expect any to precipitate in terms of the overall running of the program. We are very, very pleased. At the moment the project is providing good value for the public funds that have been invested in the project and I expect that, that will actually turn out to be a very, very significant return on investment as the projects come to their fruition, as the analysis is completed, as the options are drawn out and then as councils and review groups, you start to make those considered decisions that you want to take forward on behalf of your communities. There is very, very little risk that we are not going to get good outcomes from this whole process, I think it is excellent.

I guess we do have a view, and on behalf of the State Government, as Minister Boyle said this morning, the really exciting thing about working in the department is that we do work with the whole level of government. We have concerns, we share your concerns about how are you going to provide or how are we together going to provide the best value for all of the funds that we have across local government; whether it is State Government funds, or whether it is revenue generated through local government or otherwise, how do we demonstrate that we are getting the best value for the dollars for all of our communities? How are we going to continue to deliver those services? How are we going to continue to be able to rationalise some of the decisions that are made in light of the expectations of citizens. You as local government participants are much closer to those citizens than I am. That is really clear. Notwithstanding that, the department and on behalf of the Government, still has those concerns and we are very, very confident through the whole process, that we need not to stand on a soap box and scream those things from the roof tops, because they are shared with everybody in this room. That sharing in terms of the intent of the whole process is a very secure place for the department to be in.

We don’t have pre determined outcomes. I have had the great pleasure over the last day and half to have a number of delegations on behalf of Minister Boyle because of the caretaker mode because she could not do them personally. In a few of those cases there were discussions around Size, Shape and Sustainability and some of the issues that came out will not surprise you. People have expressed views on their own, or on behalf of others or in fact questioning the views of others, to say amalgamation, why don’t we just get on with it? Why doesn’t the Minister just make the decisions and amalgamate councils? If we think this is such a positive thing to do, we are just putting everybody through pain and anguish when we know at the end of the day the outcomes we want to achieve and if we were honest about it, we would just write to people and tell them and say this is the answer and just implement it. In fact that is not the case. We do have a whole series of objectives on the whole thing and they are set out in
the material that has been published in regard to Size, Shape and Sustainability. That does not though, include any pre determined outcomes in terms of changes to boundaries, amalgamations, any particular service delivery arrangements, whether they be through joint local governments or any other opportunity that exists, any other business model that you might be using. That is the how is not pre determined. As I said we do have a lot of objectives that we share with you as local government leaders about what the potential of Size, Shape and Sustainability is in to the future. Some of that particularly includes how we get future best value out of State Government funds that are channelled through local government for the benefit of the community.

We are very much committed to working through the SRAG Group, to coordinate the project. That group from our perspective and Greg Hoffman eluded it in terms of his comments on the video, provides an excellent forum to lead the project and at this point of time that mechanism provides us with all of the input into the project that we need along with the day to day management arrangements that we are also supporting.

From my perspective, and I think you made this Paul in your opening comment, I am absolutely confident that the process is as good as it can be. The work that has gone into designing the process and acknowledging all those officers, particularly from the LGAQ but others as well who have put the time and effort into designing the process I absolutely congratulate you on the work. It is a wonderful process and from my perspective I cannot see any particular dimension that we want to change or add too, to make it better.

That strength of the process, the inclusiveness of the process and the robustness of the process. The fact that it does throw up some uncomfortable issues and asks people to address some uncomfortable issues, means that it is the most likely process to lead to sustainable improvement. From that perspective we are extremely committed to it.

Just to close off, we are very much looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the various working groups. The comment that was made before “God in her wisdom, enjoying diversity” I think that is a fairly astute and fair comment. We are not looking for a “one size fits all” over this, we are not looking for a few sizes fits all over this. We are very happy with the approach to find diverse solutions to see the context and the environments in which those groups make their decisions. With those few comments Paul I am just happy to be part of the whole process and look forward to seeing the outcome of Size, Shape and Sustainability and we will continue to work with all the players to make sure that we are not lacking in our contribution to the project.

Thank you.
PANEL SESSION

Mr Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ
Mr Greg Hoffman PSM, Director, Policy and Representation Branch, LGAQ
Mr Phil Clarke, Deputy Director General, DLGPS&R
Mr Ben Barr, Manager, Regional Collaboration & Capacity Building Program, DLGPS&R
Mr John Curran, Team Leader, Local Government Team, QTC
Mr Gary Stephenson, President, LGMA
Cr Vince Mundraby, President, ALGAQ

Review Group Speakers:  Cr Tom Woods, Mr James Gott and Mr Tony Klein

QUESTIONS

Cr Donna Stewart, Mayor, Warroo Shire:
Paul, this is a question for you.  Recent media statements attributed to you saying there were 40 councils in Queensland that were unsustainable.  I am just wondering what information you have available to you that you based that statement on.  If this is so, doesn’t that create preconceived outcomes that undermine the review process that we are undertaking?

Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ:
I did make statements that said that we expect around 40 councils around Queensland that would be financially unsustainable throughout the process.  We expect there around those numbers.  That is in align with the 30% around NSW, 40% in South Australia and 50% in Western Australia.  We have used that rule of thumb that indicates on average in the other States we are seeing about between, 30 and 50% of councils unsustainable.  I have made those statements.  I think I said that “we believe”, I didn’t say “there is”.  I haven’t seen any outcomes of the QTC reports so far, I certainly said, looking at what is happening around other States we expect probably around 40 councils in Queensland, about a 1/3, could be financially unsustainable and that would certainly be the figure that we would expect.  I also got accused in that same press statement of saying about pushing the word amalgamation.  Three years ago you wouldn’t say the word “amalgamation” or groups of councils got together.  We have got to get over it.  It’s a word and we have to start being mature in our sphere of government and be able to say it’s an option.  You have heard Tom Woods say today that it is something his council is looking for.  It did say in the same report in the Courier Mail, that we local government, we as part of this process could also be looking at possible boundary changes and amalgamation.  I also said that we, will be driving the process and that is where we have always been.  So Donna that’s where that has come from, it’s purely an analytical grab I suppose based on what has happened in other jurisdictions.  I think we know already there is about 7-8 councils in Queensland who are financially unsustainable, and if they were private companies would virtually be bankrupt, that we know of and have had dealings with.  Certainly we don’t see the model being any different in Queensland than the other States and Territory.  Having said, knowing who they are or what they are doesn’t flaw the process, it’s just another need to continue to go through the Review and see how we are going.  It certainly is a very strong issue that I am putting to the Federal Government, ensuring that they understand Local Government in Australia has got extreme financial pressures.

Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
One of the things we have been saying around Queensland is this.  Putting four unfinancial councils together doesn’t make one big financial council.  I think that is fundamentally important.  It really attacks the logic of the people that suggest if you are unviable then you must be amalgamated.  That is not necessary the option at all.  There must be a whole bunch of other ways that you can become sustainable.
Cr Paul Bell AM, President LGAQ:
In my presentation to COAG about local government financial sustainability I said that to the Prime Minister and all the Premiers. I have seen you do it before, in other States, where you have amalgamated councils and you have put five sick financial councils together and you end up with one big sick financial council. It is a part of the discussion and certainly as something as Greg has said that we have got to make sure that; that is not the driver of this process. It is not driver. Financial Sustainability is something that we need to deal with through shared services, through regional collaborations, through other arrangements and getting a fair share.

Cr Joy Drescher, Mayor, Beaudesert Shire Council:
Paul, 15 months ago we went to this mini conference and I was so angry I didn’t bother go back the next day. Quite frankly it looked to me like the State Government said we are going to amalgamate some of these councils, you rolled over and said right let’s get to it. Quite frankly, as far as I am concerned, the Local Government Association has said there should be no forced amalgamations, there shouldn’t be forced amalgamations ever. Everyone keeps saying “we are surprised about 100 councils are now joining the Size, Shape and Sustainability”. The threat was there join Size, Shape and Sustainability or someone else will join you up together if you don’t do it. We were virtually told you will do it by such and such a day or else. The threat was there. I think most councils felt threatened, may be the process is good. We have been sitting here for over an hour and a half listening to people talk. We haven’t been able to move. Looking around checking out how many people are asleep, how many are yawning, how many have left in desperation. With exception to the man in the checked shirt, the one from MADCAP, MADROC, the speakers have not been very scintillating and right after lunch, however evil the subject is like amalgamation for God sake give us people that are alive and well. Someone else said God in her wisdom. Well God in her wisdom didn’t put any women up on stage either.

Greg Hoffman PSM, Director Policy and Representation Branch:
Could I add that we did invite one, but she wasn’t available.

Cr Paul Bell AM, President LGAQ:
Thanks Joy, what is your question?

Cr Joy Drescher, Mayor, Beaudesert Shire:
The question I asked was why does everyone keep saying they are surprised that 100 councils have agreed to join Size, Shape and Sustainability, when they were all threatened if they didn’t, they would be shot or something similar?

Cr Paul Bell AM, President LGAQ:
I don’t think anyone was threatened. Certainly the Size Shape and Sustainability Conference was virtually about, did we, as local government want to take the reform forward ourselves. Councils that day had the opportunity to say yes or no. Councils decided collectively that you would take a reform process, driven by local government forward yourselves. Are there some issues that I suppose, would have given us the opportunity to think about what has happened in other States? Yes, they were put on the table for discussion that day. That day of May 2005 has certainly moved its past history and we have moved a long way forward from that day. Are we surprised that there are 105 councils signed up for Size, Shape and Sustainability. Yes we are, we weren’t expecting, as QTC will sort of indicate to you. When we thought about the process after the May 2005 Conference and the riding instructions given to us by you, as local government, we were expecting 50-60. We thought that’s all, that’s all we talked to QTC about. We are surprised that so many councils have taken the opportunity to move it forward.

Let me say it to you that some of the things that are really exciting about the Size, Shape and Sustainability process and that is we all get to be a part of it. We are getting some funding to help us go through it. What has happened in other States where amalgamations have happened, is that councils’ get thrown together, there is no support in regards to looking at shared services, regional arrangements, other operations and processes that we can use to include and increase efficiency and carry on efficiencies post those amalgamations processes or boundary change processes or the Local Government Act Review which might give us opportunities to move in different ways and work in different ways totally that have nothing to do with amalgamation. I think we have moved away and moved forward, a long way since May 2005 and I certainly didn’t get people together for that Special Conference, and your Executive didn’t, think we were threatening you or that anyone else was threatening you, but is there...
still a move in other States regarding amalgamation? You bet there is. Western Australia is going through a process at the moment. Northern Territory, we understand announcements will be made in the next month and other people are doing it in other ways. We decided, local government in Queensland, we, decided to do it another way.

Cr Kevin Morgan, Mayor, Sarina Shire Council:
Thank you Paul, I didn’t think you were going to stop then. First of all, I would like to thank you for the opportunity of having this debate. We have only just started the process, we have got a lot to learn and I have got an open mind at this stage. I would like some comments from the panel. First off, on divisional representation and the other one on the social dependency that has happened in Victoria as a result of their process there and the way the Victorian Government is now pouring thousands of dollars and installing community development workers in small communities, to try to overcome the social dependency as a direct result of the loss of local government. I believe South Australia have got quasi councils that are springing up in small communities that are endeavouring to do a job that a local council used to do but without any support. So, some comments first, divisional representation and your thoughts on making sure we don’t create social dependencies as part of the process?

Mr Greg Hoffman PSM, Director, Policy and Representation Branch LGAQ:
Kevin can I just get clarification you want, the question about divisional representation, is whether or not any changes in divisions are appropriate, is that the gist of your question?

Cr Kevin Morgan, Mayor, Sarina Shire Council:
Well, I looked at the report of Johnstone Shire and we have chosen the same person to do our Size, Shape and Sustainability. One of the things in there in the report from Johnstone Shire had “Divisional representation wasn’t good for local government and steps should probably be taken to eliminate it”. It’s just an opportunity for a comment from other people as to their thoughts on divisional representation within councils.

Mr Greg Hoffman PSM, Director, Policy and Representation Branch LGAQ:
I’ll open by just briefly mentioning, a trend if you like, on the question of whether division or not operate in councils. There certainly has been over the past decade a noticeable trend for the elimination of divisions, of electoral divisions within councils. The rationale for that is that people, who are elected at large across their councils, sit around the council table with the perspective of the council as a whole and don’t come necessarily with an identified or narrow view of issues of importance. Decisions are made having regard to the interests of the community as a whole and not from divisional or sectional perspectives. I know there are counter arguments to that and I don’t think we need to debate whether it is good bad or indifferent. We simply need to acknowledge that, that is the conclusion of those councils that an increasing number of them have reached and gone through processes involving the Electoral Commission to determine if that is an appropriate course of action. This is not something unique to Queensland, it has been happening in other States as well for those very reasons. I think that is probably all that can be said on the issue, while others have got perspectives, it is simply happening because people perceive it as a better way to sit around a table and make decisions on the needs of their community as a whole.

Cr Tom Woods, Mayor, Waggamba Shire Council:
We are a council that has had divisions. It was one of our arguments for keeping two councils that we keep representation. We are about 200km east and west and 13,000 sq kms, we have always been concerned about representation, particularly in the western end of our shire. What has happened since we had this Conference last year, is that we had two councillors resign and filling those positions has been difficult. What we are getting now, even before that we had a councillor living outside the division and to fill the position we have another councillor who lives outside the division. When talking about Size Shape and Sustainability and if we are going to amalgamate we are also talking to the department. By next March we have got to have all our numbers done and decide then if we want to stay with divisions or do we want to go as one council. We have to wrap our mind around as a community if we believe in representation, if we amalgamate, where do we go with that then? What we decided at our last meeting if we stay as Waggamba Shire at the next election we will probably go with our divisions. I think we are moving away from them but when you start looking at it and get into the whole sphere of it, this is what we all talk about, when we talk about amalgamations or merging of other councils, its representation and we had quite a discussion on it. I’ve changed from divisions to no divisions. The people who make decisions in council aren’t elected by some of those people who make decisions on it.
You try to go on to representation and people don’t stand. So what do you do? We will have to discuss it in the broader context if we amalgamated. You can’t have two philosophies there.

Cr Mike Brunker, Mayor Bowen Shire Council:
Tom I enjoyed your presentation at the Size, Shape and Sustainability Special Conference that we had and again today. It’s a very mature and positive approach. That’s your position and bearing in mind what the guy in the check shirt said about councillors being involved, have you had some councillors go rank on you from your side or Waggamba side, say bugger you, that’s your position and we are not happy with it?

Cr Tom Wood, Mayor, Waggamba Shire Council:
What we tried to do is we want a council, you can have a diversion of opinion, but let’s face it, once the council makes a decision, that’s when they realise that is a decision of council and that’s the one we made. That is the one we are running with. Our council meetings go quite long. We have a discussion and we try to solve those sorts of things. At the end of the day that is the decision of council. We seem to be able to manage it that way. With the one on Size, Shape and Sustainability, what we are doing there is to make sure all our council understands the process, understands the outcome, understand exactly what has happened and wrap your mind around that. That is number one. Each council is doing the same. We then need to meet, every time we make a bit of progress with Size, Shape and Sustainability; we feel we must report that to our community. There are things going on that they must know about. There is nothing worse with things happening, in your community, like what we were talking about yesterday on sub divisions, people need to know what his happening. It is not necessary for them to take part in everything, but it’s important that they are informed. Every time we went to another stage, we felt we must report to the community. If we are going to make things work, the councils’ must understand respect each other’s view and have a view that we are both comfortable with. We talked to the facilitator and we made sure our media release is one that we were both happy with, every word. Both councils are happy, the community is happy, we are a united community. That is what we must be at the end of the day. People who want to go outside and say something different, they are entitled to do that, but that doesn’t seem to happen. We have got to manage that, that is a thing we have got to manage and I think we will.

Question by Delegate:
My question is really moving forward to the panel. As a result of this process, Stage II is the comprehensive review which councils will have to go through. Just in terms of timing of an election, things like that, the 2008 election, do you believe it is possible for councils to get through that process in terms of making a decision and being able to take that to their community, given the time frames that are associated with the next phases?

Mr Gary Stephenson, President, LGMA:
That is the sort of question that you have got to be asking because there is a process here that we have all adopted, that we are all working through, but to work through and put that effort into that process you have to ensure that it is not going to become a futile effort at the end of the day. One of the things that LGMA I think is recognising looking ahead in that timetable, is that disruption of an election and the potential changes of policy, changes of personnel, changes of opinion that could in fact put at risk 18 months or two years of work. Whatever you are doing at the moment you need to be mapping forward that particular implication. There has been a suggestion at different times that an election date could be deferred if a group, or a number of groups are reaching a stage where they can make decisions. I guess the risk there is that at an existing council or in fact the State Government that made that decision would deny the community the opportunity to have a ballot which could well be on those issues that are being proposed. In that case you might as well have a referendum. Unfortunately with Queensland Local Government, the time frames for getting a referendum before the next election are expiring very soon. The processes in most cases won’t be at the stage ready to set up a referendum. That is an aspect you need to be thinking forward to.

Cr Vince Mundraby, President, ALGAQ:
If I could just touch on the divisions, especially in indigenous communities where I am coming from. There is a whole range of views and the basis that we are making our decisions on is corporate decision.
At the end of the day it is going to affect everyone in our community. A lot of emphasis has been put on community engagement, how we engage with the community to make sure we put the position of the community into the future. While we were actually going down this track, because of the reforms that are happening, at this point of time we are going through the Community Services Act to the Local Government Act and there was a whole raft of changes that need to be considered, especially in the direction that we are going. At the end of the day we are running on the principles of we don’t, I guess, want to be a burden on our neighbouring shires, so for us to go back to the people, have a look and explain to the people that we need to be more accountable. We are going from a clean sheet here, down to a picture which would implement into our community a whole raft of changes that will affect every man, woman and child within our community. There is division, however, that should be addressed by the community in the engagement strategy that we implement.

Mr Phil Clarke, Deputy Director General, DLGPS&R
I just want to talk about the election date and the impact on Size, Shape and Sustainability. It would be inappropriate to make any comments in one way or another in terms of the caretaker period but the matter has been discussed within the department. It is not something that is out of bounds in that discussion. I think we are confident that the tools exist under the existing provisions of the Local Government Act to be able to deal with that situation should it arise. I think those acknowledgements have been made in the discussions between the department and the LGAQ previously when the matters have been raised. Without being able to say a particular circumstance would lead to one or other of outcomes in terms of postponed elections or anything else, I think the issue is very much in the discussion and I think we are confident at this stage that the tools exist to manage the situation should it come about.

Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ
Certainly we put that to the Minister many months back and we didn’t get a no, but we didn’t get a yes either. I just reiterate what Phil has said, it is an option that has not been removed from the table. I think, this is an observation, one of the strengths and weaknesses, this is a model, it is a consensual model, and no one has had a gun put to their head. Because it is a consensual model, it took us a number of years and I come back to and pay tribute to the LGMA which Gary mentioned earlier in the video, they are the first group to start talking about it, then I think it started at the Mackay Conference there was the first discussion, subsequent discussion last year and now here. It has taken some time. The beauty of it is everyone is there voluntarily and the downside is, it takes that long and it does then push it up against other time frames.
Mr Noel Cass, CEO, Jondaryan Shire Council:

Like a lot of people in the room, I am very impressed with the process today and likewise impressed with the maturity and good will shown thus far. I have one concern though, and that is in relation to HR. I was in a meeting about ten days ago with DLGPS&R who advised to date, the department has still not developed a position in relation to Human Resources. My concern is that this is a very important process and one of the things that could do harm and destabilise it to some extent, if your Human Resources are not confident and comfortable with what is happening and where it is going. I would like to hear your view in relation to that please.

Mr Greg Hoffman PSM, Director Policy and Representation Branch, LGAQ:

Noel, the document in my hand is the draft of that, Chapter 9, about managing human resource issues. We have acknowledged all along it is a significant consideration. Gary on a number of occasions at the SRAG meetings has made that point, point taken. I would say that our efforts to put it together have probably been slowed a little bit by the fact that we have had a response at a rate faster than we anticipated and supporting the establishments of the groups and the facilitators to get underway has delayed this process. I anticipate though, that with the draft as it is, and the work that we are doing, we will be ready to consult with all of the stakeholders involved, members of the SRAG group, within the next two to three weeks at the most, hopefully we can resolve the matter probably within two months. By that time, the groups that have advanced the process will have something to work with. Point taken and we are giving it the priority we can now, certainly post the Conference our own timetables will be a little freer to give it the attention that it does need.

Mr Gary Stephenson, President, LGMA:

LGMA’s whole intent is to ensure that managers are equipped to manage the change. Noel has hit the nail right on the head there. The workshops we have held, we understand that there are a lot of people working in Queensland Local Government that have actually been through it and managed substantial change before. With the workshops we have held, a lot of the people have been able to contribute to the uncertainty and perhaps the questions that were in others minds.

There are two phases effectively. There is this phase that we are going through looking at a whole heap of changes and of course the HR issues get down to communication and make sure people know this is just an exploratory process, make sure they know there is nothing decided, no hidden agenda. At least from your council’s point of view, you can say that.

There is the later stage which is when a decision is made about what change will be and you will have to transition as to how that change is going to be made. There are some great examples in Australia and overseas. We saw in Banks Peninsula in New Zealand knowing that the change is inevitable, trying to secure the staff for a period of time and give them some degree of input, some degree of security. It can be done. It is just a matter of communicating it is exploratory at this stage and then when you know what the sort of change is that you are talking about, because at the moment it’s anything from resource sharing through to amalgamations, everyone jumps to the big one. When you know what the decision is, you have got to plan that transition. The LGMA will be producing further work as it has done already, to try and help guide managers in that respect.

Cr Vince Mundraby, President, ALGAQ:

Just on the extension for the councils. Talking to the majority of indigenous councils who were actually formulating a submission, which a number of times I have spoken about at the SRAG meeting, for an extension of our time and I encourage other councils to put in a submission also.

Cr Robert Buchan, Balonne Shire Council:

Very quickly, Balonne Shire did away with the divisions in the early 90’s. That was to do with the number of people who voted in each division. That seems to work very well; we seem to get elected nominees from each part of the Shire. The electors are smart enough to ensure that they elect people from different parts of the Shire and we rely on them for their advice even though we are all involved with it. I just thought I would mention that for those that are worried. As Cr Wood has said, if they don’t nominate it’s pretty hard to elect them. You have got to do that, number one.

Number two, I mention the example of Waggamba and Goondiwindi, thinking along the lines that something may happen; we don’t have to have every decision from every council in this whole State made by the next election. I think there should be nothing to impede that if councils want to do
something by then. We shouldn’t be stampeding other councils if they have got a timeframe and it has to be done by then, bearing in mind the Charters Towers was programmed to join the Dalrymple in 1928, I don’t think we would be in trouble if we waited another two years for this. What I am trying to say is this. We shouldn’t be trying to stampede it. What is wrong if people can see they can do something, do it now and let others know they can do it by the next election after that? Do we have to have everything done before the next election? I don’t believe it is and I don’t believe it should stop some of them who can do it, from doing it.

Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
The answer is no, and has always been no. Just some people who are progressing the matter, particularly the CEOs, have thought what happens, particularly only 18 months ahead? If you don’t arrive there, or you never arrive there, it is no skin of our nose. There is no imposed timetable.

Question by Delegate:
Question for Cr Woods. Are the bulk of constituents in both shires for amalgamation? Do you know? Is that an issue for your council?

Cr Tom Woods, Mayor Waggamba Shire Council:
Most people think it is good, the way it is. That is why we have got to do a lot of communicating with the community because we talked to our community about it and they have told us they like it the way it is. That is why we put a lot of effort into consolidating the arrangement we had with the two councils, resource sharing because the community from their perspective have probably not being suffering. The two councils get on, things happen and for all tense and purposes things go on normally. If you asked people at the moment if they wanted amalgamation it would be hard to know what they will say. The rural might say no, the town might say yes or no. If we ask if you are happy with the present position, they will probably say yes.

When you are inside this business, it’s our responsibility to say is this sustainable into the future and what are all the problems we are going to deal with here in the future. Can we make timely decisions, well thought out decisions, one’s that are not compromised? We need to make decisions for the right reasons for the right community. We also have a responsibility, given this opportunity to tell them what the facts. I thought we were given a great opportunity, I call this an audit. When I walked away from the Special Conference last May, I told everyone I spoke to when they asked what was going on I said every council in Queensland is going to have an audit. I knew they could identify with that, they knew what an audit meant. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity in having that audit; it’s what we do with it from here. Those that are in control at the moment, have been given responsibility to do something with this audit, with this review. What am I saying? The facilitator has now got to go and speak with the community. We have spoken with him about that. We will have some input as to how we are going to get some people that he can meet with. He then goes about and engages the community without us being there to tell everyone what is good and bad so that people can be educated on what this process is, what the indicators are. I know, it does sound difficult but at the end of the day people are not stupid. Once he is given that opportunity we will then take a position and we will then go and talk with the community. They must be given their opportunity to talk with the facilitator and he has got to be happy with the process. After that no doubt there is going to be a Referendum. We will deal with it when we come to it. I am not trying to get ahead of the job. You asked the question, what do they want? At the moment they are happy with what they have got but I don’t think that is going to be the way in the future.

Question by Delegate:
So Tom there will be a Referendum before that decision is made, is that what you are saying.

Cr Tom Wood, Mayor, Waggamba Shire Council:
People have to have their say at the end of the day. That is why it is so important I feel that the two councils should be united. If we go one way or the other, it will split the community. We will go through the whole process and as a community we have agreed on where we should be going. We will talk to the community on what the whole process might be and that is the important bit.

Cr Gavin Finch, Mt Morgan Shire Council:
At the end of this review process and with the findings that we have, who is, when is and how is the facilitation of this review going to go forward? Say for instance where there are two neighbouring shires that we have two Referendums and they are not the same answer, the two Referendums?
Mr Greg Hoffman PSM, Director Policy and Representation Branch, LGAQ:
The legislation, going back to the earlier question, says that if this process of amalgamation is to occur, a Referendum is required and that is managed through the Electoral Commission of Queensland. It will only get to that point if the councils in the Review process decide themselves they want to make that quest, it goes to the Minister and if the Minister chooses, it is referred to the Commission and a process follows that sees the Referendum taking place. The Government then considers the results of the Referendum. This Referendum process only applies in the event of a proposal for amalgamation or significant boundary change. Any of the other options that are on the table for consideration if chosen, don’t require a Referendum.

Mr Phil Clarke, Deputy Director General, DLGPS&R:
The current Government’s policy on that is that no reference will be made to the Electoral Commission unless there is support from both parties for any change to boundaries, including amalgamations.

Cr Gavin Finch, Mt Morgan Shire Council:
Can I go back to, the outcomes of this Review, who is going to push them forward?

Mr Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
You are.

Cr Gavin Finch, Mt Morgan Shire Council:
Even when the Referendums have conflicting answers?

Mr Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
No, the law is as you have just been told. There are two processes. There is a SSS process but doesn’t subvert what the requirements are under the Local Government Act. They are if there is to be an amalgamation of two councils, there has to be a successful Referendum in both.

Question by Delegate:
That law on the question of amalgamation, was it stated that there would be no forced amalgamations within this term of Government? What was the stated position of the State Government?

Mr Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
Correct, that was there position and that is the law. The law has to be repealed to be different. A change of policy won’t do it. The Act has to be amended.

Question by Delegate:
We have heard a lot of discussion today about what could happen, or what may not happen. I think the question I would like to ask is what can the LGAQ do to really put people at ease with this and get them to take the time that is necessary. There is a lot of confusion now, people are starting to make comment, move quickly towards things and they might make immature decisions. With the growth that is going on in south-east Queensland, particularly in our area and to the east of us, a couple of years could mean huge changes and there needs to be a lot of thought put into this process. To say no pressure has been put on is absolutely bull shit. There has been heaps of pressure put on. The community are of the opinion that this is going to happen. In fact a very senior Government person said to me recently we will be making sure it happens because it reduces the number of you conservative bastards around the place. Now, at the end of the day, the council are the principal clients of the LGAQ and I think for us to get it right, everyone needs to take it very easy and steady and make sure it is right. We do not need to rush into anything prematurely and jump on debates and make mistakes. I would like to see some statement come out from the LGAQ to say that people are comfortable with the process and where it is going and that they will sit back and encouraging people to make all the right decisions over a period and not having to go back. The change in our part of the world could make premature decisions go very wrong.

Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ:
I don’t know where things are different from what you have just said. When people have said they are going to come out and amalgamate, we have said to people don’t make premature decisions or announcements or whatever. Have a think about it, be a part of the process. Tom indicated to you
today that they are coming to their own conclusion but they are starting a process with a number of other councils that is what we have been encouraging. Just remember what happened in Mackay when a number of councils put up their hands and said they wanted to talk about it. We had this Size, Shape and Sustainability workshop. There was a fair few councils who said, people are mentioning the word amalgamation, that’s a dirty word that is where it came from. A number of your colleagues put their hands up that day and said we want help, we have got a problem. It really is a sphere of government that is not mature enough to fix it; we think someone else is going to do it to us. When we had the Conference we certainly talked about what was happening in other States but we are encouraging every one of you, if you are a member of one of those groups, go through the whole process, don’t come out and say this is what you are going to do, or which you are not going to do. Tom has explained to you what they are going to do. They have come to a conclusion, they are way in front of us actually, and they were part way down the track before we even decided to think about it in 2005. They have said now quite conclusively that they are starting part of the process. I don’t know who is trying to derail their own political agendas other than local government’s; this agenda. This is local government driving this agenda. I go and visit many of your councils and have done in the last three or four months and its funny with some councils they say, “its funny the other side is looking over the boundary”. I say have you got the eagles watching or the hawks watching and they say they are. People are thinking through this process, it is not the State that is doing it to you, it’s not someone else, it is us as a group looking at what way we are going to go forward. It has been interesting for me sitting up listening to you; all you have talked about is amalgamation.

Noel Playford:
Paul, I do want to talk about amalgamation. I want to go back to something that Greg said a minute ago. My understanding of the process, because I think some people might be left with an incorrect impression. If two councils decide that they would like to merge or amalgamate they ask the Minister to provide a Reference to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission has a look at it and if they decide they want to recommend same to the Government, they must have a Referendum of the people in the two council areas. If both of those are approved by the people, then the Minister must amalgamate the two councils. However, if there is not approval through both Referendums then the Parliament may still amalgamate the councils. That is my understanding, the Parliament can still do it even if the Referendums’ don’t pass and I don’t think that was said before.

Greg Hallam PSM, Executive Director, LGAQ:
Thanks Noel. The Parliament is always supreme, correct. The stated policy position of the government is, as opposed to the law, if they don’t agree then they won’t take that final Act. Could I make one last final point if I could? You probably heard us talk the last two days on LG Infrastructure Services and LG Shared Services. It just strikes me that people have not yet cottoned on to the fact that we have spent a lot of money hundreds of thousands of dollars and spent a huge amount of time creating alternatives to amalgamation. In every other State those opportunities do not exist, no one else as done the hard work. In every other State there are no alternatives to amalgamation. We have created them. When people decide through the SSS process, shared services is what they want, they have a viable option available, it exists. Similarly if they want to create scale and still continue to have your own councils in infrastructure delivery, the opportunity exists. We have done something that is very unique in Australia. No one else has got there. We have bent over backwards to provide the alternatives to amalgamation for those that don’t want to amalgamate for good and proper reasons.

Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ:
Delegates I might now bring this to a close. You asked us in 2005 to report to the Annual Conference in 2006 on the progress of Size Shape and Sustainability. I think you must all agree that it has been a comprehensive report back in regards to how the Size, Shape and Sustainability agenda is moving forward. I have been once again uplifted and invigorated in the process, being able to see this afternoon what is happening and certainly is continuing to happen in regards to moving the Agenda Reform for local government forward. The reports from the Review and the groups that are here this afternoon certainly I think gives me a great belief in the process that you asked for, the process that was included in the communiqué, the process that was developed by the LGAQ and is being used by all the groups is certainly under way and is providing some good results.

I really think we have some significant partners and as Greg indicated, no other State jurisdiction or territory jurisdiction in Australia has had the partnership, particularly with the State Government in
regards to being able to take forward local government reform. It happens in other jurisdictions at 2.30 in the morning when lines on the map are changed and councils wake up the next day and things are different. It has happened in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and certainly what is being looked at in Western Australia and is about to happen, we believe, in the Northern Territory.

You have got the Agenda, formally in your grasp. It is your agenda; you take it forward the way you need to take it forward in your community. Take it forward at the time you need to with your community and continue to engage in what I think is a very significant opportunity for us to provide the local community with our services, with governance, retaining elected representation, local democracy is what we call it, for the best of our community for future local government in Queensland. Delegates I ask you to thank all the people who have been part of the panel discussion, the Review Group, people who have given us the feedback, to the LGAQ staff particularly Simone Talbot and the group who have been putting together the presentations for this afternoon. You asked for a progress report, you got a good progress report and an opportunity to give us all some good feedback which we appreciate. It is a journey together, it is a journey about local government and certainly your Association, the LGAQ will remain firm on its conviction that all of this is predicated and under written. The policy position that you have written time and time again that we are totally opposed to forced amalgamations in Queensland.

Thank you.
Address: Opposition Perspective

Mr Howard Hobbs MP
Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning

Thank you very much Cr Paul Bell, President of the Local Government Association of Queensland, Cr Di Thorley, Host Mayor. I recognise Mike Horan over there, Member for Toowoomba South, other State and Federal Parliamentary colleagues, distinguished guests, there are a lot of those here today; Mayors, CEOs, departmental representatives, ladies and gentlemen.

First, let me say what a wonderful opportunity it was last night to catch up with so many people and even yesterday afternoon through out the conference. It was great to see everyone again and I thought that the Wickety Wak show last night was pretty good. May be a few of us showed our age a little bit because they were, sort of, playing our songs. That guy in the polka dot bikini, wasn’t he something? What an Act to follow.

What I also want to say is to congratulate all those councillors last night who received awards. Thank you so much for the great work you have done for the community over many years. It is wonderful to see you receive those awards because a lot of effort goes into it, a lot of personal effort and I certainly appreciate and I am sure many others do in the community as well.

I would like to congratulate those Councillors who received awards last night and Roma Town for winning the Tidy Towns.

Thank you for the opportunity to give the State Opposition’s perspective to your Conference.

I have been privileged to give this address on numerous occasions and it has been a great honour to represent Local Governments interest in the State Parliament.

It would be even better to be on the other side of the House representing you.

Someone once said ‘all good things come to those who wait long enough’.

Well it goes without saying I’ve been good lately; just ask the Speaker, and the waiting, well the election did come six months early.

I always try to provide conference with a genuine and alternative view on Local Government matters from the conservative perspective.

This conference will be no different; however I would like you to have some more detail on the initiatives we are proposing at this State election.

While water and health have dominated the airways, particularly in South East Queensland, there are many other important issues across this great decentralised state that need to be addressed.

Road funding, water pricing, valuations, housing, vegetation management, infrastructure charges, planning, sea change and tree change, to name a few.

I won’t be dealing with all of those in detail because it would take too long, however let me start by stating that Local Government has always been a good grounding for State Parliament. The Local Government Association, on your behalf, has put together a 10 point policy plan for this election and you have requested that the next State Government:

REINSTATE THE RIGHT OF COUNCILLORS TO STAND FOR STATE ELECTION

Queensland is the only State in Australia that has laws prohibiting Councillors from standing for State Parliament. This places Councillors in the same category as murders and bankrupts.

I advise today, the Coalition, on obtaining Government, will reinstate the right of councillors to stand for State Parliament without affectively having to resign from office.
I note the State Government has responded to your 10 Point Plan and I suspect it falls well short of the Opposition’s proposal. I also note they have been pinching many of our Election commitments lately and I don’t mind if they pinch our response to your 10 point plan.

VALUATION SYSTEM
It is widely acknowledged that the current valuations system is not working. The unimproved capital value is no longer an acceptable method to determine taxes.

We should not have to accept a system where, for example, the good Aussie battler whose has a house in a suburb that has recently become fashionable is forced out of the family home because of the price others are prepared to pay.

Local Government seeks the reform of the Land Valuation System to include site value for urban land with the retention of unimproved capital value (UCV) for rural land.

The Queensland Coalition will constitute an independent working group comprised of the Local Government Association Queensland, stakeholders, Industry and department representatives to develop a system which meets the requirements of our Urban and Rural communities.

MORATORIUM ON COST SHIFTING
In April 2006 the Commonwealth and all State governments, together with Local Government signed the long awaited Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA).

The IGA includes a number of key features that will help counter cost shifting onto Local government, which is estimated to cost Queensland councils approximately $25 million each year.

Local Government requests a commitment to the IGA and a moratorium on further unfunded legislative mandates to councils.

The Queensland Coalition supports the appropriate delegation of State powers to Local Government which takes into consideration the resources required to undertake these tasks, and will honour the Inter-Governmental Agreement on cost shifting. The Queensland Coalition also supports meaningful consultation with Local Governments and believes that relations between State, Federal and Local Government should be conduced in a spirit of mutual respect, with emphasis on partnerships, co-operation and transparency in financial arrangements.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE REVIEW
Commencing in 1993 with the introduction of the Local Government Act followed by the Environment Protection Act, Integrated Planning Act, Water Act and other legislation, Local Government in Queensland has borne the brunt of a wide range of additional statutory compliance and reporting requirements. The one size fits all approach applying across the diverse nature of Local Government in Queensland is imposing excessive and disproportionate administrative demands – particularly on smaller councils.

You have sought a commitment to review legislative compliance requirements.

The Coalition supports a review of legislation and regular consultation with Local Government on the formulation and implementation of policies and legislation to ensure that issues of concern are responded to through a co-ordinated whole-of-government approach.

RESCISSION OF ASBESTOS LEGISLATION
The Public Health Act (Asbestos) introduced in 2005 made councils responsible for regulating the removal of less than 10 square metres of asbestos from non-workplace settings.

Local Government seeks the rescission of legislation requiring councils to be involved in the removal of asbestos from non workplace buildings.

The Coalition recognises the imposition placed on Councils for the removal of asbestos from non workplace settings and will undertake meaningful consultation with local Government on the monitoring and regulation of asbestos.
FLUORIDATION OF URBAN WATER SUPPLIES
In December 2005 the State Government amended the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act threatening at some future time to force Local Government to fluoridate urban water supplies as well as attempting to cost shift the responsibility by offering only $6 million in subsidy against the Health Department’s $85 million estimate for the task.

Local Government requests the decision be made by Councils, or if mandated the State should provide the funding.

The Coalition believes in community empowerment and the right of Local Governments and ratepayers to make decisions on fluoridation of water supplies. However the Coalition believes that if fluoridation was to be mandated the State Government should provide access to adequate financial and other resources corresponding with Local Governments roles and responsibilities.

INCREASED SUBSIDY FOR EXTERNAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO STATE GOVERNMENT SITES AND NON-STATE SCHOOLS
Local Government seeks an increase from 50% to 75% in the subsidy paid to councils to provide the external infrastructure to State Government sites and non-state schools.

We are sympathetic to the request and are prepared to examine this matter when true state of budgetary finances is known.

INCREASED TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (TIDS) FUNDING
The Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) has provided significant support for local roads. The program has been well supported and is now the primary source of funding for works on Local Roads of Regional Significance. Local Government are seeking a further funding increase of approximately $20 million per annum to boost TIDS funding to $100 million per annum.

The Coalition will provide an increase of $20 million per annum boost for TIDS funding.

This is well in excess of the $11 million offered by the Transport and Main Roads Minister.

WATER INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
Local Government seeks a commitment that there will be no asset stripping of Local Governments water and sewerage assets and a guarantee of full compensation for the owners of infrastructure subsumed into any new institutional arrangements.

The Coalition does not support asset stripping of Local Government’s water and sewerage assets and believes relations between State and Local Government should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect with emphasis on partnership and cooperation.

RETENTION OF THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS IN DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT
Local Government seeks the retention of the current role of councillors in the development assessment process.

The Coalition supports improvements to the development approval process and will retain the current role of councillors in the development assessment process. The Coalition also supports the establishment of a low cost mediation system to reduce planning and development disputes. Further to the ten point policy plan, I have some other initiatives that I would like you to be aware of.

MOSQUITO CONTROL ON CROWN LAND
Many of you would be aware of my long campaign to ensure that the State Government paid their fair share of mosquito control on crown land.

I announce today that the Coalition will provide $4m per year on a recurrent basis for this purpose.

SEA CHANGE
Many Local Governments are facing serious infrastructure problems with the Sea Change phenomenon that is occurring in Queensland.
The Coalition will provide $30m over three years on a dollar for dollar basis to fund local infrastructure projects in these growth areas.

Local Governments can make individual or group applications for project funding up to $2 million from the Sea Change fund.

The package is about providing the roads, sewerage, foreshore upgrades, parklands, pools, halls and libraries whilst protecting the qualities that attract tourists and new residents to these areas.

TREE CHANGE
We have not forgotten the Tree Change areas that are facing similar problems but maybe not on the same scale.

Tree Change communities are placing pressure on smaller rural councils to provide the infrastructure to meet the demands of these growth areas, providing the basic services such as water supply, sewerage, roads and adequate housing is a real challenge for those councils.

The Coalition will provide $6m over three years on a dollar for dollar basis from the tree change fund to assist those councils.

Wild Dog Bounties - we will match dollar for dollar your present bounty if you are now paying $50 we will give you another $50. We recognise the problem with wild dogs and believe a substantive bounty will assist. We are serious about controlling wild dogs.

SIZE SHAPE AND SUSTAINABILITY
I have been following the Size, Shape and Sustainability exercise with great interest and commend councils for their participation.

Sustainability can mean different things to different people.

Some suggest the amalgamation of unsustainable councils will make them sustainable.

I have the view under the present financial arrangements that the amalgamation of unsustainable councils could mean you end up with a larger unsustainable council.

One only has to look at Victoria where large scale amalgamation occurred yet they still have a significant number of what could be determined now as unsustainable councils.

I am not suggesting amalgamation should not take place. There may be situations where location, population, growth and community of interest may make amalgamation practical.

Let me make it clear that the Coalition will not support forced amalgamations.

We support the SSS process and have confidence that councils will recognise where benefits can be gained for the long term.

It is becoming clear that Local Governments across Australia are under funded. Over the last 12 years the percentage of taxation revenue distributed to Local Governments went down from 1.2% to 0.6%.

This coupled with cost shifting, population growth, increasing construction costs, skill shortage and increasing demands of a modern society is making it more difficult for councils to balance the books.

This is in contrast to the huge windfall the states now receive from GST.

Local Government does need a fixed percentage of taxation and I am pleased to see that this issue has reached the COAG (Council of Australian Governments) level.

WATER CRISIS IN SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND
Water is one of the biggest issues in town and there are opposing views from both sides of the Parliament on the best way forward.

Additional water has to be found for short and long term requirements and this situation is not restricted to the South East Corner.

Both the Government and Coalition agree on the need for the western corridor recycled water scheme to use recycled water from Brisbane waste water treatment plants, in Power Stations.

Common ground also exists on the need to use and reticulate water more efficiently and build more storages. Unfortunately that is about where the similarities end.

With the loss of the Wolffdene dam site in 1990 by the Goss Government where land had been purchased for a dam that would have been similar in size to Wivenhoe.

It was inevitable that other dam sites would have to be found and infrastructure put in place. Unfortunately this progressed at snails pace and eventually stalled.

Fast forward to today and we have a genuine water crisis on our hands. Put another way the chickens are coming home to roost.

The Coalition’s plan focuses on building the water infrastructure that has been planned for years but never built, ensuring more water is recycled for industrial and agricultural use and ensuring water is used more efficiently.

We plan to construct dams at Wyaralong, Glendowner, Amamoor Creek Downs, the raising of the Borumba Dam and to reassess the yield of the existing Wivenhoe dam.

These dam sites have been previously identified and considerable land purchased for that purpose.

In addition we would build the Emu Creek dam to supply Toowoomba.

The Coalition vision is for all water to be recycled not dumped into oceans and rivers.

We have committed to fund the Western Corridor Recycled Water Pipeline. This was an initiative supported by my Water Infrastructure Task Force when I was Minister for Natural Resources and should have been built by now.

We have a special $100 million Business Water Efficiency & Recycling fund to assist Councils and business development projects that replaces quality drinking water currently being used on parks, sporting fields and for industrial use with recycled water.

It will also support water swapping between recycled urban water and irrigator’s fresh supplies as well as stormwater conservation initiatives.

Many of the present Government Water Rebate Schemes have been copied from our initiatives. This Business Water Efficiency & Recycled Fund so far has not been. It is a good initiative and I would welcome the Government supporting it as well.

Our $100 million Water Saver Rebate Scheme is to provide rebates to home owners to install water saving devices in their homes. This funding is approximately $40m more than what is presently being offered by the State Government.

This package worth in excess of $1 billion along with the provision of mandatory rainwater tanks in new homes, an early start on construction of new dams and a commitment to the development of desalination and new water sources is a genuine deliverable water package for the future.

The hastily announced Traveston Dam site near Gympie has never been listed as an option in any planning document for the past decade, and is highly unlikely to ever be feasible, affordable or deliverable and is not included in the Coalition Water Policy position.
WATER INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE
On a broader scale the Coalition announced that we would set up a Water Infrastructure Task Force similar to what I had in place to get the development of environmentally and economically sustainable water infrastructure throughout Queensland back on track.

Key water projects such as the Nathan Dam, Uranna Dam, Mullinga Dam, Connors River Dam, Raising Kinchant Dam, Rockwood Weir, Capricorn Coast Pipeline and water for Bowen will be a high priority for development under our $1 billion over six years Queensland wide Water Infrastructure Development program.

WATER TAXES
Water management and administration will also change under a Coalition Government. We will drop Labors water taxes, get water planning back on track and give rural users the option of managing their own water supply schemes.

The $100 tax on stock and domestic water licence holders will be withdrawn and replaced with a one off licence fee.

The $4 per megalitre charge will also be withdrawn and water prices will be capped at the cost of operating and maintaining irrigation schemes and would not seek a rate of return, or profit margin, on historical investment.

The $15 per megalitre on Local Government is a best guess and will be reviewed and Local Government will not carry the financial burden for the whole community.

Another issue that needs discussion before the Election is what will the price of water be after the water grids and reforms are in place. We already know the present governments strong stance on user pays!

TOOWOOMBA AND DARLING DOWNS WATER SUPPLY
I personally believe we should be looking closely at our existing natural resources for a long term water supply for Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. I have already mentioned Emu Creek Dam to supplement Toowoomba.

One of the best dam sites in Queensland is located near Taroom. The Natham Dam will hold 1.2 megalitres, similar in size to Wivenhoe. A 330 kilometre pipeline could connect Miles, Chinchilla, Dalby and Toowoomba to an additional and reliable supply of water.

Water then could be sent to Brisbane if necessary, it is only another 70 kilometres from Toowoomba to the Wivenhoe outlet and it runs down hill.

Another option is a small diversion of the Clarance River with a dam site at Elbow Valley north of Warwick into the Condamine River. Water would then run to within 35 kilometres of the upper reaches of Ma Ma Creek which flows into Lockyer Creek and onto Brisbane.

The water in the Condamine River would also run within 55 kilometres of Toowoomba.

The Clarance diversion would be more challenging because it is located in NSW; however I believe the time will come when common sense will prevail and progress can be made at State and Federal Government levels on adequate water supplies for our cities and towns.

When I was Minister for Natural Resources, I did examine the Clarance diversion and inspected the Elbow Valley Dam site. I also contacted the NSW Government, however they were not interested, which was no surprise at the time.

Interestingly enough with a slightly larger diversion of the Clarance, NSW could have put a substantial amount of water back into the Murray Darling system.

I thank you again for being given the opportunity to put the Queensland Coalition perspective to your conference.
Oppositions are often portrayed as being negative because of the way the media run the ‘for and against’ story of the day.

But as you can see from what I have announced today we have a number of positive plans and policies to address the issues affecting all Queenslanders.

Thank you very much.

**Address: Local Leadership in Action**

*Ms Julie McCrossin, presenter “Life Matters ABC Radio*

Due to copyright laws this speech was unable to be published.
Hon Treasurer’s Report

Cr Brendan McNamara
Treasurer
LGAQ

Mr President, distinguished guests, delegates and observers, I move that the statement of financial performance and the statement of financial position as at 31 May 2006, as audited and printed in the conference agenda, be adopted.

At the halfway mark of my term as your Association’s Treasurer, I am pleased to report that the financial position of the LGAQ not only remains healthy but has improved.

Notwithstanding that the QAO Certified Statements are contained in your agenda document at page 236, allow me to make some more detailed observations about the LGAQ’s financials and strategy. As can be seen from the balance sheet as at 31 May 2006, the legal entity has net assets totalling $11.4 million. After discounting for the $1.4 million we hold in reserves on behalf of government funding agencies, Your Association’s net worth is $10 million. The LGAQ carries no debt and all contingent liabilities such as staff leave entitlements are fully funded.

In relation to revenue and expenditure, the 2005/2006 member subscription of $2.7 million represents only 20% of total LGAQ revenues, down from 25% the year before. Other major sources of funds come from fee for service, online subscriptions and owned entity profits.

Further to what your President said in his address about LGW dividends exceeding member subscriptions to LGAQ over the last 3 years, member subscription to LGAQ represent only one tenth of 1 percent of council expenditures. A conservative assessment reveals that LGAQ’s effort has returned a bit over $400 million to member councils during 2005/2006. Expressed as ROI - $14,000%.

The key performance indicator for any service orientated organization is “value for money”. Successive member attitude surveys reveal that over 86% of council Mayors and CEO’s consider LGAQ member subscription as just that - value for money.

The quick ratio of the LGAQ legal entity at the end of 2005/2006 stands at 1.15 which means there is enough cash to pay the bills and a bit left over. The LGAQ’s financial strategy for the last decade and a half is to have balanced budgets and a small cash reserve to cover at-risk revenues. It remains a constant strategy to leave cash with the members rather than stash resources in hollow logs.

In summary, the unqualified financial statements before you highlight the positive state of the LGAQ finances. Furthermore, it enables the Association to continue the effort on behalf of member councils.

Address: Sucking The Marrow Out Of Life

Mr John Maclean
Ironman
Para Olympian

Due to copyright laws this speech was unable to be published.