Local Government Association of Queensland Inc
107th Annual Conference

Host: Cairns City Council

Official Opening Ceremony

Tuesday 2 September 2003

Held at the Cairns Convention Centre
Cnr Wharf and Sheridan Streets, Cairns

With the Official Opening by
The Hon Peter Beattie- MP
Premier
Conference Program

1-4 September 2003

‘First Things First’

Monday, 1 September 2003

8.30am to 1.00pm  Executive Meeting

10.00am to 6.00pm  Registration
Delegates, Observers and Partners
Foyer, Cairns Convention Centre, Cnr Wharf and Sheridan Streets, Cairns

1.00pm to 1.30pm  Executive Lunch with LGMA State Council

1.30pm to 4.00pm  Regional Roads Group Assembly

6.00pm - 7.30pm  Welcoming Ceremony
Hosted by King and Co
Cairns Esplanade - Drinks and Finger Food
All Partners Welcome Free of Charge

6.30pm  Welcome to Country
Mr Seith Fourmile, Gimuy Yidingi People

6.35pm  Welcome to Cairns
Cr Kevin Byrne, Mayor of Cairns

6.45pm  Response
Cr Noel Playford OAM, President, LGAQ

6.50pm  Sponsors Slot
Mr Tim Fynes-Clinton, Managing Partner, King and Co

6.55pm  Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Local Government

7.30pm  Program concludes

FREE EVENING
Tuesday, 2 September 2003

8.00am  Registration
Foyer, Cairns Convention Centre, Cnr Wharf and Sheridan Streets, Cairns

8.30am  Call to Order by President

8.35am  Presentation of Executive and Office Bearers

8.45am  Official Opening
by Premier, Hon Peter Beattie, MP

9.15am  Presidential Address
Cr Noel Playford OAM, President, LGAQ

9.30am  Keynote Address: “Governance in Uncertain Times”
Dr Richard Butler AM, Former Ambassador to the United Nations and Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission to disarm Iraq. - Governor of Tasmania Designate

10.15am  Debate

11.45am  Address: Federal Local Government Minister
Hon Wilson Tuckey MP

12.15pm  Lunch
Hosted by Telstra Countrywide

1.30pm  Address: Main Roads and Transport Update
Hon Steve Bredhauer MP

2.00pm  Debate

3.00pm  Address: “State of our States’ Infrastructure”
Professor Lyndsay Neilson

3.30pm  Debate

4.45pm  Address: “Community Attitudes and Voter Intentions - Council Elections 2004”
Ms Kim Landers, ABC TV “State Line” host

5.15pm  Adjournment

6.30pm for 7.00pm  Gala Dinner - Cairns Convention Centre
Hosted by by Hastings Deering
(Dress: Coat and tie)

Long Service Certificate Presentations

11.30pm  Program concludes
Wednesday, 3 September 2003

8.30am  Conference Resumes

8.45am  **Address: “How Do We Rate? - Council Rating Under The Microscope”**
        Messrs Alan Morton/Stephen Fynes-Clinton, consultants to the LGAQ

9.15am  Debate

10.30am **Address: State Minister for Local Government & Planning**
        Hon Nita Cunningham MP

11.00am Debate

12.00noon **ALGA Update**
        Cr Mike Montgomery, President Australian Local Government Association

12.15pm  Lunch
        Hosted by Department of Public Works

1.30pm  Conference Resumes

1.30pm  **Split Plenary Forums:**
        Who does what and makes the decisions - post the 27 March Poll?
        Funding our community’s future - who pays?

2.45pm  Debate

3.30pm  **Address: State Opposition Update**
        Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, Leader of the Opposition
        Mr Howard Hobbs, MP, Shadow Minister for Local Government

4.00pm  Debate

4.30pm  **Address: “Foundations Of Peak Personal Performance”**
        Mr Matt Church, Scientific Humorist

5.15pm  Adjournment

6.30pm for 7.00pm  Evening Program:
        Yorkeys Knob
        Rainforest Rhapsody “Off with the Fairies”
        Hosted by Jardine Lloyd Thompson Pty Ltd

11.30pm  Program Concludes
Thursday, 4 September 2003

8.45am Workshops

8.45am Forum - “Ships of Shame”

12.15pm Consideration of:
(a) Executive Report
(b) President’s Annual Address
(c) Treasurer’s Report

12.30pm Selection of 2005 Annual Conference Venue

12.45pm Address: “Hope and Opportunity”
Ms Tan Le, former Young Australian of the Year

1.15pm Closing Ceremony

1.30pm Lunch
Hosted by Powerlink

3.00pm - 4.30pm Optional Best Practice Tour
(departing Cairns Convention Centre)

6.00pm Evening Program:
Farewell Dinner - Freshwater Connection
“Local Government Off the Rails”

11.00pm Program concludes
“Policy” Motions

NO. 1

EXECUTIVE

DISASTER MANAGEMENT
MOVER: Cr K Mahoney (Woocoo) SECONDER: Cr P Bell (Emerald)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Policy Statement Clause heading 3.6 be amended by deleting the word ‘Natural’ to read ‘Disaster Management’ and further, include new policies on Terrorism to read as follows:

3.6 Disaster Management
3.6.1 Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements (NDRA)
3.6.2 Fire Services
3.6.3 Terrorism
3.6.3.1 Local Government should be kept fully informed of Federal and State Governments proposals and initiatives relating to counter-terrorism, in particular, critical infrastructure risk assessment and management strategies.”
3.6.3.2 Financial assistance should be provided by Federal and State Governments for Local Government to undertake risk assessment studies and develop mitigation strategies in relation to the protection of critical infrastructure potentially impacted upon by terrorist activities."

CARRIED

NO. 2

EXECUTIVE

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH
MOVER: Cr L Tyrell (Thuringowa) SECONDER: Cr K Hockey (Monto)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Policy Statement Clause 5 heading be amended by deleting the words "Environmental Management” and inserting the words “Environment and Health” to reflect the inclusion of public health related policy issues in this section.”

CARRIED

NO. 3

EXECUTIVE

POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS - STATE ELECTION POLICY PLAN
MOVER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa) SECONDER: Cr P Bell (Emerald)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Policy Statement Clause 1.3 be amended in the final paragraph by deletion of the words ‘2000 State Election Policy Plan’ and insertion of the words ‘2003 State Election Policy Plan’, and further

That the current Appendix B (2000 State Election Policy Plan) be replaced with the 2003 State Election Policy Plan.”

CARRIED
"A" Motions

Association Matters

NO.1

RECEPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS
MOVER: Cr N Playford (Noosa)  
SECONDER: Cr P Bell (Emerald)

The President’s Annual Address will be read on Tuesday morning 2nd September 2003 and needs to be formally received prior to consideration later in the Conference.

"That the President’s Annual Address for 2002-2003 be received.”

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF PRESIDENT’S ANNUAL ADDRESS
MOVER: Cr Ross (Redland)  
SECONDER: Cr Secombe (Redland)

The President’s Annual Address remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on Thursday 4th September 2003.

"That the President’s Annual Address from 2002-2003 be adopted”.

CARRIED

NO.2

RECEPTION OF THE 107TH ANNUAL REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE
MOVER: Cr P Bell (Emerald)  
SECONDER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)

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

"That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2002-2003 be received.”

CARRIED
ADOPTION OF THE EXECUTIVE REPORT
MOVER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan) SECONDER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)

The Executive’s Annual Report remains before the Conference during proceedings and is considered on Thursday 4th September 2003.

"That the Annual Report of the Executive for 2002-2003 be adopted".

CARRIED

NO. 3

EXECUTIVE

RECEPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT
MOVER: Cr P Bell (Emerald) SECONDER: Cr M Borzi (Mareeba)

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 2003 and Auditor’s Report be received."

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND AUDITOR’S REPORT
MOVER: Cr A Bennison (Brisbane) SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

The Annual Financial Statements and Auditor’s Report remain before the Conference during proceedings and are considered on Thursday 4th September 2003.

"That the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 May 2003 and Auditor’s Report be adopted”.

CARRIED

NOTE: The following motion (no. 4) involves proposed changes to the Association’s Rules. Any alteration of rules must be passed by at least a two-third majority vote of all Members whether present at the conference or not (see Rule 57)

NO. 4

BURKE

ASSOCIATION RULES - ALTERATION - PROXY VOTING AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MOVER: Cr A Clarke (Burke) SECONDER: Cr R Smith (Boonah)

"That the Constitution and Rules of the Local Government Association of Queensland be amended by the inclusion of a new Rule 22A as follows:

- Voting by Proxy-

22A If a Member is unable to attend a conference ("the absent Member"), the absent Member may appoint a delegate of another Member ("the proxy delegate") to vote the whole of the absent Member’s entitlement at a conference in accordance with the following provisions: -
(a) The absent Member must:

(i) Complete and execute under seal the Proxy Form (which appears as Appendix A to these rules) and forward same to the Executive Director, which Form must be actually received by the Executive Director at least 14 days prior to the commencement of the conference; and

(ii) forward a copy of the Proxy Form to the proxy delegate; and

(b) The proxy delegate must be a nominated delegate to the conference (of his/her own Council), duly notified to the Executive Director in accordance with rule 21; and

(c) The proxy delegate must provide written confirmation to the Executive Director of his/her acceptance of the appointment as proxy for the absent Member, which written confirmation must be actually received by the Executive Director at least 7 days prior to the commencement of the conference.”

LOST

Governance Section

NO.5

EXECUTIVE

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS - AMENDED LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARIES REVIEW COMMISSION

MOVER:  Cr P Bell (Emerald)  SECONDER:   Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)

“That Section 8 of the Local Government Regulation 1994 be rewritten to prescribe relevant issues and criteria to be considered in the review of all references given under Section 64 of the Local Government Act and not merely the three particular types of references currently addressed, and further

That Section 8 be expanded so that it does more than merely identify “issues to be considered” and prescribes the outcomes which should be sought to be achieved in relation to the particular issues, and/or the factual conclusions which justify (or do not justify) a particular kind of change”

CARRIED
NO. 6

KILKIVAN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS - OPTIONS FOR MAYOR TO BE ELECTED AT LARGE OR FROM AMONGST COUNCILLORS
MOVER: Cr D Lahiff (Kilkivan) SECONDER: Cr M Angel (Kilkivan)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Minister for Local Government and Planning to amend the Local Government Act, to allow each Council to choose between the following options for future Council elections:

a) Separate elections for Mayor and Councillors; or

b) A single election for all Councillors with the Mayor being elected internally from elected Councillors."

LOST

NO. 7

NQLGA/CARDWELL

VOTING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS - SECRET BALLOT FOR FILLING A CASUAL VACANCY
MOVER: Cr J Byrne (Cardwell) SECONDER: Cr R Godbehere (Cardwell)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland pursue changes in legislation to allow for a ‘secret ballot’ vote rather than a ‘show of hands’ when a Local Government is required to appoint a replacement Councillor when a vacancy occurs within the last twelve months of a Council term."

CARRIED

NO. 8

MIRIAM VALE

SALE OF LAND FOR ARREARS OF RATES - ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE WITH OTHER BIDDERS
MOVER: Cr L Mitchell (Miriam Vale) SECONDER: Cr D Whitmore (Miriam Vale)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek an amendment to the Local Government Act 1993, Section 1045, to permit local governments to negotiate with any bidder at the auction should negotiation with the highest bidder be unsuccessful."

CARRIED
NO.9  MIRIAM VALE

SALE OF LAND FOR ARREARS OF RATES - EXEMPTION FROM "COOLING OFF" PERIOD
MOVER: Cr L Mitchell (Miriam Vale)  Cr D Whitmore (Miriam Vale)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State Government amendment to S363 of the Property Agent and Motor Dealers Act 2000, to provide exemption for properties referred to in S1045 of the Local Government Act 1993 from the "Cooling-Off Period" by altering the definition of relevant contract to read:--

"means a contract for the sale of residential property in Queensland, other than a contract formed on a sale by auction or a property referred to in S1045 of the Local Government Act 1993."

CARRIED

Finance and Administration Section

NO.10  EXECUTIVE

DEVOLUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES - NO COST SHIFTING TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr A Bennison (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr K Mahoney (Woocoo)

"That the State Government recognise that over the past decade State devolved responsibilities or additional regulatory and compliance requirements have imposed additional costs of approximately $25 million per annum on Local Government and that in future Local Government will demand that any new responsibilities or legislated impositions be matched with appropriate funding."

CARRIED

NO.11  HERVEY BAY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES REVIEW
MOVER: Cr T Sorenson (Hervey Bay)  SECONDER: Mr L Bennett (Hervey Bay)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to conduct a review of local government boundaries in Queensland with a view to achieving a rationalisation of boundaries which will result in a more viable, cost effective system of local government throughout the State. The review should be undertaken with full consultation with local government and the development of a compensation mechanism to assist any local governments that may be adversely affected by change in the short term."
AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr B Ludwig (Livingstone)  SECONDER: Cr J Smith (Livingstone)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to conduct a review of local government boundaries in Queensland with a view to achieving a rationalisation of boundaries which will result in a more viable, cost effective system of local government throughout the State. The review should be undertaken with full consultation with local government and their communities and the development of a compensation mechanism to assist any local governments that may be adversely affected by change in the short term."

LOST

NO.12
GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST)- ALLOCATION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr J Byrne (Cardwell)  SECONDER: Cr G Churchill (Banana)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to make available to Queensland Local Governments on an annual basis, a percentage of the GST revenue passed on to the state by the Federal Government. Such amount to be equivalent to the cost effect of any new legislation which imposes a cost burden on Local Government. Further, that such payments be made for the ongoing cumulative costs to Local Government."

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr R McCullough (Mt Isa)  SECONDER: Cr F Donovan (Mt Isa)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to make available to Queensland Local Governments on an annual basis an amount equivalent to the cost effect of any new legislation which imposes a cost burden on Local Government. Further, that such payments be made for the ongoing cumulative costs to Local Government."

CARRIED

NO.13
AMBULANCE LEVY – EXEMPTION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS
MOVER: Cr G Churchill (Banana)  SECONDER: Cr P Bienek (Banana)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government for local government and small business to be exempt from the Ambulance Levy."

CARRIED
NO. 14  
AMBULANCE LEVY - AVOIDING MULTIPLE CHARGING  
MOVER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)  
SECONDER: Cr R Newell (Bowen)  
"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to ensure that the multiple electricity holders are not charged a multiple number of times for the ambulance levy."

CARRIED

NO. 15  
VALUATION OF LAND ACT - SITE VALUE OPTION  
MOVER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)  
SECONDER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  
"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Hon the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines to review the Valuation of Land Act 1944 to provide the option for a valuation provided by the Department to be based on site valuation."

CARRIED

NO. 16  
STAMP DUTY - EXEMPTION ON LAND PURCHASED FOR PARK PURPOSES  
MOVER: Cr P Wood (Toowoomba)  
SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan)  
"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to waive stamp duty on the purchase of land by Local Government for public open space, for example bushland park and creek corridors."

CARRIED

NO. 17  
DISASTER MANAGEMENT - STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS - ADDITIONAL STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING  
MOVER: Cr B Ludwig (Livingstone)  
SECONDER: Cr J Smith (Livingstone)  
"That the Local Government Association of Queensland approach the State Government seeking a renewed methodology for the distribution of funding to Local Governments for the support of SES groups."

CARRIED
People and Performance Section

NO. 18  
NQLGA/CARDWELL

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS - ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS
MOVER: Cr J Byrne (Cardwell)  
SECONDER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations on behalf of Queensland Local Governments for the introduction of an industrial wage determination alternative to Enterprise Bargain Agreements which would allow Councils to opt out of Enterprise Bargaining."

CARRIED

Environment and Health Section

NO. 19  
MAROOCHY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - ENDORSEMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE - "THE ECONOMY IS A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF THE ENVIRONMENT"
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  
SECONDER: Cr T Thompson (Maroochy)

"That Local Government Association of Queensland endorse the overwhelming view of the LGAQ Sustainability Conference that the economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment (Lowe, 2002)"

CARRIED

NO. 20  
COMPOSITE MOTION
GAYNDAH/MAROOCHY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - LGAQ LEADERSHIP ROLE
MOVER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)  
SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland demonstrate leadership in enabling local government to become a central player in the formation and delivery of natural resource management policies and programs (eg. through the development of a NRM framework similar to the Wentworth Group’s "Blueprint for a Living Continent" (Young et al, 2002)

and that the LGAQ Executive commit itself to this as a matter of urgency."

CARRIED
AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  SECONDER: Cr T Thompson (Maroochy)

"That this conference acknowledges and endorses the leadership of LGAQ in assisting QLD councils to deal with Natural Resource Management issues.

That the Local Government Association of Queensland demonstrates further leadership in enabling local government to become a central player in the formation and delivery of natural resource management policies and programs (eg. through the development of a NRM framework similar to the Wentworth Group’s "Blueprint for a Living Continent" (Young et al, 2002)."

CARRIED

NO. 21  MAROOCHY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - LACK OF STATE GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  SECONDER: Cr T Thompson (Maroochy)

"That Local Government Association of Queensland express its deepest concerns about the failure of the State Government to deliver on a raft of NRM outcomes: including but not limited to Regional Coastal Management Planning, Vegetation Clearing, Paradise Dam, South East Queensland Regional Landscape Strategy (SEQRLS), environmental weeds etc."

CARRIED

NO. 22  COMPOSITE MOTION
GAYNDAH/MAROOCHY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - DIRECT COMMONWEALTH FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)  SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

"That Local Government Association of Queensland engage directly with the Commonwealth Government regarding investment in natural resource management"

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  SECONDER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)

"That Local Government Association of Queensland consider engaging directly with the Commonwealth Government regarding investment in natural resource management"

CARRIED
NO. 23

WATER RESOURCES - URGENT COMPLETION OF WATER RESOURCE PLANS
MOVER: Cr A Finlay (Stanthorpe)  SECONDER: Cr D Ingram (Stanthorpe)

"That the Minister for Natural Resources & Minister for Mines be requested to take urgent action to complete the preparation and release of Water Resource Plans for various river systems in the State and ensure that appropriate resources are allocated to allow the timely completion of Resource Operations plans for these areas."

CARRIED

NO. 24

COASTAL MANAGEMENT - EXPANSION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CONTROL
MOVER: Cr R Logan (Cook)  SECONDER: Cr H Rutherford (Cook)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby for the right of coastal local governments to control and regulate the water line and all lands under the water line to the eastern sea boundary of their area."

CARRIED

NO. 25

PLASTIC BAGS - SUPPORT FOR STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PLASTIC BAGS
MOVER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan)  SECONDER: Cr I Meyers (Jondaryan)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby for the phasing out of the use of petroleum based plastic bags by 2005 and support all legislative and non-legislative efforts by State Government, Federal Government and Industry to achieve this outcome."

CARRIED
LITTERING FROM VEHICLES - REGISTERED OWNER TO BE RESPONSIBLE

MOWER: Cr T Shepherd (Gold Coast) 
SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland approach the State Government to consider legislative amendment to the Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000 to allow authorised officers to issue PINs for the depositing of litter from a motor vehicle, on the basis of motor vehicle registration details."

AMENDMENT

MOWER: Cr G Baildon (Gold Coast) 
SECONDER: Cr T Shephard (Gold Coast)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland approach the State Government to consider legislative amendment to the Environmental Protection (Waste Management) Regulation 2000 to allow authorised officers to issue PINs for unlawful littering from a motor vehicle, on the basis of motor vehicle registration details."

CARRIED

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES - CONTRACTOR ACCREDITATION AND REGULATION - "GREEN CARD"

1. That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State Government assistance in the development of an accreditation scheme for suitably trained civil and building contractors using a "green card" similar in concept to the "gold card" used in the building and construction industry.

2. That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State Government and industry assistance to set up an appropriate annual award scheme to recognise and encourage the cooperative efforts of the building and construction industry in the move to sustainable development.

3. That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State Government recognition of the specific difficulties and needs of Local Governments in auditing and regulating the "on-site" delivery of sustainable environmental outcomes during the construction phase of development because of the administrative difficulty of complying with the conflicting requirements of a number of policies and laws.

4. That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State Government assistance to review and change the appropriate legislation and policy associated with sustainable environmental management to ensure the consistent integrated management of such policy in an effective manner. Such an integrated policy to:

- Clearly define the environmental management responsibilities of licenced contractors and sub-contractors
- Provide for and recognise the accreditation and annual award process for accredited contractors
- provide for a sliding scale of indexed penalties;
- provide an effective mechanism for the appointment of appropriately trained “accredited” staff;
- provide for the effective delegation of authority to allow State Government and Local Government Staff to regulate and administer the policy with the minimum of conflict between various administrative bodies.

WITHDRAWN
NO.28

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM (GMO) - POWER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE GMO FREE ZONES
MOVER: Cr N Strohfeld (Rosalie)  SECONDER: Cr C Ambrose (Rosalie)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek an amendment to the Integrated Planning Act to allow individual local governments to declare Genetically Modified Organism Free Zones for part, or all, of their Shires, towns/cities."

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr N Playford (Noosa)  SECONDER: Cr N Strofeld (Rosalie)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek legislative amendments to allow individual local governments to declare Genetically Modified Organism Free Zones for part, or all, of their Shires, towns/cities."

CARRIED

NO.29

COASTAL PROTECTION - PROTECTION OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF FROM SUB-STANDARD SHIPPING
MOVER: Cr M Brunker (Bowen)  SECONDER: Cr R Newell (Bowen)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby all levels of Government to ensure that all of the recommendations from the International Commission of Shipping Report entitled, “Inquiry into Ship Safety - Ships, Slaves and Competition” be adopted and implemented and that the Association support the development of a Memorandum of Understanding with major shipping users that they will not take the cheapest alternative and use sub standard shipping to transport their products or produce."

CARRIED

Planning and Development Section

NO.30

REGIONAL PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESSES - SUPPORT BY THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
MOVER: Cr A Bennison (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Premier, seeking his Government’s strong leadership and involvement in regional planning throughout Queensland and in the SEQ2021 project, to facilitate sustainable population growth patterns, supported by appropriate economic and employment generation and ensuring growth management includes strategic infrastructure development, as well as protection of greenspace and the coastal environment."
AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr M Berwick (Douglas) SECONDER: Cr G Connett (Douglas)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Premier, seeking his Government’s strong leadership and involvement in regional planning throughout Queensland to facilitate sustainable population growth patterns, supported by appropriate economic and employment generation and ensuring growth management includes strategic infrastructure development, as well as protection of greenspace and the coastal environment."

CARRIED

NO.31 COMPOSITE MOTION IPSWICH/GAYNDAH
REGIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY - STATE GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT AND FUNDING
MOVER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich) SECONDER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Premier to provide necessary funding and support to the Regional Landscape Strategy in fulfilment of his election promises."

CARRIED

NO.32 CALOUNDRA
INTEGRATED PLANNING ACT - INCREASED COURT POWERS AND DETERRENTS OVER BREACHES OF DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS
MOVER: Cr D Aldous (Caloundra) SECONDER: Cr A Champion (Caloundra)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to take immediate steps to ensure developers adhere to development approvals by providing appropriate deterrents against breach of such approvals in all relevant legislation and to provide for the Planning and Environment Court to have the power to impose a money penalty where appropriate and make an order for costs in proceedings which come before it."

CARRIED

NO.33 LOGAN
ON THE SPOT FINES - EXTENDED TO DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT BREACHES
MOVER: Cr T Sandmann (Logan) SECONDER: Cr J Freeman (Logan)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Attorney-General, and the Local Government and Planning Minister, requesting that they facilitate the changes necessary to the State Penalties Enforcement Regulation 2000 to allow local councils the option to issue Penalty Infringement Notices (on the spot fines) for the Development Offences mentioned at Part 3 Division 1 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997 namely Sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4, 4.3.5 and 4.3.7. Further and in a similar manner the Environmental Offence mentioned at Chapter 8 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 at Section 426, dealing with a level 1 Environmentally Relevant Activities."

CARRIED
Community Development and Human Services Section

NO.34  COMPOSITE MOTION
CQLGA/BANANA/BUNDABERG/SWQLGA/
BURKE/NQLGA/BURDEKIN/DDLGA

COUNTRY RACE CLUBS - INCREASE IN STATE FUNDING
MOVER: Cr K McDuff
SECONDER: Cr A Clarke (Burke)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Hon. Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie and the Minister for Tourism and Racing, the Hon. Merri Rose MP requesting that the State Government support Qld Racing and reinstate horse racing in rural and remote area to its previous levels due to the crisis facing country racing and the social/economic ramifications for country communities. The State Government support to be $5 million recurrent funding over and above the current TAB funding to the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board to allow the previous levels of racing to continue”.

CARRIED

NO.35  COMPOSITE MOTION
LOGAN/MAROOCHY

GRAFFITI - CONTROL ON THE SALE OF SPRAY CANS
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)
SECONDER: Cr T Thompson (Maroochy)

"That the Local Government Association seek amendments to the State Criminal Code Act 1899, section 469 Wilful Damage, Part 9 Graffiti, requesting provisions which require retailers to store spray paint in a secure area so it cannot be bought off the shelf; making it illegal to sell spray paint to minors and giving Council the right to enter and photograph any premises selling spray paint and also the power to enter private property to remove graffiti that is visible from a public place.”

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)
SECONDER: Cr J Freeman (Logan)

"That the Local Government Association seek amendments to the State Criminal Code Act 1899, section 469 Wilful Damage, Part 9 Graffiti, requesting provisions which require retailers to store spray paint in a secure area so it cannot be bought off the shelf; making it illegal to sell spray paint to minors and also to give the power to Local Government to enter private property to remove graffiti that is visible from a public place.”

CARRIED
NO.36

AFFORDABLE HOUSING - SUPPORT FOR THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MOVER:  Cr B Oakes (Nebo)  SE CONDER:  Cr J Ross (Redland)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the relevant Federal and State Government
Departments to investigate and implement methods to improve the availability of affordable housing
generally and in regions affected by unprecedented industrial and economic expansion. Such
infrastructure is beyond the capabilities of many local governments to adequately house residents and
workers.”

CARRIED

NO.37

INDIGENOUS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT - CONTINUATION OF "WHICH WAY YOU MOB" PROJECT
MOVER:  Cr B Abbot (Noosa)  SE CONDER:  Cr P Hudson (ACC)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the relevant Federal and
State Government Departments requesting recurrent financial support for the Which Way You Mob!
Indigenous Youth Project to ensure Indigenous youth participation opportunities and Indigenous youth
leadership development continues within DOGIT communities represented by the Aboriginal Coordinating
Council. Further, additional financial assistance requested to expand the Which Way You Mob Indigenous
Youth Project to enable support and assistance to Indigenous Youth Programming attached to Councils
across Queensland.”

CARRIED

NO.38

LIQUOR LICENSING - LICENSES LIMITED TO 3 AM
MOVER:  Cr G Baildon (Gold Coast)  SECONDER:  Cr T Shepherd (Gold Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to amend the Liquor
Act 1992 to limit the trading hours of licensed premises to 3am.”

CARRIED

NO.39

LIQUOR LICENSING - REMOVAL OF BAN ON NON RESIDENTS CARRYING ALCOHOL THROUGH
RESTRICTED AREAS
MOVER:  Cr R Logan (Cook)  SECONDER:  Cr T Shepherd (Gold Coast)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland investigate a legal challenge, if all other means
to achieve a satisfactory outcome are unsuccessful, to the validity of the Queensland Government Liquor
Licensing Amendments to the provision that allows for the restricted carriage of alcohol provision be
placed upon a Shire road network.”

CARRIED
Roads, Transport and Infrastructure

NO. 40  
NATIONAL HIGHWAY FUNDING - COMMONWEALTH TO HONOUR COMMITMENTS
MOVER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan)  
SECONDER: Cr D Davidson (Tambo)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland calls upon the Commonwealth Government, in the introduction of any new road funding reforms as part of AusLink, not to reduce the level of funding or its agreed responsibility for the National Highway System, and further

That the National Highway System be completed, particularly in Queensland, before the Commonwealth shifts funds to other areas."

CARRIED

NO. 41  
ROAD AND TRANSPORT FUNDING - FEDERAL BLACK SPOT PROGRAMME - CHANGES TO CRITERIA
MOVER: Cr P Wood (Toowoomba)  
SECONDER: Cr K McDuff (Bundaberg)

"That the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon. John Anderson MP, be requested to modify the eligibility criteria for accessing funding under the Federal Black Spot Programme, to:

a) include intersections on the National Highway in regional urban communities, and

b) recognise and exclude "secondary costs" associated with major regional urban intersection upgrading works, which may otherwise preclude consideration of such projects for Blackspot subsidy,

with the view to achieving continuing and more effective reduction in the trauma and costs of road accidents to regional urban communities, because the level of funding available to undertake Federal Safety and Urgent Minor Works (SUMW) Programme is currently inadequate to fund the major safety works required at many locations."

CARRIED
“B” Motions

Governance Section

NO. 42 LIVINGSTONE

DISASTER MANAGEMENT - STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE UNITS - ADDITIONAL STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland approach the State Government seeking a renewed methodology for the distribution of funding to Local Governments for the support of SES groups.”

NOT DEBATED - MOTION IS REPEATED

NO. 43 SBLGA

RATE REVENUE - COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF REVENUE FROM STATE GOVERNMENT LAND ACQUISITION FOR COMMERCIAL FORESTRY PURPOSES

MOVER: Cr R Eisenmenger (Murgon) SECONDER: Cr W Hubner (Murgon)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Minister for Natural Resources to compensate local government for the loss of rates revenue through land being declared non-rateable due to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines purchasing land and this land being planted with commercial timber plantations.”

CARRIED

NO. 44 MAREEBA

VALUATION OF LAND - LAND FOR PUMP SITES VALUED WITH RELATED PROPERTY

MOVER: Cr F Cattarossi (Mareeba) SECONDER: Cr M Lyle (Eacham)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to:

- amalgamate the value of pump sites with the related body corporate of group titled properties for rating purposes.
- automatically cancel a permit to occupy which formed part of a property when the property is sold.

CARRIED
Finance and Administration Section

NO.45  NQLGA/CARDWELL
LOAN BORROWINGS - REDUCTION OF QTC INTEREST RATES
MOVER: Cr J Byrne (Cardwell)  SECONDER: Cr R Godbehere (Cardwell)

"That the Local Government Association Queensland make representation to achieve a reduction of QTC interest rates of 1% on all future borrowings by Local Government.”

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr J Byrne (Cardwell)  SECONDER: Cr R Godbehere (Cardwell)

"That the Local Government Association Queensland make representations to the State Government to achieve a reduction of QTC interest rates so that the State Government is not profiting from Local Government borrowings.”

CARRIED

People and Performance Section

NO.46  NQLGA/NEBO
LACK OF SKILLED WORKERS - GROWTH AREAS
MOVER: Cr B Oakes (Nebo)  SECONDER: Cr P McFadzen (Nebo)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland be requested to lobby the relevant Federal and State Government Departments to investigate and implement methods to increase the numbers of trained and skilled workers available within the workforce particularly in areas experiencing significant economic industrial growth.”

CARRIED

NO.47  IPSWICH
STAFF TRAINING - ELECTRICAL SAFETY ACT AND REGULATIONS
MOVER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Hon the Minister for Local Government and Planning to make representations to the Minister for Industrial Relations concerning the failure to provide sufficient training time and trainers to enable Local Governments to meet the requirements of the Electrical Safety Act and Regulations.”

CARRIED
Environment and Health Section

NO. 48  
HERVEY BAY

PEST MANAGEMENT - BITING MIDGE - RECOGNITION AS INSECT OF HEALTH CONCERN  
MOVER: Cr T Sorenson (Hervey Bay)  SECONDER: Mr L Bennett (Hervey Bay)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to recognise biting midge as an insect of health concern to humans and endeavour to have the State Government include biting midge whenever future health policy formulation is undertaken."

CARRIED

NO. 49  
NQLGA/ETHERIDGE

PEST MANAGEMENT - MACROPODS - CONTROL OF NUMBERS  
MOVER: Cr M Furber (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr J Smith (Etheridge)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek State and Federal Government funding for research into finding a realistic, achievable and affordable method for the control of macropods where the growth of macropod numbers is endangering mechanisms to repair damaged riparian zones and the control of weeds in riparian zones."

CARRIED

NO. 50  
GAYNDAH

WEED MANAGEMENT - RESPONSIBILITES IN WATER STORAGES  
MOVER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)  SECONDER: Mr S Mason (Gayndah)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland take action so that licence owners or operators of storages on rivers or streams as defined under the Water Resources Act are responsible for the control and/or eradication of waterweeds and that in stretches of rivers or streams where flow is supplemented by a Water Service Provider that the Provider be primarily responsible for the control and or eradication of waterweeds."

AMENDMENT  
MOVER: Cr P Huth (Gayndah)  SECONDER: Mr S Mason (Gayndah)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland take action so that operators of storages on rivers or streams as defined under the Water Resources Act are responsible for the control and/or eradication of waterweeds and that in stretches of rivers or streams where flow is supplemented by a Water Service Provider that the Provider be primarily responsible for the control and or eradication of waterweeds."

CARRIED
NO.51  GOLD COAST

RESTRICTED DOGS - CLARIFICATION OF DEFINITIONS AND USE OF ON THE SPOT FINES
MOVER: Cr G Baildon (Gold Coast)  SECONDER: Cr T Shepherd (Gold Coast)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland approach the State Government for amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 Chapter 17A - Restricted Dogs, as follows:

(a) include definitions of what is "childproof" and what constitutes "strong and firm materials" for the purposes of an enclosure; and

(b) to allow Councils to issue penalty infringement notices (PINs) for breaches of the legislation."

CARRIED

NO.52  IPSWICH

LAND DISPOSAL - CONSISTENT APPLICATION BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT LAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
MOVER: Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)  SECONDER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Premier seeking his Government's commitment to the application, by all State agencies, of the Government Land Management System (GLMS) policies and guidelines, particularly where properties contain significant environmental values."

CARRIED

NO.53  REDCLIFFE

WATER QUALITY - SUBSIDY FOR STORMWATER DRAINAGE WORKS
MOVER: Cr R Smith (Redcliffe)  SECONDER: Cr A Boulton (Redcliffe)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to provide a 50% subsidy for the provision of stormwater quality improvement devices within the urban drainage networks."

CARRIED

NO.54  NQLGA/MACKAY

WATER REUSE - REVIEW OF WASTEWATER SUBSIDY SCHEME GUIDELINES
MOVER: Cr D Comerford (Mackay)  SECONDER: Cr W Molloy (Mackay)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek an amendment to the Subsidy Scheme Guidelines for Wastewater Reuse to include assessment of environmental benefits.

AND FURTHER that the Local Government Association of Queensland request clarification of the process of assessing private benefit under the Subsidy Scheme Guidelines.
AND FURTHER that the Local Government Association of Queensland seek a review of the Subsidy Scheme Guidelines, in particular wastewater reuse, to ensure that the guidelines reflect current State Government policies in regards to environmental impacts, such as discharge to water ways.”

CARRIED

NO. 55

WATER RESOURCES - STATE GOVERNMENT ACTION TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS
MOVER: Cr F Cattarossi (Mareeba) SECONDER: Cr M Lyle (Eacham)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland, request in recognition that water is our most precious commodity, the State Government to take a pro-active approach to the provision of additional water storages to meet urgent and predicted rural, urban and industry requirements”.

CARRIED

NO. 56

GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS - STATE GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO ASSESS IMPACTS
MOVER: Cr A Clark-Dickson (Inglewood) SECONDER: Cr B McCutcheon (Chinchilla)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government seeking assistance with the provision of specialist advice to local governments on the release of Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) into the environment.

CARRIED

Planning and Development Section

NO. 57

NATIVE TITLE - INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS WITH CLAIMS
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy) SECONDER: Cr B McNamara (Flinders)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State and Federal Governments to review the level of financial support offered to Local Governments faced with native title claims.”

CARRIED
NO. 58

IPSWICH

REGIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY - QUEENSLAND TRUST FOR NATURE - ESTABLISHED AS INDEPENDENT STATUTORY AUTHORITY
MOVER:  Cr J Nugent (Ipswich)  SECONDER:  Cr V Attwood (Ipswich)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the Premier requesting that the State Government establish the Queensland Trust for Nature as an independent statutory authority to ensure its success in receiving philanthropic financial donations as the basis of a revolving fund to secure significant landscape values."

CARRIED

NO. 59

SWQLGA/TARA

INTEGRATED PLANNING ACT - GREATER DECISION MAKING POWERS FOR COUNCILS
MOVER:  Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  SECONDER:  Cr D Edwards (Quilpie)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Minister for Local Government to amend the Local Government Act and the Integrated Development Assessment System to allow Councils greater decision making powers in relation to Development Applications."

CARRIED

NO. 60

COMPOSITE MOTION
NQLGA/RICHMOND/FLINDERS/ETHERIDGE

STATE GOVERNMENT LAND DEALINGS - IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS TO OVERCOME PROTRACTED DELAYS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS
MOVER:  Cr J Wharton (Richmond)  SECONDER:  Cr McNamara (Flinders)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc seek legislation changes to the Water Act, Land Act and any other acts administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to incorporate definitive time-lines for completion of the duties so incorporated in those Acts."

CARRIED
NO. 61 TOOWOOMBA

POWER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE - PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT STREET TREES
MOWER:  Cr J Wood (Burdekin)  SECONDER:  Cr N Strohfeld (Rosalie)

That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to require Ergon Energy and Energex to provide significantly more funding towards:

(a)  installation of Aerial Bundled Conductors and/or the undergrounding of power in existing avenues of significant street trees.

(b)  research into better methods of conducting power in urban environments so as to preserve and enhance the amenity, aesthetic and environmental values of significant avenues of street trees.

CARRIED

NO. 62 CQLGA/BELYANDO

HOUSING STANDARDS - LIMITS ON SINGLE PERSON ACCOMMODATION
MOWER:  Cr P Freeleagus (Belyando)  SECONDER:  Cr M Finger (Belyando)

"That the State Government be requested to take appropriate action by way of conditioning mining permits to limit or curtail the provision of high density single person’s accommodation units in mining towns."

CARRIED

Community Development and Human Services Section

NO. 63 REDCLIFFE

GRAFFITI - REMOVAL SUBSIDY SCHEME
MOWER:  Cr R Smith (Redcliffe)  SECONDER:  Cr A Boulton (Redcliffe)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government for a centralised graffiti removal reimbursement system, to subsidise and support graffiti prevention work being undertaken by individual local governments."

CARRIED
NO.64  COMPOSITE MOTION
LOGAN/REDCLIFFE

SECURITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - EXPANDED TO SUBSIDE STAFFING RESOURCES
MOVER: Cr A Boulton (Redcliffe)  SECONDER: Cr T Sandmann (Logan)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to extend the Security Improvement Program (SIP) to include a 50% subsidy for staffing resources to manage crime prevention upgrades and pro-active implementation of town planning and development assessment safety standards."

CARRIED

NO.65  REDCLIFFE

CRIME PREVENTION - SUBSIDY FOR COMMUNITY BASED SAFETY PROJECTS
MOVER: Cr R Smith (Redcliffe)  SECONDER: Cr A Boulton (Redcliffe)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government for subsidy of community based safety projects as these were previously the core business of the Police Service. Funding should flow on to local governments if they are expected to adopt this role."

CARRIED

NO.66  BRISBANE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING - INCREASED FUNDING FOR BOARDING HOUSES AND CARAVAN PARKS
MOVER: Cr A Bennison (Brisbane)  SECONDER: Cr G MacPherson (Brisbane)

"(1) That the Local Government Association of Queensland call on the State and Federal Governments to urgently direct more funds towards purchasing or building boarding houses and caravan parks to help address the decline in this type of accommodation in urban areas.

(2) The Federal Government should guarantee increased funding to the States for public housing."

CARRIED

NO.67  NQLGA/ETHERIDGE

CHILDCARE STAFF - EXEMPTION FROM QUALIFICATIONS
MOVER: Cr J Smith (Etheridge)  SECONDER: Cr M Furber (Etheridge)

That the Local Government Association of Queensland be asked to make representations to the relevant Minister to seek exemptions from the new requirements, under the new legislation covering Child Care Centres that takes effect later this year, for staff at child care centres to hold specified qualifications and the employer to hold current medical certificates for such staff prior to such staff being able to act as a Child Care Centre director or Assistants at remote or limited hours child care centres.

CARRIED
NO. 68  

NQLGA/CQLGA/MIRANI/SARINA

MEDICARE HEALTH CARE REBATES - INCENTIVES FOR RURAL MEDICAL PRACTICE  
MOVER:  Cr K Morgan (Sarina)  
SECONDER:  Cr P Steindl (Sarina)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Federal Government to implement, in selected areas, a series of rural item numbers in the Medicare Health Care Rebate to provide an explicit incentive for rural practice, acting as both incentives for rural practice and complement other retention payments to provide continued incentive for recruitment and retention of trained and experienced doctors in more adequate numbers for rural and remote Australia.”

CARRIED

NO. 69  

BARCALDINE

AMBULANCE SERVICE - AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED PARAMEDICS  
MOVER:  Cr J Miller (Barcaldine)  
SECONDER:  Cr R Chandler (Barcaldine)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland seeks an assurance from the State Government that each local government area in Queensland will have, as a minimum, at least one qualified paramedic in its designated area within 12 months.”

CARRIED

NO. 70  

WQLGA

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES - OPPOSITION TO RELOCATION OF MANAGEMENT STAFF  
MOVER:  Cr J Miller (Barcaldine)  
SECONDER:  Cr R Chandler (Barcaldine)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby State and Federal Government Departments to reverse the trend of moving management positions out of regional areas of Queensland and to give due consideration to the effects that the "Aligning Services and Priorities Program" will have on the regional staffing levels as well.”

CARRIED
Roads, Transport and Infrastructure

NO.71  COOLOOLA
ROADSIDE REST AREAS - REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS PREVENTING OVERNIGHT STAYS ON MAIN ROADS

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads requesting that the Main Roads Queensland’s Roads Policy Manual - "Provision of Roadside Amenities” be amended by deletion of the following paragraph from Clause 3.8 of the above Manual which reads as follows:-

"Overnight stays are not permitted at motorist rest areas within 50km of commercial camping / caravan facilities. Accordingly, prominent signing and guide fencing should be incorporated within the design of these sites to prevent vehicles entering non-parking areas."

WITHDRAWN

NO.72  CQLGA/BAUHINIA
ROAD TANKER CONTENTS SIGNAGE - CORRECT DETAILS
MOVER:  Cr P Sullivan (Bauhinia)  SECONDER:  Cr D Williams (Bauhinia)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to introduce appropriate legislative requirements to ensure that bulk road tankers operating on public roads, prominently display signage correctly indicating details of their loads."

CARRIED

NO.73  WQLGA
AIRPORTS - ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AIRPORTS
MOVER:  Cr D Davidson (Tambo)  SECONDER:  Mr P Tanks (Longreach)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland actively lobby the Federal Department of Transport & Regional Services, Qld Department of Transport, Premier and Treasurer to increase the funding available in the Rural and Remote Airports.”

CARRIED
NO. 74  MAROOCHY/ULGA
PUBLIC TRANSPORT - STUDY INTO FREE/LOW COST PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPTIONS
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)  SECONDER: Cr T Thompson (Maroochy)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland and the State Government undertake a study and cost benefit analysis, in conjunction with Federal and Local Government, to determine whether providing free, or low cost, and efficient public transport would reduce the need and cost to expand the existing road and car parking infrastructure in urban local government areas.

To achieve those aims consideration should also be given to:

- Recover road use costs
- Fund future transport investment and public transport operational costs
- Reduce traffic congestion and air pollution"

CARRIED

NO. 75  TAMBO
REGIONAL AND RURAL BUS SERVICES - SUBSIDIES FOR OPERATORS
MOVER: Cr D Davidson (Tambo)  SECONDER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government and Federal Governments to ensure that bus and coach operators are afforded the same subsidy level as air and rail operators as the provision of bus services to many rural communities is imperilled by the current inequity in subsidies.”

CARRIED

NO. 76  LOGAN
SPEED CAMERAS - CIVILIAN OPERATORS ON LOCAL ROADS
MOVER: Cr T Sandmann (Logan)  SECONDER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads, and the Minister for Police to allow civilian personnel who are suitably trained and accredited, to operate speed cameras on local roads under the direction of the Queensland Police Service with the revenue from subsequent fines being returned to the state government less any operational costs incurred by the local government in undertaking the enforcement."

AMENDMENT
MOVER: Cr T Sandmann (Logan)  SECONDER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads, and the Minister for Police to allow civilian personnel who are suitably trained and accredited, to operate speed cameras on local roads under the direction of the Queensland Police Service.”

CARRIED
NO.77

UNREGISTERED VEHICLES - REMOVAL FROM ROADS
MOVER: Cr T Sandmann (Logan)  
SECONDER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to include in Section 100 (Removal of things from Roads) of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 the power for Local Government to remove unregistered vehicles from roads where they are causing amenity concerns."

CARRIED

"C" Motions

DELEGATES PLEASE NOTE:

"C" Motions include those that are affirmations of earlier Annual Conference decisions as well as those proposing a course of action that has already been taken as a result of Executive decision or Directorate action. These motions are normally referred to the Executive to determine if any further action is necessary. Delegates may, however, request that a "C" motion be brought forward for debate when the opportunity is provided prior to the close of business on the first day of the conference.

However, in response to the large number of motions received for this year’s Annual Conference the Agenda Committee has identified a number of motions that are administrative or procedural in nature or comply with LGAQ policy that can be actioned without the need for formal debate at the conference.

Consequently, representations have been made on these motions and it is proposed that the Annual Conference endorse this action.

These motions are identified in the agenda by the symbol (*)
NO. 78
EXECUTIVE

C MOTIONS - ACTION UNDERTAKEN BY THE ASSOCIATION
MOVER: Cr P Taylor (Jondaryan) SECONDER: Cr B Abbot (Noosa)

"That the Annual Conference endorse the action taken by the Executive to initiate action in relation to the following ‘C’ motions “

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Governance Section

NO. 79

BUNDABERG

SALARY SACRIFICE ARRANGEMENTS - COUNCILLOR SUPERANNUATION
MOVER: Cr M Forman (Bundaberg) SECONDER: Cr P Wood (Toowoomba)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland Inc., make representations to the Minister for Local Government and Planning requesting consideration be given to amending the Local Government Act 1993, to introduce Salary Sacrificing arrangements for Local Government Councillors”.

CARRIED
NO.80  
BURKE

SUPERANNUATION - INTRODUCTION OF CHOICE OF FUNDS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government to change the superannuation rules so that Councillors and employees can elect to contribute their superannuation contributions to a fund of their choice.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.81  
LOGAN

LOCAL LAWS - SIMPLIFIED PROCEDURE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENTS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland write to the Minister for Local Government & Planning the Honourable N Cunningham MLA seeking legislative amendments that would allow Queensland local governments the authority to exercise power similar to that which currently exists under the Reprints Act 1992 (Qld).”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO.82  
NQLGA/ETHERIDGE

CODES, STANDARDS, GUIDELINES - FREE PUBLIC ACCESS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations at the State and Federal levels to ensure free public assess to all codes called up by Federal, State and Local Government legislation.”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO.83  
GAYNDAH

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - QUADRUPLE BOTTOM LINE FRAMEWORK

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland encourage local governments to develop and implement a quadruple bottomline framework that underpins and reviews environmental, economic, social and cultural performance as a basis for local government decision making.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO.84  WQLGA

ELECTIONS - EXTENDED PERIOD TO FILL CASUAL VACANCY BY APPOINTMENT

"That the State Government amend the Local Government Act to provide an option for Councils to appoint and or hold a by election for casual vacancies that occur on or after 1 March in the second year of the quadrienium."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Finance and Administration Section

NO.85  COOK

RATING POWERS - ALTERNATIVE REVENUE RAISING MODELS

"That this Conference request the Local Government Association of Queensland inc. to create the environment for a local authority to assist long term residents of a shire with one benchmarked valuation for a set rate that is able to be increased commensurate to CPI movements each financial year and is not at the mercy of the unimproved capital valuation of the property."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.86  ∗ COMPOSITE MOTION

ULGA/PINE RIVERS/TOOWOOMBA

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP - GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

That the Local Government Association of Queensland -

1  Seek State Government assistance in the development of Public Private Partnership Guideline Material for Local Government similar to that prepared for state agencies.

2  Have the State Government recognise the specific needs of Local Governments in the delivery of infrastructure and to accommodate them in the development and delivery of Public Private Partnerships.

3  Seek the State Government’s assistance in the delivery of Public Private Partnership seminars / training programs for Councillors and Council staff who could potentially become involved in PPPs.

4  Seek to amend the purchasing provisions of the Local Government Act where necessary, to allow local governments to deliver infrastructure projects through relationship contracts developed with the private sector.

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78
NO. 87                            COMPOSITE MOTION
REDCLIFFE/NQLGA/SARINA

PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE - AVAILABILITY FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS
MOVER: Cr R Smith (Redcliffe)           SECONDER: Cr K Morgan (Sarina)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby both the State and Federal Governments to ensure that a scheme is established to provide adequate and affordable public liability insurance to community organisations."

CARRIED

NO. 88                            PINE RIVERS
MOVER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)           SECONDER: Cr R Munn (Beaudesert)

URBAN FIRE LEVY - EXEMPTION FOR CROWN LAND HELD IN TRUST BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

That Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the State Government to have the Fire and Rescue Authority Regulation 2001 amended to include vacant Crown land held in trust by Local Government under Section 11 "Property that is not prescribed property". This amendment would exempt Local Government from the State Government Urban Fire Levy on vacant Crown Land held in Trust by the Local Governments.

CARRIED

NO. 89                            IPSWICH
VALUATION OF LAND ACT - VALUATION METHODOLOGY

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Hon the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines to review the Valuation of Land Act 1944 to take full account of valuations in developed areas by referencing the net of market value less built improvements so as to determine land value."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 90                            HERVEY BAY
RATING MODEL AND VALUATION REFORM

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland develop rating models that will assist Queensland Local Governments experiencing huge valuation fluctuations and consider proposing to the State Government changes to the rating legislation."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO.91

REDCLIFFE

GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES - FORESHORE SAND REPLENISHMENT INCREASED FROM 25% TO 50%

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby State Government to seek increased subsidies from 25% to 50% for foreshore sand replenishment.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.92

NQLGA/HERBERTON

SMALLER COMMUNITIES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - INCREASE IN SUBSIDY LEVELS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland write to the Premier and Minister seeking a commitment from the Government to allocate further funds to the Smaller Communities Assistance Program to enable an increase in current subsidy levels so that the necessary sewerage and water projects unable to be funded by Councils at present subsidy levels can be achieved.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

Environment and Health Section

NO.93

IPSWICH

PEST MANAGEMENT - FUNDING TO SUPPORT PREPARATION OF PEST MANAGEMENT PLANS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines requesting the provision of seed funding for local governments to prepare pest management plans as required under the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Bill 2001.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.94

BRISBANE

PEST MANAGEMENT - RED IMPORTED FIRE ANT - FUNDING OF ERADICATION PROGRAM

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland seek an assurance from the State Government that the Red Imported Fire Ant Eradication Program will be adequately funded throughout its five year operation”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78
NO. 95

NATIONAL PARKS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO BE ADVISED BEFORE DECLARATION

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representation to the State Government that a protocol be put in place that National Parks not be declared until the Local Government is notified.

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO. 96

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland encourage local governments to implement its resolution, made at the 2001 Annual General Meeting, to apply an environmental levy to protect and enhance the State’s biodiversity."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 97

GAYNDAH/MAROOCHY

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - WORKSHOPS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED REGIONAL NRM PLANS

"The Local Government Association of Queensland assist ROCs to conduct a series of workshops to assist local government to contribute to the development of Integrated Regional Natural Resource Management Plans."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 98

CQLGA/PEAK DOWNS

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT - FINALISATION OF NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST MKII BILATERAL AGREEMENT

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland urge the State and Federal Government to finalise and sign off on the bilateral agreement for Natural Heritage Trust Fund to enable regional groups to progress with the development of integrated natural resource plans as requested by Government."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO.99

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT - TREE CLEARING EXEMPTION IN URBAN AREAS

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request:

(a) the Vegetation (Application for Clearing) Act 2003 be amended to ensure the moratorium does not apply to urban areas; and

(b) DNRM provide guidance and clarification to local Government on exemptions 3(a)(ii) and 3(a)(iv)."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.100

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT - CONTROL TO REMAIN IN QUEENSLAND

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland object to the transfer of control of vegetation clearing and control matters from the relevant state government authority which has the expertise to deal with such matters to Environment Australia in relation to certain species of trees eg. Acacia harpophylla (brigalow)."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.101

PEST MANAGEMENT - FERAL PIGS - FUNDING FOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland again vigorously pursue the State and Federal Governments to financially support research and strategies to address the issue of feral pigs, given they are recognised as a pest of national priority."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.102

PEST MANAGEMENT - MOSQUITOS - LICENSING OF FOGGING MACHINE OPERATORS

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request Queensland Health to review the licensing requirements for an operator to undertake fogging for mosquitoes with the aim to make it a specific licence"

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO. 103  NQLGA/NEBO

WEED MANAGEMENT - GIANT RATS TAIL GRASS - DECLARED AS WEED OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
MOVER: Cr B Oakes (Nebo)  SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland be requested to lobby relevant Federal and State Government Departments to change the classification of SPOROBOLUS grasses. SPOROBOLUS PYRAMIDALIS & SPOROBOLUS NATALENSIS (Giant Rats Tail Grass) be declared and that funding be provided for a detailed study into the extent, implications and solutions to the threat and spread of Giant Rats Tail Grass."

CARRIED

NO. 104  DOUGLAS

RECYCLED RUBBER - USE IN ROAD SURFACING

"The Local Government Association of Queensland actively promote to road surfacing contractors that they include a component of recycled rubber (tyres) in their products and encourage all local governments and the State Government to follow this initiative and only tender for these recycled products."

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO. 105  CQLGA/BANANA

ON SITE SEWERAGE CODE - EXEMPTIONS FOR RURAL PROPERTIES
MOVER: Cr G Churchill (Banana)  SECONDER: Cr P Bienek (Banana)

"That rural properties be exempt from the requirement to prepare a site and soil evaluation plan and subsequent design report for effluent disposal from domestic water pursuant to the requirement of the On-site Sewerage Code of the Water Supply & Sewerage Act"

LOST

NO. 106  PINE RIVERS

WATER CONSERVATION - EDUCATION QUEENSLAND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL INITIATIVES

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to Education Queensland to promote a change in school budgeting processes to encourage water conservation."

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78
Planning and Development Section

NO. 107

CARPENTARIA

NATIVE TITLE - AMENDMENT TO GOVERNMENT LAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM POLICIES REGARDING COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland continue to lobby the State so that:

• the Government Land Management System ‘GLMS’ Policies recognise that native title rights and interests continue to exist, and acknowledge that these currently affect the use of land and water if native title has not clearly been extinguished over the area.

• the GLMS valuation guideline recognises native title compensation as an existing ‘encumbrance’ that must be accounted for when calculating the net amount payable by local government to the State in consideration for land resumed, to obtain clear title.

• the State accept responsibility for all native title compensation arising from past local government land resumptions or any future acquisitions and in particular compulsory acquisitions, in acknowledgement of the ‘double dipping’ that has occurred under the current GLMS Policy.

• the State adopt a methodology in its GLMS policy to ensure that local government does not in effect pay native title compensation twice. That is, if the state charges an amount (based on the GLMS “highest and best use” method) to obtain Freehold Title that the state pays the Native Title compensation as it should any other compensation for existing underlying tenure or rights that may be extinguished by the grant of the Freehold title to a Local Government.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 108

NQLGA/FLINDERS

NATIVE TITLE – RESOLUTION OF CLAIMS ON TOWN COMMONS

MOVER: Cr J Wharton (Richmond) 
SECONDER: Cr J Chapman (Atherton)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the State Government to clear non-controversial areas of Un-allocated State Land adjoining townships of Native Title issues so that developments can occur in accordance with Council Planning Schemes.”

CARRIED

NO. 109

NQLGA/ATHERTON

INTEGRATED PLANNING ACT - DELAYS IN REFERRAL AGENCIES RESPONSES

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Department of Local Government and Planning with a view to ensuring that all Referral Agencies under the Integrated Planning Act 1997 respond to Local Governments within the prescribed time frames required under legislation. This includes when the Referral Agency does not have any requirements of a development.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO.110  GOLD COAST

INTEGRATED PLANNING ACT – INCREASED POWERS TO COLLECT INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGES FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES

"That the Queensland State Government be approached to consider further amendment to the current infrastructure planning and funding legislation, with a focus on the expansion of community infrastructure categories for which infrastructure charges can be collected (similar to those in other States), as a result of the increased demands on these infrastructure categories from new development.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.111  DOUGLAS

INTEGRATED PLANNING ACT – STATUTORY COMPENSATION FOR INVALID DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

MOVER: Cr M Berwick (Douglas) SECONDER: Cr G Connett (Douglas)

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland urgently hold discussions with the State Government regarding the impact of S4.1.21 and s4.1.22 of the Integrated Planning Act 1997 ("the Act") to overcome the problem of Council’s inability to obtain legal liability coverage in relation to any compensation awarded by the Court.”

CARRIED

NO.112  BRISBANE

ON THE SPOT FINES – EXTENDED TO SWIMMING POOL FENCING BREACHES

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the State Government (Department of Local Government and Planning) to:

1. introduce Prescribed Infringement Notices (PINs) for pool fencing offences;
2. amend other legislation relating to the regulation of pools to enable local government to obtain quicker compliance, increase capacity to inspect pools and increase public safety.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO.113  DDLGA/CLIFTON

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – ENTERPRISE ZONES FOR REGIONAL QUEENSLAND

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland request the Federal Government to support the establishment of Enterprise Zones in regional Australia as a means of encouraging economic development and employment opportunities in such regions.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
Community Development and Human Services Section

**NO.114**

**IPSWICH**

**SPORT AND RECREATION FUNDING - INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the State Government to amend the Sport and Recreation Queensland funding guidelines to allow Local Governments to be eligible to receive funding under the Indigenous Community Development Program and or provide a sponsor role for Indigenous Organisations to manage such programs.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

**NO.115**

**BURKE**

**FUNDING FOR MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIPS - COUNCILS ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE**

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland encourage member councils to contribute to the funding of a number of John Flynn Medical Scholarships for medical students at the James Cook University.”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

Roads, Transport and Infrastructure

**NO.116**

**COMPOSITE MOTION**

**CQLGA/BAUHINIA/NQLGA/ETHERIDGE**

**ROADS OFF ALIGNMENT - LEGISLATIVE SOLUTION AND SIMPLIFIED LAND EXCHANGE REQUIREMENT**

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland take urgent action towards the establishment of a legislative solution to the need to regularise roads incorrectly identified on the Queensland Government Land Data Base; and further

That Department of Natural Resources and Mines be requested to simplify its current land exchange requirements to resolve off alignment situations.”

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING
NO.117  COMPOSITE MOTION
CQLGA/BAUHINIA/SWQLGA/QUILPIE

ROAD AND TRANSPORT FUNDING - ROADS TO RECOVERY PROGRAM - CONTINUED BEYOND 2004/2005
MOVER: Cr J Smith (Livingstone) SECONDER: Cr B Oakes (Nebo)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to continue the Roads to Recovery funding beyond the 2004/2005 deadline.”

CARRIED

NO.118  WQLGA
ROAD FUNDING - EQUITABLE TIDS COST SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Main Roads Department to ensure that all areas of the State are treated equitably in the percentage allocation of TIDS funding. It is recognised that only limited funding is available in this area and if all Councils supported the proposals on the 50%-50% basis that was originally proposed, then more councils would benefit from this funding.”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO.119  WQLGA
ROAD FUNDING - EQUITABLE RIP FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland lobby the Department of Main Roads to ensure that all areas of the state are treated equitably in terms of RIP funding and the funding commitment of Councils to Main Roads project.”

INCLUDED IN MOTION 78

NO.120  ULGA
INFRASTRUCTURE EXTERNAL TO STATE GOVERNMENT SITES AND NON-STATE SCHOOLS - STATE GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE WITH GUIDELINES
MOVER: Cr J Nugent (Ipswich) SECONDER: Cr H Schwabe (Maroochy)

“That the Local Government Association of Queensland express to the Minister for Education, the Hon. Anna Bligh MP, the Association’s view that the State Government should, as a minimum, comply with its current Guidelines on Arrangements for Infrastructure External to State Government Sites and Non-State Schools.”

CARRIED
NO. 121

POWER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE - UNIFORM PRACTICES FOR PRUNING STREET TREES UNDER POWER LINES

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland negotiate with Ergon Energy and Energex to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to define suitable arboricultural practices for the pruning of street trees under power lines in urban environments."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 122

DAMAGE TO ROADS - FORESTRY ACTIVITY - APPLICATION OF FORESTRY MOU TO PRIVATE OPERATORS

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland examine the widening of the Forestry Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Government Association of Queensland and Forestry to include private operators."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

NO. 123

LIVESTOCK STRAYING ONTO ROADS - LIABILITY OF OWNER

"That the Local Government Association of Queensland make representations to the Queensland Government to develop appropriate legislation to abolish the common law principle (known as the "rule in Searle v Wallbank", and confirmed by the High Court as part of Australian common law in SGIC v Trigwell (1979) 142 CLR 617)) that an owner of cattle has no legal duty to fence his or her land to prevent the cattle from roaming onto the highway."

REFERRED TO NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING

LATE MOTION NO. 1

REGIONAL FORESTRY AGREEMENTS - INPUT BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS

MOVER:  Cr L De Marzi (Atherton)  SECONDER:  Cr J Chapman (Atherton)

"That the State Government be requested to provide direct and meaningful consultation with all stakeholders including Local Government as part of the State Regional Forest Agreement planning process.

CARRIED
"OPENING ADDRESS"

Hon Peter Beattie MP
Premier

Can I say at the beginning that we have had our differences from time to time with the Local Government Association but in my experience and in Nita’s experience, the LGAQ puts forward positive and constructive views. While we don’t always agree, we have a good relationship and the relationship between the State Government and local councils is obviously very important. Can I start by thanking you, the two Gregs and the Executive for your cooperative arrangement. We have met, and some of the most interesting meetings I have had have been with you and I look forward to that continuing. Could you please join with me and thank the Executive for the great relationship they have with us.

Let me acknowledge a number of people, Nita Cunningham MP of course, the Minister for Local Government. I understand Bob Quinn and Howard Hobbs are around somewhere I would like to acknowledge both of them, Noel of course, Greg Hallam, the Mayor of Cairns, Kevin Byrne, Queensland mayors, councillors, CEOs, other delegates, ladies and gentlemen. There are a number of things that I would like to say to you today. This is your 107th Annual Conference and it is my responsibility to open it. Let’s get that out of the road - it is open.

Very soon I am going to sign an updated State Government/Local Government Protocol, which sets out the relationship between the State Government, local councils and how we will operate. When I am finished here, the four of us will sign that agreement. It has been an issue of importance between the State Government and local councils and it is something that Noel and Greg have pursued. We have updated it and we think that underpins our relationship. It is very symbolic and important that we be signing it here today but we will do that later.

First I want to talk to you about three issues. Firstly, terrorism, secondly, regional planning and finally the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants. Let me start and talk to you about terrorism. As we all know Australia is no longer immune from terrorism. I think all of us were stunned by what happen in September 11 and then we still though nevertheless that is in New York and it is a long way away. Then came Bali. I don’t believe any of us any longer thought terrorism was a long way away because a lot of Australians lost their lives. It heightened the security environment to all of us and it made a very important point that we were no longer safe. That means that the Federal Government, State Government and Local Government have got to work together, do everything we possibly can to ensure that we protect our infrastructure and that we get plans in place to deal with terrorism if it happens.

The world market research centre, Global Terrorism Index, which assesses risk around the world, for 2003/04 ranked Australia as 38 out of 186 countries in terms of a terrorist target. What I am talking to you about today is real, not something made up, it is real and I share the Prime Minister’s John Howard’s view, and I hope you share it as well, that we need to be prepared. In essence it is vital to maintain vigilance, security preparedness. It is important that we have partnerships with Local Government and the Federal Government to protect and strengthen Queensland against any possible threat. The LGAQ has been working consistently with my government since the Bali bombings and I am keen to enhance that partnership.
Each and every one of Queensland’s Local Governments has a vital role to play in preventing, responding to and recovering from potential terrorist activities in this State. My government is going to provide $50,000 in funding to the LGAQ, and I am announcing that today, to be put towards a development of a counter terrorism risk management tool. We will work with the LGAQ to develop that tool. What it does, it recognises that local governments have got a key and important role to play. It may well be that the information and advice on planning is vital to your work and we hope that tool, will assist you in your preparations.

Staff from my department’s Security Planning and Coordination Unit and the Queensland Police Unit Counter Terrorism Coordination Unit will be conducting a security and counter terrorism workshop in Cairns here on Thursday. If you have got an opportunity to go I would urge you to do that because as you probably know, those of you who have followed it, our response in Queensland to terrorism is done through my department and the police. There is a co-operative arrangement. I would hope you would give some thought to that and we can provide details to you if you are interested.

It is only through strong partnerships and a consistent approach that we can best strengthen Queensland against a terrorist threat. Counter terrorism is obviously not the only area where a partnership needs to be effective but it is a key one. Can I ask all of you to give it some thought and don’t for one minute think that it won’t involve you, it may. If you look at what has happened in terrorism around the world, “soft targets” are the easiest targets. Clearly, if you have got defence mechanisms in place, or heightened security, then it is more difficult for terrorists to be effective, as they want to be. They will pick soft targets and the reality is if we believe that we are not going to be affected then we become an even softer target. I don’t want to alarm anybody but I do want to be prepared. Infrastructure, in particular, is vitally important and that is why we need to work together.

That is the first thing I wanted to say to you today. We are offering you a partnership, we want to continue the work that has already been started and we want to make sure we are prepared as we possibly can. No one can give any absolute guarantees when it comes to terrorism. You know that, I know that, but we have to be prepared as we possibly can.

Let me move on. We all know that collectively we are in a great position, that is Local Government and State Government to shape the future of Queensland. To do that, again, we need to plan. We have somewhere between 83,000 and 86,000 people moving to Queensland each year and most come from interstate. I should say, that not only do they come from interstate; we have the highest overseas migration coming to Queensland in our history. That is why we are getting 83,000 – 86,000 a people coming to this State. That puts significant pressure on the State Government and puts significant pressure on a lot of your councils.

By 2026, 23 years down the road, our population, which is around about 3.8 million now, is predicted to be 5.3 million. That is a dramatic increase in a short period of time. By 2051 the population is predicted to be 6.5 million that is a big increase. Population growth, particularly in the south-east corner of Queensland, reinforces the need for a co-ordinated response to growth management and that is why planning schemes, as we both know, are so important. We need to identify future priorities, help with budget planning and give greater certainty to investors. Each council needs to determine a level of regulation it wants for its area and to prepare plans addressing the needs of their individual communities. You all know there are different needs and different pressures across the State, you know your needs and growth better than I do. I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of these schemes to your communities.

I ask the mayors and CEOs here today to just not leave this matter up to your planning staff, good as they are, effective as they are. My Government has approved ten integrated planning compliance schemes. We are reviewing 57 schemes currently, another five are on display and we are waiting for a further 51 to be submitted. In south-east Queensland 18 councils are required to submit schemes, of these five have had plans approved, six are progressing well, seven are at risk of not meeting extended deadlines of 30 June 2004. Once all councils have their planning schemes in place there will be a comprehensive approach to planning throughout the whole of the State, which, is your target and is our target. Planning
takes not only time, but as you know it takes money as well. I thank the LGAQ for their work on these things. There are local government staff here today from Nita’s department and if there are issues anyone wants to raise in relation to planning then we are keen to talk to you about it. We do want this to be a cooperative arrangement; we do want to work with councils, that is why there was an extension. We want to try and get these plans in place. It is not about kicking people around it is about trying to work with you to get a result. Can I urge you to talk to Nita’s people today so that we can get an outcome.

Let’s talk about money. I want to thank the LGAQ for working with us to break the deadlock over the Commonwealth FAGs and that happened on Friday. The grants were withheld since 15 August and I think the outcome is a victory for commonsense. It is another example of what we can achieve when we work together. Nita Cunningham has given a commitment that we will move quickly to transfer the $70 million in funds to councils within 24 hours of receipt, or as quick as we possibly can. Once we get the money we will be passing it on. If it hadn’t been for the strong backing my government received from all of you here, this outcome may not have been possible.

We might not always see eye to eye, as I said before, with the LGAQ but we will continue to work with you for the benefit of all Queenslanders. That is why the protocol I mentioned at the beginning is so important. It will help us avoid political bun fights and help us build a better Queensland. The protocol acknowledges that local government should have an opportunity to contribute to the development of State policies and strategies that affect local communities. It acknowledges that the Queensland Government should have an opportunity to input into the development of policies and strategies of the LGAQ where State has an interest as well. It also acknowledges local government has a capacity to assist in delivering State priorities at the local and regional levels through partnership and strategic alliances. It establishes the principles for such partnerships and alliances. The LGAQ had concerns about the lack of commitment by government agencies to implementing the previous protocol so we have updated the protocol. It requires annual reporting now, by all agencies and has an action plan. Some of the difficulties we have had in the past we are determined to overcome. If you look around Australia and you look at the relationships that exist between State Governments and Local Governments, I don’t believe there is any State in Australia that has a better relationship between Local Government and State Government. The reason for that is we actually value Local Government. We know the work you do. Yes we can have argy bargy arguments about ambulance levies and all those sorts of things and we can get done over - that is the one for the ten years by the way. That is brave of me to say that isn’t it; God knows where that will take me. I bet I get to I wish I had never said that Nita, I bet I wish I never said that. We do value this relationship. When we sit around the Cabinet table and there are matters coming forward, we do ask what Local Government’s view on these matters are. That is why this relationship is so important.

That is why in many things, when it comes to infrastructure we have put forward plans, which we think, are of assistance. We have allocated money as you know for regional cities. The regional cities strategy that we have put in place, the regional centres program, has meant that those of you who have been successful in applying and have been able to access dollar for dollar, government funding. As I look around and I travel around the State a fair bit, I can see the benefits of those programs. The State opened Gympie’s program, which I think does a great deal for their city and something that they should be very proud of and we valued the partnership. If you walk down the Esplanade here, you can have a look at what has happened in Cairns. We have contributed with the Cairns City Council. Kevin and I opened the Esplanade recently and that was a very valuable partnership. I went for a walk this morning down there on the Esplanade and it is a fantastic development. There is more work being done. If you go down the Strand with Tony Mooney you can see that partnership and what it has produced for Townsville. These are just some examples of where the State Government has put up money to ensure that we enhance every one of our regional cities and towns. That is why that program, we started it a few years ago, we have added to it again, and you will have an opportunity to put money into it. I have only mentioned a couple of the examples of what has come out of it. You all know there are many, many more and you have taken advantage of them.
One of the reasons we have done that is because we want to maintain Queensland for what it is, the most decentralised State in Australia. We are the only State, with exception of Tasmania, where more people live outside the capital. When it comes to road funding, all those sorts of things we have made sure more money is spent outside the capital than in it and that is why those programs are so important, and why we value those relationships.

The final thing I want to say to you because I am happy to take questions, you will be aware there was a meeting of COAG in Canberra on Friday. There was a big argument about health, but I am not going to talk to you about that today. You will be aware that there was an agreement in relation to water. A number of councils here have been writing to me and expressing issues about water entitlements. One of the things that I supported, when we were arguing with the Commonwealth, was actually dealing with water entitlements and water first. If you are interested in what came out of that decision, about water entitlements, I would be keen to send it to you or get it through Nita or myself. I want to say to all of you who have written to me about water entitlements, that decision on Friday deals with the issue of water entitlements. All you have seen about this is the press involving the money for Murray Darling. What this does, it provides for a system of tradeable water entitlements. A number of you have been ringing and writing to me about it, well you have got what you wanted and I would hope that you would have a close look at it because it will mean a great deal for the people who form your constituencies, particularly in rural Queensland. I draw your attention to it, I don’t have time to go through it today but if you want copies of it I am happy to provide them to you.

Can I thank you for giving me the opportunity to open your conference. Can I wish you well in your deliberations and I finish where I started. We do want to continue the strong partnership that we have between Local Government and my Government. I couldn’t care less what people’s individual politics are, that doesn’t worry me. What I am worried about is making sure we build a better Queensland and we can do that in partnership with one another.

Thank you for having me.
"PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS"

Cr Noel Playford OAM  
President, Local Government Association of Queensland

Mayor of Cairns, Cr Kevin Byrne, Premier of Queensland the Hon Peter Beattie MP, State and Federal Ministers, including our two (2) Local Government Ministers, the Leader of the Queensland Parliamentary Liberal Party, Mr Bob Quinn, Shadow Ministers, other parliamentarians, ALGA President Cr Mike Montgomery and CEO Ian Chalmers, Vice President of the Local Government Association of NSW, Cr Leo Kelly, President of the ULGA Cr Tony Mooney, President of the Queensland Local Government Women’s Association, Cr Julie Arthur, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this, the 107th and last Annual Conference of the historic first four-year term of local government.

I’m obviously not the only person who has been looking forward to stay in the vibrant city of Cairns. Despite the reduction in councillor numbers in Queensland over the years, we have record numbers at this conference. That means more opportunities to make new friends and enjoy your time in Far North Queensland. Thank you to all of the Cairns crew for the very professional support in organising this year’s conference.

I also wish to especially thank the Premier for his attendance at this conference and his willingness and preparedness to meet and talk with me regularly through the term of his government on a range of important matters. Quite obviously we haven’t always agreed, but the relationship has been proper and cordial, and I particularly appreciate the regard and respect the Premier has for local government. Most importantly, the relationship is still producing results as witnessed by the signing of the renewed high-level protocol and across many of the fronts such as counter-terrorism and security of critical public infrastructure. Thank you once again Premier for opening the conference.

Colleagues, the theme of this year’s conference is ‘First Things First’. It reflects the more sombre, conservative and basic agendas that prevail both globally and locally. Our choice of conference speakers and subjects reflect that mood, with addresses on the impact of terrorism on our communities, infrastructure, rating and community attitudes. The community attitude survey results will no doubt hold your interest with council elections getting close. With both the State and Federal elections in the wind, of course, we will also hear from a number of our State and National colleagues.

Clearly this year’s format is different and seeks to deal with the genuine issues people have raised with us about their aspirations for the conference. The LGAQ and I might not always get it right, but we do listen and will act on your suggestions whenever possible. At the end of the conference there will be an opportunity for you to give us feed back on the changes we have made for this year’s event. I look forward to your input.

As in each of the past two years, I don’t intend to bore you with copious detail of what the LGAQ has done over the last year. We do that via LGAQNet and other communications, such as the achievements document. Today I want to talk about three important issues.

First, the need for change in the way local government receives a share of taxation collected by the Commonwealth Government from Australians. I also want to talk about what has changed with respect to the LGAQ’s way of doing business in the past few years and what further changes could happen down the track. Finally and very importantly, I want to talk about what in my view could be one of the most fundamental changes we will make as an association, subject of course to councils views, that is, the provision of the LGAQ Online or Web Enabled Services which you will hear far more about tomorrow morning.

It would be putting it mildly to say that as both a sphere of government in Queensland and at individual council level, many of us have been put through the wringer over the last month or so because our State
and Federal Ministers could not agree on the distribution of financial assistance grants to Councils which were supposed to be paid over 2 weeks ago. As we now know, Minister Tuckey eventually sent a letter to Minister Cunningham last Thursday agreeing to the compromise four year phase-in that we suggested 6 weeks ago.

This is the first time in 30 years Councils haven’t been paid on time.

I know some delegates will be thinking what’s all the fuss about. Did you know that for 51 of our Councils these grants represent more than half of their total untied income? And for three Councils it’s more than 85% of their total income.

So for 2 weeks we’ve seen a dipping into reserves, some redundancies, planning to approach the Commission for stand down orders, planning overdrafts, considering what works or services to cut or curtail, working out possible budget cuts to pay interest on overdrafts and adjust to loss of interest income. And not knowing how long the nonsense was going to continue. Not impressed.

And of course Greg Hallam didn’t have enough to do with his normal job, filling in for Judith Himstedt who has not been able to work for the last 5 months, and preparing for this Conference. We know he loves a challenge, but at this particular time he could have done without the last two months of daily tactical planning, number crunching, on the phone with officials from both Ministers’, Premiers and Prime Ministers offices, and the grey hairs the whole unnecessary exercise has caused.

The irony of it all is that Greg wrote the drafting instructions for the FAGs Act back in 1986 when he was a Commonwealth public servant, but he provided in the legislation for a circuit breaker if the two Ministers couldn’t agree. The then Minister used the provision in 1987 when there was no agreement, and the Commonwealth decided the grant distribution that was worked out by Greg Hallam and Alan Morton. And here they are 15 years later, still number crunching the grant pool!

The big difference is that when Brian Howe was Minister, the legislation was changed and the circuit breaker was removed, so now both Ministers have to agree or no money can be distributed to Councils.

A circuit breaker could be reinserted in the legislation so this situation wouldn’t occur again, but what is needed is a fundamental change to the sharing of taxation revenue between the three spheres of Government in Australia. If the Federal Government is going to continue to be the only government constitutionally able to levy taxes, there needs to be an agreement on sharing rather than the Commonwealth saying “it’s our money and we’ll determine both the quantum and the strings attached to what WE hand out”.

That’s the position we’ve reached in our submissions to the parliamentary cost-shifting enquiry due to report before the end of the year, and at last week’s ALGA meeting we resolved to develop the case for that approach to sharing taxation revenue. Is it likely to happen? It depends on whether a Federal Government is willing to give back part of the power it obtained when the States ceded all taxation powers to the national government. It’s hard to be optimistic given the record, but no one asked to design a system of government would end up with the inefficiencies of duplication of departments and functions that currently exist in our Federated system, and with a National government which uses its financial power to achieve and maintain dominance in areas they should stay out of.

In the meantime, we’re stuck with FAGs, which could see further changes when the cost-shifting enquiry reports, or if the latest methodology is again changed as a result of Minister Tuckey’s request to the Queensland Grants Commission to develop a timetable for more research to be undertaken so that the methodology could be improved.

Leaving FAGs, I move on to changes at the LGAQ. In the three years since I became president and as I have moved around the State District Local Government Association meetings and individual council visits, I have listened to the genuine and constructive criticisms that have been made of the Association.
It has been pretty clear to me, my fellow office bearers and the Executive, that from your feedback and with the benefit of consecutive member attitude surveys, you are generally very happy with the Association as a whole. You particularly value the work we do in representing your interests at State and Federal level and in providing assistance and services as and when required.

It has also been clear to me that there is a genuine desire on councils part to improve the relationship and/or communications between the Executive itself and Member Councils. Communications is a major issue for busy Mayors and councillors.

Over the last three years we have implemented quite a few changes and I want to spend a minute outlining them, stressing that feedback to any of us on the Executive would be invaluable.

First, every councillor now receives free of charge a copy of Council Leader. Second, every Mayor receives on a monthly basis a personal and direct communication from their Executive member, the Council Newsbrief. Third, allied to that monthly communication and prior to each executive meeting, every Mayor now receives the executive agenda index so that they can be better informed of the matters that are coming before the Executive, and most importantly have a second or third bite of the cherry if their councils had previously not expressed a view on an important issue when asked for a comment. Fourth, both the Executive Director and I have committed to attend meetings on an annual or twice a year basis of those executive electoral districts where both the Executive member and their constituent councils want to get together to discuss LGAQ business. Beyond that, the LGAQ has broadened and expanded its advisory reference groups to further improve council input. About two thirds of our Member Councils are now directly involved in the LGAQ's work in some way or other.

I indicated that I would make a few brief observations on prospective changes the Association might consider in the future. There has been a lot of movement in the past three years as the LGAQ has evolved from a direct representation model to a more direct democracy model of Association. Within financial limits, that needs to continue. I will be shortly developing some discussion papers for the Executive on how kindred organisations such as the British Columbia Provincial Local Government Association go about their policy development business. But in attempting to meet the need of those councils or individuals who want to get more involved, we need to preserve the voice of the silent majority, who don’t request any greater consultation or input into Association processes.

In recent years the LGAQ has become an extension of many small to medium councils - a virtual organisation. Given the resource pressures on many of these councils, the advent of powerful new information and communication technologies and the success of existing LGAQ schemes, this trend is likely to continue and accelerate. I encourage Member Councils to genuinely think about their potential future needs in this area. In other words make sure you drive us - not the reverse.

I acknowledge the Association can do more in the years ahead to help councils with their rating system development and difficulties. As you will hear later today from the ABC’s Kim Landers, the community’s view on our performance on rating has dropped substantially over time. The Association has helped a number of councils in the last few years to develop more sophisticated rating systems. Somehow that function or service should be expanded, if as a sphere of government, we are going to seriously attempt to improve our performance.

It is also my view that we have to persuade or convince the State Government of the need for a statutory disciplinary tribunal to deal with improper conduct of a non-criminal nature by councillors. In other words, breaches of the Local Government Act. Just a handful of “feral councillors” can cause the whole body of elected members to be bought into disrepute and currently our legislative framework enables that to happen. That has to stop.

In terms of the big news tomorrow on the unveiling of the LGAQ Online Web Enabled Services offering, without pre-empting what will be said, I will make these remarks. For quite a few years now the LGAQ has concentrated on proactively planning and preparing for the future, as well as harnessing the benefits of council unity either in policy or commercial terms.
Over the last decade we have brought you LGAQNET, LGM, LGW and Local Buy. All big money savers for councils. The Online Service offering is similar. It will fill a void. Believe me, no one else will offer to run a state-wide Online Service system like this for councils and if they could, or would, it would be very expensive. Whether you are a small council or at the bigger end of the scale, there is real value in this new service. We are so confident of that fact, a value calculator has been developed to help councils draw their own conclusions - you will see it on show for the first time tomorrow.

Councils, courtesy of very generous federal funding via the NtN program and through an intergovernmental protocol with Queensland Government to share digitised data online, will have until 30 June next year to trial at no cost significant aspects of the online service. In the meantime, councils will have until the end of this current term to decide on committing to the larger more substantial LGAQ Online Service offering which includes an enhanced LGAQNet, bundling of all existing current LGAQ ‘pay as you go’ databases plus e-commerce, but more of the detail tomorrow.

But you need to know that we need 100 councils as takers to be able to offer the service from 1 July next year. It’s not viable under that sort of take up rate. To that extent it’s no different to what happened when we launched LGM and LGW; if we use our combined purchasing power to reach a critical mass, we can have a superb service we could never afford individually.

I want members to understand this is not a money making exercise for the LGAQ. All we are doing is covering our real costs. To that end, we have an open book policy on our revenues and expenditures for this project. Our staff have done a bit of market testing with around 20 councils in the past few weeks and made the figures available to them. The same offer applies to any other council. This is a service being offered for the benefit of members, not LGAQ revenue.

I would add that irrespective of whether enough councils take up the offer of subscribing to LGAQ Online Services, the Executive has resolved to upgrade LGAQNET to make it more user friendly. As we have been promising for a few years, by implementing a state of the art content management system, from next year you will determine what and how much information you get from the LGAQ - a big turn around. We are all burdened by information overload and LGAQ proposes to make a contribution to reducing the problem.

The last word on this subject, what we are offering is not technology for technology’s sake or a shiny new toy. Many of the elements of this package will save the two most important things for councils - time and money.

I want to thank my fellow office bearers, Paul Bell, Les Tyrell and Ann Bennison and the whole Executive for their support.

Your Association is not a one or two person band; the entire Executive has at some stage represented local government on some important forum or other. LGAQ’s achievements are a team effort of both the Executive, dedicated staff, and supportive Councils, and I thank all of you for your considerable efforts.

Above all else a big thank you to our Member Councils for your support of me in this role. One of the highlights for me has been the opportunity to meet so many of you on your own patch.

I look forward to catching up with as many of you as possible over the next three days and to a productive conference that benefits the communities we all serve.

Thank you.
“FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UPDATE”

Hon Wilson Tuckey MP
Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government

Thank you Noel, thank you ladies and gentlemen for your interest to be here today. For most of my speech today I propose even to read it, which is something I don’t do that often but I think there are issues that need to be put carefully on the record. So, let me say first that I am pleased to be with you and I have no doubt that many of you will think that the financial assistance grants issue is a “first things first” issue. While I don’t deny that $285 million worth of funding is a big issue, I will today also talk to you about some Australian Government initiatives which go beyond the immediate and aim to position local government for the future.

Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs)

Now to first things first. You will be pleased to know that I have approved the payment schedule for the 2003-04 FAGs grants. Over the weekend I signed the necessary papers to allow the transfer this morning of the relevant funds from the Commonwealth Treasury to the Queensland Government and you will be receiving advice as to those amounts as applicable to your councils in the very near future.

I want to put a couple of matters on the record nevertheless because history is already being rewritten. The simple facts are these. Over a year ago I received the eighth consecutive request from the Queensland Government issued to a variety of ministers over that period, requesting a further Section 26 exemption from the National Principles enacted in the Federal Parliament by the Keating government in 1995, eight consecutive years.

History records that at that point in time, in other words prior to the distribution of the 02/03 grants, I wrote back refusing a blanket Section 26 approval. I conceded two quarters of payments on the condition, that in that six months period, your Local Government Grants Commission here in Queensland would reassess the grants according to the national principles. When they did so in round figures over 90 councils received more and some 40, I think it was 92 and 45 councils, received less.

The swings were very large and they created a variety of concerns. The fact that they were so big was more evidence of the failure of the system in this state. Now, okay the shock was there but I agreed that the next two quarters would be paid under the old system, while we sorted out what might have been a phase-in. I thought it was reasonable for my department and possibly myself to be consulted and let that process work itself through. That was not the case. Your state minister wrote to you shortly thereafter proposing and giving you figures for a five-year straight line phase-in. That had some quite interesting developments. The poor old city of Brisbane had five years to get over the shock of a $40,000 cut. You know, morning tea money for the first week of their financial year. $40,000 and yet 34 aboriginal councils suddenly were denied $3 million forever because in fact the new assessment identified they had been under compensated by fifty percent over the previous eight years. Now straight line calculations do those sorts of silly things. My personal response was to say, well I think we can do it better and it should be done relative to the percentages affect up or down and I will come back to that point. I just want to lay down on the ground the actual circumstances.

But notwithstanding that letter and that advice, there never was a formal submission on any level of funding in terms of the figures until 11 August this year, four days before every other state actually got their cheque in the mail. No it doesn’t matter how you want to put it, there were messages flowing through the media for six months. There were all sorts of ideas proposed here and there but in fact they were referred to as a five-year straight line, or in the later stages, a four-year straight line. Great, every other state got through their business, achieved the national principles, had their submissions in and the cheque on the way on the due date, the 15th of August. The Queensland Government made their first
formal application four days before closure. Now they are the facts, so now I have put them on the record, I will go back to reading my speech.

The first of the four quarterly payments that you will be receiving is $71.6 million. As I have already indicated my approach to the methodology review and grant outcomes have been a matter of principle.

The Commonwealth has had legislation covering arrangements for these grants in place since July 1995 specifying the Commonwealth’s requirements. In that time, Queensland has not complied with these requirements and I, as the federal minister, had an obligation to Federal Parliament to ensure that it did comply, just as you individually must comply with your state Local Government Act. All other states had complied within a year or two of that legislation back in 1995.

At my insistence, the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission developed that new methodology. I have already mentioned some 92 councils (including 34 indigenous councils) will receive an increase in grants under this new methodology. Some of those 92 councils would have been underpaid under the previous arrangement.

My requirements under any phase-in were:

− Those councils receiving an increase should receive their increase in total within three years;
− The 34 indigenous councils which were all to receive an increase in grants should be given priority in the phase-in. That is a requirement of the legislation that special treatment be given to aboriginal people in two sections that it appears.
− Those councils suffering major reductions in their grants (as a percentage of total untied revenue) should be given time — four to five years — to make the adjustment; and
− Those councils receiving a decrease and able to move quickly to the phased-in grants should do so to ensure that money flowed to other parties.

My proposals were met, as is a matter of record, by strong resistance from the Queensland Government although they did have support from a large number of Queensland councils. It was quite interesting when we wrote to them recently how many who were entitled to more money actually defended their right to that money, particularly when it was pointed out there was a sort of story out there that those who were getting more didn’t really think they needed the money, that their ratepayers could pay up instead.

In order to overcome the impasse, we have now agreed on the following framework:

− Indigenous councils will be phased-in in 2003-04
− Any small disadvantaged councils similarly affected to also be phased-in in 2003-04;
− Minimum grant councils to be obviously excluded
− Remaining councils to receive a four-year straight line phase-in.

No small disadvantaged councils were subsequently identified by the Queensland Government. One of the common concerns of those Queensland councils whose grants were decreasing was that they needed time to adjust to grant changes. However councils in other states who are just through the process, in other words, a revaluation and a substantial increase in their gross rateable value etc, appear not to have the same difficulty as has been identified in Queensland.

For instance, the WA Local Government Grants Commission has set a cap on grant reductions for general purpose grants of 15% in 2003-04. This year, some of the grant reductions were -$198,887 for Kalamunda (minus 14.6%), minus $165,527 for Port Hedland (minus 11.5%) and minus $142,062 for Kalgoorlie-Boulder (minus 10.3%).

The Victoria Grants Commission phased-in new roads methodology over three years starting in 2001–02. In the first year, 20 councils had a reduction in their roads grants of greater than 10%. For instance, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council was reduced by $490,911.
In the second year of the phase-in of the roads grants, the Victorian Grants Commission introduced a new methodology for its general purpose grants. The Commission put a cap of 6% on any general purpose grant reductions and I could go through some further examples but I won't.

I am aware that some councils continue to have concerns with the new Queensland methodology and with some of the data that the Grants Commission is using. For example, and I quote, "Cairns City Council is currently highly unhappy with the outcomes provided by the current methodology". Johnstone Shire Council states "our council has serious doubts about the methodology being used by the Grants Commission and the fairness of the methodology". Tiaro Shire Council states that "it has serious concerns about the validity of the revised methodology." The Urban Local Government Association of Queensland were, and again I quote, "very critical of the outcomes from the old methodology", but also say it is "extremely disappointed with the outcome of the review".

I have noted these concerns. It seems to me that the Queensland Grants Commission should have been able to get these matters right in the very long time they have had to look at them. We can no longer ignore the fact that important issues in relation to the Queensland FAGs grants never seem to be resolved in Queensland to general satisfaction, and the fact that successive federal ministers have for well over a decade doubted the compliance of your process with the national principles for the distribution of these grants.

For that reason I announce today that I will initiate an inquiry into the management of the financial assistance grants process in Queensland. Arrangements for the inquiry are presently being developed.

Cost Shifting Inquiry

The House Of Representatives Inquiry into the role, responsibilities and financial arrangements for local government has the potential to be a very significant change agent for local government.

At the recent Local Government and Planning Ministers’ Council in Darwin, the chair of the committee, David Hawker, and Anna Burke, the deputy chair, briefed the council on progress with this committee’s inquiry. The Inquiry Report is scheduled for release later in 2003, and will be the subject of a special meeting of the Local Government and Planning Ministers’ Council.

I note with interest that motion number 10 in your conference papers, calls on the Queensland Government to recognise and act on the fact that over the past decade, through devolving responsibilities or additional regulatory and compliance requirements, it has imposed an additional cost of $25 million per annum on local government. I think this is a fundamental issue. I understand there was some signing of some sort of protocol this morning that starts to look at the various responsibilities of both arms of government. I sincerely hope some money was attached to that proposal.

The realities are that local government has been at the tail end and our government believes it is time there be a better recognition of the work done and the funding available to compensate for that effort. I remind people constantly that the Commonwealth Government obviously raises well over 100% of its own needs for expenditure. Local government is forced to raise 80%, meaning every time another responsibility is dumped in your lap you have got to collect at least 80% of it from your constituency and of course state governments collect less than 50% of the monies they spend. These make it extremely easy for one group to complain bitterly about their failure while dumping responsibility on to others and that is a national issue and is one that transcends party politics.

So answers to these questions have got to be given. I have just announced the names of both the chairperson and the vice chairperson of that committee, one is a Liberal the other is a Labor representative. It is a bi-partisan committee and I think it is well and truly convinced from the evidence received.
I am delighted nevertheless that the Inquiry has brought to the fore the greatly expanded role that local government has in service delivery and regulation, and that the Inquiry has led to quantification of the huge impost on local government that has resulted from States cost shifting.

It is only through documentation and exposure that we can begin to develop strategies to address that situation. I am also aware that whilst cost shifting is predominantly related to state decisions and policies, the Australian Government will also need to focus on its, albeit, smaller role in cost shifting. The Cost Shifting Inquiry has added to our knowledge of the state of infrastructure that local government is responsible for.

Roads to Recovery

As we all know, Roads to Recovery was implemented because there was a need to address the growing backlog of work on the local road network, work that local government was simply unable to handle.

The recent review, undertaken jointly by the Commonwealth and Australian Local Government Association, found that this is exactly what Roads to Recovery has done.

I am sure that most councils here can provide an example of Roads to Recovery money being used effectively at a local level to achieve local, regional and national outcomes. I will highlight just a few by way of example:

− Biggs Road and Josephine Falls Road are single lane roads, here in Cairns. These roads give access to a popular recreation area. The roads were narrow and traffic travelling in opposite directions had to leave the seal to pass. Using Roads to Recovery funds, Cairns City Council upgraded and widened 1.7 kilometres of this route to two-lane standard.

− The Winton Town Bypass was partly gravel and ran close to a cattle unloading area. As a result, the town was covered in dust whenever stock or traffic movements were high and there was the potential for accidents when stock were being unloaded. Using Roads to Recovery funds, the road was sealed and shifted away from the unloading zone for cattle, which meant less dust over the town. The potential for incidents at the cattle unloading ramp has also been much reduced, and maintenance costs are lower too.

− Let me say I personally visited Birdsville recently and looked at an excellent project that they have completed on a state road because they were told they had to wait another 50 years before the State would do it. What impressed me most was that they had conducted the works at an administrative cost of two percent and I think local government has got to get out there and sell that they can deliver 98% of Commonwealth monies on the road. It is not our experience in dealing with State Government to get anywhere near that figure. I have said publicly in the Roads Conference in Kalgoorlie, I hope one of the Auslink strategies is to have trust funds for our monies so they can be put in a place and let somebody, be it Mr Thiess or Mr Local Government or be it the State Government, bid for the administration so that we ensure the maximisation of our dollars in road works.

Across Australia, the Federal Government has already paid out $766 million under this programme with a further $184 million to come in 2003-04 as part of its commitment to provide $1.2 billion to councils by 30 June 2005. These payments are guaranteed by legislation.

One important point I need to make is that Roads to Recovery still has nearly two years to run. Some councils appear to think that it will end in 2004, that is not so. It will continue to run under the existing legislation until 30 June 2005. In particular, the introduction of Auslink will not affect that programme.

A decision will be made on the future of the Roads to Recovery programme closer to its completion. Let me say, my State of Western Australia, is unfortunately the worst example when a State Government
pulls $14 million back off local government under a written agreement. It puts huge pressure on myself and John Anderson in winning the argument in a very competitive environment, that is the Economic Review Committee, or Expenditure Review Committee of the Federal Cabinet. When we have to go in there and say “look keep this program going” and one of our opponents for money says, “well you didn’t get much road for it in Western Australia, you just financed the State Government to do something else with the money”. That makes it extremely difficult for us. To the great credit of the Western Australian local government organisations, they have taken that right up to the State Government by way of public advertising and other things to try and correct that very silly move, but we do need states and local government to stick to their commitments, or past commitments if we are to win the argument for a long term progression of *Roads to Recovery*. I think it is worth it, I think it is a wonderful program, but we must, we have to win it, against all sorts of competing influences and that is an issue on which we don’t need to be undermind.

**Auslink**

*Auslink* represents a national strategic approach to the next phase of transport reform. *Auslink* aims to ensure that all the sectors must be smarter in putting our money where it will achieve the most benefit.

In addition, we must attract additional investment from the private sector. Local government will have a substantial part to play. We strongly believe that councils are in the best position to determine their own road priorities and that won’t change, but it is important that councils look beyond their boundaries to develop local infrastructure.

Under *Auslink*, the Australian Government will explore options for establishing the strategic direction for each of the freight or interstate or regional corridors of national significance.

We will seek submissions from other levels of government, working individually or in conjunction with the private sector, for projects conforming to the agreed national strategy.

As well as transport infrastructure, I know that natural disaster relief is also another issue of great importance to local government.

**Natural Disaster Relief**

Natural disasters are currently estimated to cost Australian communities about $1 billion a year in economic terms and infinitely more in personal suffering.

The Australian Government is working on a new approach, aiming for safer and more sustainable Australian communities and to reduce risks, damage and losses from bushfires, cyclones, floods and landslides.

In June 2001, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commissioned a wide-ranging review of natural disaster relief and mitigation arrangements in Australia. The review has been completed and is awaiting COAG consideration.

The Commonwealth announced in the 2003-04 budget that it would provide $68.5 million over five years for the new mitigation programme with the aim of creating safer and more sustainable Australian communities and a reduction in the risk, damage and losses arising from future natural disasters.

The measures could include disaster mitigation strategies, disaster risk assessment, disaster-resilient infrastructure, preparedness measures such as warning systems and disaster research.

Let me say how important it is to move from National Disaster payments, a $100 million a year put in the federal budget under the line, as compared to preventative measures where that is practical. We have started off with flooding, we have had some excellent responses. The deal is that each state gets an
allocation of money and state governments in association with local government put forward proposals to spend those commonwealth funds.

The issue that often gets clouded in this debate is, that the only conditions applicable to that money are that the amount offered by the Commonwealth be one third of the total cost and that state governments guarantee the balance but not less than the Commonwealth’s contribution, ie a third. It is not true that local government has to find the other third. I have had that entrenched in the new arrangements for a very good reason. These initiatives commence with local government and you shouldn’t be frightened off if you have a serious problem by not being able to fund one third of the cost. We should take a much broader approach to that sort of situation.

Local government is expected to be a partner where they can afford it, but they shouldn’t be denied the opportunity of receiving this supplementary funding if their financial circumstances don’t allow them to put up a third. I just want to put that on line.

It is not such a problem for Queensland but we have seen the wild fires of the southern regions this year. It has been quite amazing to me that we preserved all these forests and got them all ready to burn down. Anybody that wants to talk about greenhouse emissions, isn’t talking about how much greenhouse exited Australia during those fires and nobody wants to admit that if they had sold all the carbon credits in those forests, how much they would have had to pay back after the fires. We knew it was going to happen and history told us we got it all wrong.

The process goes on. We have a major Federal Parliamentary Inquiry again. Representations from all political parties including the one and only Green Member of Parliament in the House of Representatives are on that committee and I think, will tell us some pretty horrifying things. I think it is going to tell us because of the national disaster relief arrangements that actually fires were allowed to get big enough to qualify for that funding before anyone tried to put them out.

All in all we can have as many reserves as we like. You have 19 million pigs north of here to look after in the Cape York reserves, they eat 100 frogs a day. You have any option if you want National Parks, they have to be looked after and there has got to be mitigating processes to make sure we don’t have a repeat of 400 houses being wiped out in the City of Canberra. They weren’t burnt down they were blown away. The whole concept is to take mitigation action, wherever practical in any of those disaster regions, and of course for local government that includes building codes, town planning responses, all sorts of factors associated with keeping people safe from the disasters that are part of our national psyche if you like.

I think it is a very important area and one I hope local government will participate to the greatest extent possible. I think we can collectively do a lot of good there and as my opening remarks on this subject said, the biggest cost is personal suffering and that should be addressed by preventing it, not giving people money after the event.

Commonwealth funding for the new disaster mitigation programme is subject to

− Matching funding from states and territories and local government;
− State, territory and local governments reforming statutory land use planning, development and building controls to mitigate natural disasters;
− The use by all jurisdictions of agreed consistent risk assessment methodologies; and
− Commitment to a national framework for natural disaster data collection and research.

In addition to establishing and managing the new disaster mitigation programme, my department also has responsibility for the new regional partnerships programme.

Regional Partnerships

As a key component of the stronger regions framework, regional partnerships builds on the experience of previous community based regional programmes, including regional solutions, regional assistance, dairy regional assistance and rural transaction centres to better support local ideas and aspirations.
Let me say just in my visit to Cairns today, some of the examples of the success already arising from some of those funding programs is extremely encouraging.

I just want to touch briefly for your information on the changes. The monies from all those programs is now under one heading "Regional Partnerships". Instead of the old assessment process assessment will virtually start with a recommendation of your nearest area consultative committee. They don't have a "yes/no" power but we will look closely at their advice. It is quite a challenge for them because they can no longer just see themselves as a regional sort of advocate and say well we have got to get some money for our mob, they are going to have to take a national approach, look at the quality of the applications and look at the level of community financial commitment. It may not necessarily be large but it has got to be relative to the capacity of the community to participate. This is not a program for ambit claims.

I guess the other most important factor of the new program is that eligibility has been extended to private enterprise. It's a funny thing that we in government have this habit of saying "Oh we can only deal with 'not for profit' organisations". I think if you want to grow a community having someone with a profit motive has a funny effect of adding to jobs and adding to economic activity. We are not talking about the bank of last resort or financing some minor purchase. We are talking of green fields efforts to bring a project, maybe out of the city, maybe someone's great idea, and I can quote a couple of examples.

The first attempt of this was done with forestry money in the town of Eden. That of course was one of the areas where all of the forests were shut down to save them. They have consequently burnt down but the fact of life is they also lost their other major employer, a fish cannery. We went down there with $3 million, had a local committee do the primary assessment and we got $12 million worth of new investment in that small city.

The most important I guess and the most unlikely was to assist someone to build a pie factory. A local businessman in retail and manufacturing, highly regarded, wanted to go to nation-wide. We gave him funding and he is employing 30 people. The net result of that program was $12 million of investment and I believe we, the Commonwealth, will get our $3 million back in less than three years and the savings we are experiencing through not having to pay social welfare benefits. Those are the opportunities.

I think in Eden we filled a gap between what a bank might lend a businessman to develop in a major capital city and what they lend in a less populated area. That is the sort of principles involved. It is a very important program and I hope as local government you will take what opportunities you can.

I just wanted to touch on the other issue where we have provided some funding to the LGMA to look at opportunities to work from home. They clearly exist in local government and I would like to think local government took a lead nationally in demonstrating this to the community and the benefits that can flow from this initiative.

I myself can recognise all the financial and economic difficulties of paid maternity leave. If we can put that behind us, what is the use of 14 weeks of paid maternity leave when the baby turns 15 weeks old. There is no ongoing benefit. An opportunity for work from home is a continuous benefit and for people in my age category we know that looking after a 16 year old can be more difficult than looking after a 16 week old. You need to be home. If you can work from home then there are all those benefits. It is great for family and work but putting that aside, let me say that the benefits for local government are in reduced office space, air conditioning and things of those nature.

All of a sudden and out of the blue we have a new debate. That debate is about first home owners and their ability to purchase a block of land. One of the criticisms applicable to the price of land is that it is in short supply because of the delays through the planning process. Frequently the answer to that is "well I can’t hire a town planner". What happens, I get the Institute of Town Planners in my office the other day putting this issue to me and asking for more Commonwealth funds for training, something that is not certainly an immediate response. I raised this issue of working from home and they said to me if that was implemented in local government there would be no shortage of planners, there is enough of them home.
raising a family that could participate and meet a gap in the work force. I ask you to seriously consider those issues and see where you can make a positive out of that situation.

Ladies and gentlemen I just want to close with one quick comment. I am sorry to interfere with your debate on the motion about amalgamations. I’d preferred that you had voted. My view for my communities is one of their right to democratic representation to retain the elected council but a really consistent and dedicated effort to amalgamating underneath that body at the administrative level. You could gather with my electorate of 50 councils, some are quite small, and two of them now share the same chief executive, Tammin and Kellerberrin.

The idea of amalgamating works units and, in some cases, having a couple of scrapers instead of a couple of trucks, and sharing them out makes sense. The City of Kalgoorlie now hires out its qualified people to the adjoining small councils. It is a sort of business unit. I think you have got a lot of opportunities there and I think the opportunities you can take yourself and fit your local requirements. It’s up to you. It’s a vote you should take as you feel fit but I do think we can separate the two functions and have our cake and eat it too. We don’t have to deny people the fact that they can walk down the street and meet their local councillor.

A tragedy in quite a small town of Carnarvon for me in local government was the day a fellow told me about his prospecting plan but that the council wouldn’t let him do it. I said “it has never come before the council!”. “Oh no” he said, “I went and talked to the town planner and he said the council will never let you do that”. That is not local government, I think you have got to be there, that’s my problem, it shouldn’t be yours.

Look thank you for listening to me. I hope the good news I bring you is okay. It has been a hot period and there has been a few arguments and disagreement. I am not totally convinced you have got the best outcome with the straight line deal, I think it distorts too many things but we have agreed to it and the money is in the mail.

Thank you.
“MAIN ROADS AND TRANSPORT UPDATE”

Hon Steve Bredhauer  
*Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads*

I think that this is now my sixth Local Government Association of Queensland conference. The LGAQ conference provides me a valuable opportunity each year to work with you in addressing those challenges, which are not only unique to the State - but are confronting both our levels of government.

I am going to focus on a number of issues that will be of interest to you today. I am going to spend a little bit of time later on talking about the transport issues particularly in southern Queensland. I do that because there is a bit of a focus on those transport planning issues in south-east Queensland at the moment and I think this is an opportunity to put some sort of perspective of the State Government’s view about those issues and then I will touch on a number of relationship issues between local and state government and local, state and commonwealth.

A pressing issue facing this state is population growth, and the pressures that this growth is placing on the delivery of services and infrastructure.

Queensland is growing at a rapid rate. Those of you from councils on the coast, in particular, will be familiar with the pressures of growth. But, while our overall population is rapidly increasing - there are those places in Queensland facing population decline.

These two facts present us with twin challenges - addressing growth with the associated need for expanded infrastructure - and ensuring that a portion of the budget goes towards supporting those communities facing population decline.

One-third of all population growth that took place in Australia last year was in Queensland. This growth is happening at such a rate - that, by 2020, Queensland will have overtaken Victoria as the second-most populous state in Australia.

All of us are aware that the speed and sustained nature of this growth needs to be matched with a coherent, measured response - and with planning.

In the past five years, state and local governments in Queensland have worked together to focus on planning to deal with Queensland’s growth in population and economy. In fact, that co-operation extends back before my time as Minister but I am focusing particularly on my time as minister.

The State Government has worked solidly with local government in south-east Queensland and regional Queensland to develop Integrated Regional Transport Plans - for south-east, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Border Rivers, Eastern Downs and Wide Bay and the Gulf.

These local plans for Queensland’s regions look at integrating our efforts with regard to transport and land use. Increasingly, we will see these new tools, guiding regional land use decisions - so that new development is optimally located to take into account the infrastructure costs of providing basic services.

Integrated Regional Transport Plans are now commonly the driver behind our moves to preserve transport corridors to ensure we can meet the future needs generated by population growth.

There is no question that Integrated Regional Transport Plans provide us with a long-term framework for planning at a local level over a 25-year period.

A new document I am launching today will guide all of us in implementing the region-specific measures contained in those Regional Plans.
We will add Integrated Regional Transport Planning Framework to the suite of tools available to state and local governments to work collectively in making responsible planning decisions that are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable.

While the need for Integrated Regional Transport Plans clearly identifies the need for infrastructure, services and planning activities, at a local level - the framework document is an overarching strategy that tells us how to undertake good planning practice to achieve sustainable outcomes.

The framework will equally guide the efforts of yourselves - local government - in a way, which represents a good "fit" with the activities of state government, and in a way, which achieves a set of outcomes that are basically common between state and local government. It will serve to align our efforts - both within the state, and between state and local governments in achieving those responsibilities. I would like to acknowledge the work that has been done by Queensland Transport, Department of Main Roads, Department of Local Government and Planning and LGAQ in putting the framework together.

What we are trying to do is to develop a common thread to our planning processes so that we can meet the challenges of population growth and industry, and importantly to make sure that we have a consistent approach across government. Whether it be state government or any of the 125 local government councils we need to be adopting a similar philosophy. The framework will build on the Beattie government's long-term commitment to integrating our land use and transport planning.

As I mentioned earlier, I want to focus for a couple of minutes on the transport issues in South East Queensland because of a debate that is about to get underway and I want to talk about the context, I guess, in which the State Government is working to develop our plans and to meet the infrastructure requirements of those councils in south-east Queensland.

In 1998 I launched the Integrated Transport Plan for south-east Queensland. The IRTP provides the 25-year overarching vision for the population growth that is expected to occur across the south-east and how we proposed to plan for that growth. Under the IRTP we have Transport 2007, which is the medium term program, designed to give effect to those infrastructure and service delivery projects, which we hope to achieve in that timeframe. We also have the three-year rolling plan and we are adding to that with documents like the one I just launched - the IRTP Framework.

We have undertaken significant infrastructure development in south-east Queensland. I can mention $599 million we have spent on the south-east Busway and Transit Lane Project. I can also mention the $135 million Inner Northern Busway Project that is due for completion by the end of this year and which will see services operating on that busway from the beginning of next year.

We have seen growth on the south-east Busway of 80 percent patronage over the last 18 months and we expect those benefits to flow to people on the inner northern and northern suburbs. We are also undertaking on the northern corridor, priority studies to give us the capability of delivering improved public transport services along the Lutwyche Corridor.

On Saturday, I opened the new Springwood Bus Interchange and announced that an additional 248 services per week will be provided to Logan City. John Freeman, the Mayor of Logan City is here today and was represented at the opening by Tom Sandmann. That is about providing for services and infrastructure for one of Queensland's fastest growing areas - Logan.

We're undertaking the Translink and Integrated Ticketing SmartCard Initiative. I signed the $130 million, 12 year deal to secure the SmartCard a couple of months ago and we are working with our Translink team across the State Government, Brisbane City Council, Queensland Rail and the other 15 public transport operators across south-east Queensland not just to provide an integrated ticketing through SmartCard, which is a big and important focus, but to develop the transport network plan in the largest area under
one single integrated transport service in the world from Noosa in the north to Coolangatta in the south and west to Helidon.

The work that we undertake there will be not only leading Australia but up with world's best practice. We're working on the Travel Smart Initiative, which is delivering positive benefits by providing education to people about how they can find alternatives to the private motor vehicle, in public transport, in cycling and in walking to reduce the demand on our public network.

But we are also planning for the road network requirements of south-east Queensland with major projects like the M1, between Brisbane and the Gold Coast and Port of Brisbane Motorway, which has recently been constructed. Plans are well advanced for the duplication of the Gateway Motorway and Bridge and a range of others, which I will come to in a minute.

I just want to mention briefly that in yesterday's Courier Mail there was a discussion, as part of this debate, on public transport in south-east Queensland about what the coalition might do. I don't want to enter into the politics of the debate but one of the things that Lawrence Springborg said he would do in government is accelerate planning for the Gateway Motorway and Bridge to fast track that project. I just suggest to the people at the Courier Mail and others who think that might be good policy to cast their minds back a couple of years to where we were with the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

A decision by the Coalition Government to accelerate the planning process and fast track the delivery of that project in the final analysis led to the cost going from $620 million to $956 million. I don’t believe that you can shortcut the necessary planning processes and deliver an effective project outcome without seeing substantial escalation in costs of that nature.

So I caution people against those who suggest to you that you can accelerate or fast track major infrastructure projects like the Gateway Motorway and Bridge Project.

We're working with the Commonwealth on the Ipswich motorway and on the Yandina to Cooroy Upgrade. We have completed Stage 1 of the Northern Caboolture Bypass, the Brisbane to Beenleigh Duplication and the Mount Lindsay Highway where we recently let a contract for about $33 million. Work on the Dohles Rock Road to Boundary Road Upgrade is underway and we have planning studies in place for projects such as the four laning of the Nicklin Way, the Sunshine Motorway Corridor Study, the CAMCOS, Western Ipswich Bypass Study and a range of others. It is a comprehensive suite of planning for transport infrastructure and the State Government is working closely with Local Government in south-east Queensland to deliver.

In talking about the relationship between the State Government and Local Government I would like to provide an update on the Local Government / Main Roads Roads Alliance. This is another way in which we are working together to meet the needs of a growing and changing population.

The Alliance agreement is now effectively through phase one and gearing up for phase two - where it will create visible change in how state and local governments manage the road network. All regional roads groups have been established, and the majority have held their first meetings.

All technical committees are up and running, and are close to finalising the set of priority networks within their regional roads groups. The list of pre-qualified asset management system providers has already been drawn up, and this will significantly speed up the process of allocating tenders and getting down to work.

Many other Alliance initiatives will be in place before early next year, when full implementation will begin. The Roads Alliance has been a collaborative success story - but it has not always been an easy path.

Both our levels of Government have established ways of doing things that have evolved over a number of decades. We have been able to move towards some common understandings and models to deliver the
Alliance. It is testament to the strong commitment that we all have to the future of the Alliance. That is because we recognise now - as we did when we commenced this process - the very real benefits to be gained from planning and budgeting on a regional basis.

I want to contrast that level of co-operation between the State and Local Government and particularly the focus on south-east Queensland that I just outlined, with relationships with the Commonwealth Government. Through the Auslink initiative we have seen, I guess, a lack of co-operation, a lack of willingness by the Commonwealth Government to work with other levels of government to achieve our common objectives. They are to establish a transport plan, which is not just national, but which can then be devolved down to the state and local levels, so that we can work with them to deliver the transport network priorities that we each have in our local, regional and state areas.

Unless we have that level of co-operation and support Auslink won’t work and I guess I am disappointed that through Auslink we have seen a lack of willingness on the part of the Commonwealth to engage in a meaningful way with the other levels of government to provide what Australia desperately needs. That is a national transport plan that can serve not only to meet the freight corridor requirements of the state of Queensland, and the country as a whole, but can also enable us to deal effectively with the issues of urban congestion and urban population growth.

At some stage in the debate in the Courier Mail about population growth and the need for infrastructure to meet that population growth, there will need to be the rigour of scrutiny applied to the Commonwealth in their failure to deal with the issues of urban congestion and urban population growth as is evidenced through the Auslink proposal. In fact, they have specifically said that Auslink will not address the issues of urban congestion and urban population growth. But I put it to them that it is false economy to say that you can improve the efficiency of the freight network without dealing with the issue of urban congestion and urban population growth.

The place where our freight network falls down is in our urban areas, be it the urban areas in south-east Queensland or the urban areas in regional parts of Queensland, in Townsville, in Cairns, in Rockhampton and in Gladstone, where congestion on the road network makes access to things like ports and major rail heads a major inhibitor to that kind of economic activity. Somewhere along the line we are going to have to focus on those issues but we are also going to have to focus on the issues of funding. Now, I've made my decision about where I am going to be after the next election but John Anderson is still prevaricating. I'm not going to be Nostradamus here today but my prediction is that John Anderson will announce his retirement before the next election and that Auslink will go with him.

Part of the problem is that he knows that to sell Auslink to the states and to local government he needs to have additional funds allocated to transport to be used as the sweetener, if you like, for getting us on board for his new proposals. He can’t win the fight with Peter Costello for additional funds for transport and road network in Australia.

I would suggest to you that we will have a new transport minister after the next election and that the debate will shift off Auslink onto some other format.

The other issue is that we come under increasing pressure from all of you, and from various other stakeholders in the community to increase our share of funding for road and transport infrastructure in Queensland, and to find ways to raise additional revenue to put into roads and transport infrastructure in Queensland.

Everyone of you, every time I have deputations and you come to see me, ask for more for your roads I understand that and we do what we can to meet those requests within our available resources. I want to contrast the performance of the State Government in terms of finding additional resources for Main Roads and transport infrastructure with that of the Commonwealth.

I need to highlight to you the difficulty we have as a state government in finding new ways, new taxes, new charges that we are going to put on the population out there to fund roads and transport that many
of you are arguing we should do. The difficulty is that Australian motorists presently pay $7 billion dollars a year in fuel excise and they get 16 cents in the dollar back in road and transport infrastructure. Ten years ago they were getting 35 cents in the dollar back from the Commonwealth in terms of road and transport infrastructure. Over the ten years that has declined to 16 cents in the dollar that is coming back in roads and transport infrastructure. Over the same time State Government funding for roads and transport has more than doubled and I will stake our record in funding for roads and transport infrastructure against the Commonwealth any day.

Yes, there is a degree of acceptability out there in the travelling public that they would be prepared to pay more if they saw it coming back to roads and transport infrastructure. However, that level of acceptability is very seriously curtailed by the fact that they know that they are paying a direct road user charge. Now, nothing could be more direct than the fuel excise that they pay and they are getting less than one fifth than what they spend on fuel excise back in roads and transport infrastructure. And that's an imbalance that needs to be addressed.

I understand the issues that it’s committed to Consolidated Revenue, Health and Education and Defence and National Security and all of those kind of issues but somewhere along the line, some Commonwealth Government of one political flavour or another is going to have to address the issue if we are going to meet the infrastructure requirements of the growing population centres of urban centres around Australia.

Quickly through a couple of final issues. The higher mass limits - We've been making efforts to try to reconcile the competing needs between higher mass limits and the need to protect our road, particularly, our bridge infrastructure.

In January 2003, a policy framework allowing for limited extension of access for Higher Mass Limit vehicles beyond the National Highway System or NHS was implemented on a 12-month trial. Extensions must be on existing B-Double routes contiguous to the NHS, with applications to the road owner in the first instance assessed on a case-by-case basis, with the first vulnerable structure (for example bridges or culverts) being the point at which access for HML vehicles stops.

While no additional routes have been gazetted as yet, the first are expected within the next few weeks. There are eleven applications that have been received to date. Four have been returned to the applicant due to no agreement with asset owners, five are awaiting additional information, two are proceeding to gazettal. Other applications are known to be with road asset owners awaiting their consideration.

Notable routes include: Port of Brisbane to Gateway Motorway, via Port of Brisbane Road and Port of Brisbane Motorway; Gateway Motorway to Logan Motorway, via the Gateway Extension; and a couple of others that I won't go into but it is important to note that these routes have the capacity to divert some HML vehicles off the Brisbane Urban Corridor which would be welcomed in these areas.

Before finishing today I would briefly also like to update you on progress on one important Beattie government initiative, the 50 kilometre per hour local street initiative and provide you with an update on the progress of the changed roadside rest area policy implementation.

Research shows that 20-30 per cent of casualty crashes in residential areas occur on local streets. To address this issue a 50-km/h local street speed limit was implemented in south-east Queensland from 1 March 1999 and rolled out to the rest of the State on 1 February this year.

I'm very pleased to report that the rollout has been successful. It's been supported by both the State Government and local government and I say to you today, thank you, for the contribution you've made in helping us put this system in place. It is saving lives on Queensland roads. The first two years we estimate 26 lives were saved on south-east Queensland roads and that benefit is now flowing to the rest of the state.
Briefly now to the Roadside Rest Area Policy, which I know, has caused concern to a number of councils particularly in western areas. Following a six-month review of the policy pertaining to camping in roadside rest areas managed by Main Roads, it has been decided to extend camping hours at those sites affected by the new policy to a universal 20 hours. Motorists will now be able to stay for up to 20 hours at the 43 sites identified in Main Roads’ Guide to Queensland Roads as permitting camping. It is important to note that there are roadside rest areas, which have traditionally prohibited camping, and we intend to continue prohibiting camping in those areas but in the other 43 we will allow for stays of up to 20 hours. This is a change from the policy announcement in March - which put overnight restrictions on 29 of those sites.

What we intend to do is to conduct a more comprehensive review of the entire policy in consultation with local government and other stakeholders over the coming months, but in the meantime, the new arrangements of a 20 hour maximum stay will be put in place and I think it will go a long way to resolving concerns that have been expressed to me by a number of you.

It’s important to note, though, that rest areas were never intended to be free camping facilities. They were always designed basically to help road safety in terms of managing fatigue. Also, commercial operators of camping and recreation facilities in your towns in regional and rural parts of Queensland rely on this drive tourism for part of their economy.

I hope what we have reached is a reasonable compromise which will be acceptable both to those commercial camping and caravan park operators and to caravanning and drive tourism market in the context of that comprehensive review.

Look, I think I can leave it at that. There are a number of other matters that I could comment on but I would like to leave time for a few questions or comments if you might have them.
“STATE OF OUR STATE’S INFRASTRUCTURE”

Professor Lyndsay Neilson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agencies such as the OECD, the World Bank and UNDP have consistently found that:

(i) good quality infrastructure raises productivity, lowers production costs;
(ii) infrastructure spending must expand fast enough to accommodate growth and to open up new areas for development;
(iii) the highest potential returns from investment are generated when the local and regional economies are open and accessible (in particular trade, investment and labour in-migration); and
(iv) there is a corresponding need to invest in institutional skills and technical resources to support investment.

Transport is central to economic development. Without physical access to jobs, health, education and other amenities, the quality of life of residents suffers; while efficient access for goods to and from ports and airports is a fundamentally important factor in international competitiveness.

Based on an analysis of the past decade, Queensland’s investment at all levels of government, including private sector infrastructure investment in its ‘hard’ physical infrastructure in relation to the size of its economy, has been consistently higher than most other states and territories, including Victoria.

Over the past 20 years, Queensland’s local government has maintained its level of capital expenditure per head, in real terms (at $360 per head per annum, in 2001/02 prices). State Government capital expenditure, on a real terms per head basis, has shifted over the same period from around $1474 in 1983/84 to $964 in 2001/02. The peak in the mid 1980s was associated with projects such as rail electrification.

There is concern expressed about some infrastructure sectors, for example, the roads and highways sector in rural Queensland remains affected by apparently less than adequate investment in rehabilitation. The Queensland Government has also identified a $4.8 billion backlog of rehabilitation and maintenance works on State-controlled roads. These facilities are important to economic performance.

Like Victoria and Melbourne, Queensland faces congestion and deterioration of accessibility and environmental standards in Brisbane and other urban centres. This could constrain the way in which Queensland’s ‘engine for growth’ operates in the future. Queensland is experiencing a very high rate of population growth, with over 75% of this growth locating in the South-East corner. According to BTE research, Brisbane faces the most significant increase in cost of congestion of all State capitals over the next fifteen years.

To address challenges like this, Victoria has recently changed the way in which it plans infrastructure investment, adopting a strategic planning approach to public sector investment decision making, and has strengthened the need for scenario-based strategic thinking at all levels of government within the state. Victoria has introduced the concept of a state-wide strategic program of investment, enabling longer-term planning for Victoria’s future and for the State’s major capital works. This embracing of strategic planning has generated a number of important public sector benefits, including:

(i) a clear and explicit rationale for achieving policy directions;
(ii) a commitment to excellence in a number of key capabilities by reducing the complexity of choice in public sector investment; and
(iii) a common frame of reference as to where Victoria should be in future years.
Melbourne’s strategic plan Melbourne 2030 could provide a point of comparison for local government in Queensland in addressing strategic planning. Equally, the preparation of long-term capital programs with major strategic projects developed within a project ‘pipeline’ (the Multi-Year Investment Strategy) may also provide useful points of comparison.

Introduction
It is a pleasure to be invited to speak again at an Annual LGAQ Conference. I am not speaking today on behalf of the Victorian Government.
The views I will express today are very much my own.

Infrastructure, Competitiveness and Sustainability
The focus of this discussion is on the physical infrastructure underpinning economic activity.

Infrastructure investment and the adequacy of Australia’s infrastructure have been the continuing focus of debate for the past two decades. The late 1980’s focused on privatisation and competition policy, and on infrastructure backlogs and technological upgrades - rail electrification, for example.

The 1990’s saw actual implementation of privatisation, while at the same time a resurgence of investment in urban infrastructure led by programs such as the Commonwealth’s Better Cities program.

A great deal of emphasis was being placed on the competitiveness of the Australian economy in an increasingly globalised world, and on the need for our infrastructure to be adequate to the challenge of supporting a strong export economy in Australia.

Today we add the concept of sustainability to the challenge of competitiveness - making sure that we can grow and develop today without compromising the possibilities for future generations.

We tend to think of sustainability in environmental terms - making sure we don’t over-exploit natural resources, or endanger ecosystems. But sustainability also is about productivity - doing more with less.

And improved productivity is ultimately also about competitiveness - if we reduce resource consumption an input costs, we should be more competitive.

Infrastructure investment is about capital assets with long lives - when we think about infrastructure and its capabilities we need to be thinking about the future as much as about today. Are we building infrastructure to support Australia’s competitiveness today, on a basis that also builds a sustainable future?

Infrastructure in a Global Context
Globally the importance of infrastructure is becoming more and more evident. China is supporting phenomenal economic growth with a massive infrastructure development program. Europe is transforming its energy infrastructure to meet the greenhouse challenge.

In the Middle East attacks on oil infrastructure and water infrastructure have been a feature of ongoing conflicts.

The recent blackouts in the North-East of the United States, and the problems in California in recent years in the power sector, highlights the potential vulnerability of our economies to infrastructure failures.

How much economic loss did the blackouts in the Nth-East cause? How many service companies with computers active were caught by power failures? How many factories? What does the incident mean for investor confidence?

Reliable infrastructure in a stable political environment will be hallmarks of future competitive economies.
Indeed, the recent World Competitiveness survey\(^1\) ranks Australia as No. 2 in world competitiveness, based on the competition policies we have adopted, the stability of our political systems and our economy, and the quality of our supporting infrastructure.

International agencies such as the OECD, the World Bank and UNDP are constantly reminding nations of the significance of infrastructure in national and regional economic development. We ignore infrastructure at our own loss.

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The *World Competitiveness Yearbook* is produced by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland. It provides annual ratings and rankings of national competitiveness across the globe.

The quality and reliability of infrastructure is one of its key factors for assessing the competitiveness of nations. IMD examines what it calls basic infrastructure, technological infrastructure, scientific infrastructure, health and environment, and education. In other words, a very broad definition of infrastructure, far wider than our focus today.

For 2003, Australia performs very well, ranked number 2 internationally in terms of the overall quality and reliability of its infrastructure after the USA. Past rankings have seen Australia fluctuate between 2 and 4 in the world rankings.

What is of interest is that infrastructure quality is clearly a necessary factor in economic performance, but not the only one. While ranked high on infrastructure and efficiency measures, Australia’s economic performance is not highly ranked. China, while relatively low on infrastructure performance, is number 2 on economic performance.

On this matter, the OECD in a recent study of Melbourne as a metropolitan region said “The traditional determinant for competitiveness of an economy is the level of investment as well as the supply and quality of infrastructure. The reason is especially the reduction of both main types of costs determining the location of firms - the fixed costs of setting up a firm and the transport costs - which is achieved by a large supply of floor space and basic transport and energy infrastructure.”\(^2\)

**Infrastructure Quality**

The quality of Australia’s infrastructure is very variable, as indicated by the 2001 Australian Infrastructure Report Card prepared by the Institution of Engineers.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) *IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2003*, Lausanne, Switzerland.


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107th Annual Conference - Proceedings

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Rating is A to F, with A being the highest rating.

Our rail and irrigation systems were assessed as being in worst shape, and both are now the subject of national attention through the AusLink transport initiatives and the recent national water initiatives, both led initially by Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson.

Fortunately, our international global gateways - our ports, airports and telecommunications links are assessed highly, based on fitness for purpose. Our international movements of goods, people and information operate through efficient gateways.

But the land-side connections to those gateways - our national and state roads, our rail links - are seen to be in poor shape. These poor connections may increase the cost and reduce the reliability of our exports, hence reducing their global competitiveness.

The "Report Card" gave State-controlled roads a 'C-' (average to poor) while local roads were rated 'D' (poor), with lack of both capital and maintenance funding noted.

The report identified a need for an increase in overall funding and a re-evaluation of the balance between capital and maintenance expenditure.

The Investment Debate

There has always been a debate about the adequacy of public spending on infrastructure.

In 1989, Donald Aschauer, an American economist, created almost an uproar by concluding, after extensive analysis, that public infrastructure investment was a key factor in the growth of the United States economy, and that each dollar of public capital investment in infrastructure (energy, water and transport) generated 36 cents of private gross product.

Over the past decade, researchers have tried to both support and debunk the Aschauer analysis, with the result that, as the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research here in Australia recently concluded:

"After a decade of analysis, the general conclusion is that public capital in general and transport infrastructure in particular is more important as a driver of economic development than what was
considered to be the case before the Aschauer study. There is doubt, however, whether it is as important as the Aschauer study found it to be.”

The higher the share of public investment in GDP (that is the higher the public capital stock growth rate) the higher the productivity growth rate.”

In other words, infrastructure investment does underpin and stimulate economic growth, the only question is by how much.

That is a really important conclusion because it leads to the question of what can be done to stimulate further infrastructure investment, to improve competitiveness and support sustainability. Let’s first look at how we have been going.

Infrastructure Investment Trends
I will focus particularly on the transport sector, partly because it is a large sector, partly because of its significance to State and local governments.

The work by NIEIR for the Australian Council for Infrastructure Development, presented by the CEO Dennis O’Neill, shows a growing amount of money in year 2000 values being spent on transport infrastructure nationwide, but a reducing percentage of national GDP over time, relative to the high period of the 1960’s.

The NIEIR analysis concluded that if transport infrastructure investment had been maintained at the higher levels of the past into the 1990’s and to now, Australian GDP would have been some $13 billion higher in 2001 than it is.

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That doesn’t answer the question about the adequacy of transport investment versus other areas of investment, but it does point to the implications of the falling away of investment as a share of GDP.

Looking at the comparative effort of the major States over past years, Queensland and WA as larger States are spending more than NSW and especially Victoria on road and highway construction. Partly this is about distance, partly about the impact of population growth on the demand for new subdivisions.

All States have had peaks associated with major projects in the last few years.
A similar pattern prevails with investment in bridges, obviously with more evident peaks as projects come and go. Victoria typically has been well below Queensland except for the project peaks of the late 1990's.
Water, sewerage, and other physical infrastructure also underpin economic performance as well as delivering environmental and social services.
Chart 5: Sewerage and Drainage Infrastructure Investment

Chart 6: Water Storage and Supply Infrastructure Investment
It can be useful to separate out who is paying for what in the roads sector, especially as governments pass more responsibility on to the private sector for subdivisional roads and also for selected major road projects.

The following graph shows the growing role of private investment in roads infrastructure in Victoria, predominantly the city link project.

It also shows the impact of local government contracting our more work to the private sector. The public-for-public component had fallen significantly over the years.
The picture for Queensland is different, with the three sectors holding much the same share of investment over time.

Finally, looking at State and Local Government shares of the infrastructure investment task, in Queensland the State share has stabilised after a peak in the mid-1980's associated with rail electrification.
Some Queensland Specific Issues
Queensland has faced rapid population growth over the last twenty years, resulting in an expansion in total population served of more than 50% in this period. This growth has however, been confined to a relatively small geographic area.

The following Table shows the relative concentration of Queensland’s growth in the South-East corner, with 75% of the total State growth taking place in SEQ over the period shown.

In contrast to the high growth rate for the state as a whole, and for most of the coastal regions, the western portions of the state have shown overall population declines in the last twenty years.

Apart from SEQ, the only other region that grew faster than the State average was Far North Queensland as a result of development activity in the Cairns region.

The urbanisation pressures have focused on the coastal areas of the State, generally providing significant challenges in planning and environmental management as part of the functions of Local Government, in addition to the need for infrastructure and services for the new population.

The diversity of growth situations impacts on the role and function of Local Government across the State and the emphasis required on particular functions.
Population Growth by Region - 1981 to 2000

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane &amp; Moreton</td>
<td>1401480</td>
<td>1856473</td>
<td>2303310</td>
<td>64.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Bay/Burnett</td>
<td>154660</td>
<td>192688</td>
<td>228045</td>
<td>47.45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darling Downs</td>
<td>169240</td>
<td>192419</td>
<td>202475</td>
<td>19.64%</td>
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<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>28380</td>
<td>28611</td>
<td>25952</td>
<td>-8.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzroy</td>
<td>146720</td>
<td>168368</td>
<td>174771</td>
<td>19.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central West</td>
<td>14480</td>
<td>13098</td>
<td>12163</td>
<td>-16.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mackay</td>
<td>90630</td>
<td>111234</td>
<td>132533</td>
<td>46.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>157480</td>
<td>181910</td>
<td>183290</td>
<td>16.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>141650</td>
<td>187772</td>
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<td>50.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
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<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>2345300</td>
<td>2972004</td>
<td>3522044</td>
<td>50.17%</td>
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</table>

Source: ABS

Queensland has particular issues to face because of the scale of its road network - maintenance being a particular concern.

The poor quality of roads has also been identified by Queensland Main Roads which commented "the fact that Queensland’s road system is inadequate is undeniable. Most of the 34,000 km State-controlled road network constructed in the 1960s and 70s is coming to the end of its serviceable life and road users incur higher costs due to roads that are the roughest in Australia."

Austroads figures indicate that the roughness problem relates primarily to rural roads with only 88% of travel undertaken on roads with a roughness level condition of less than 110NRM (roughness measurement) compared with 92% for both New South Wales and Victoria. A roughness level that is less than 110NRM will normally provide acceptable travel conditions.

Returning to the theme of the challenge of sustainability and competitiveness, the OECD argues strongly that a key role for government in addressing competitiveness and infrastructure investment is "correcting for market failures, especially with regard to congestion and environmental effects of firm activity and population growth" (OECD 2003).

We face these challenges in all Australian capitals, but nowhere more so than in Brisbane, where rapid growth is a key driver.

Research by the Bureau of Transport Economics\(^7\) reveals that Brisbane faces the most significant increase in the cost of congestion of all State capitals over the next fifteen years. Congestion costs in Brisbane are estimated to rise from $2.6 billion per year in 1995 to $9.3 billion by 2015, almost a 260% increase.

Not only will Brisbane have the highest increase in congestion costs, total congestion costs will be higher than for Sydney with a population more than double that of Brisbane.

Based on the BTE research, the congestion cost in Brisbane will increase from $1800 per capita in 1995 to around $4,600 per capita in 2015. This compares with 2015 congestion costs of around $2,000 per capita in both Sydney and Melbourne.

The following Table provides comparisons for each State capital city.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>$6.0</td>
<td>$8.8</td>
<td>$1600</td>
<td>$2000</td>
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<td>Perth</td>
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<td>$1.9</td>
<td>$480</td>
<td>$1900</td>
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The Instruments of Governance
The OECD also sees key roles for government in having the conditions right so that markets can work efficiently and secondly, applying public goods like infrastructure, education and environmental quality where public activity is necessary. Essentially, governments need to be active. (OECD 2003)

I like to address the instruments of governance, to make sure we are drawing all the potential government capabilities in addressing the future direction for matters such as infrastructure investment and management

- **Regulatory** - do we have the right legislative and regulatory frameworks?
- **Financial** - are we spending enough on the right priorities?
- **Fiscal** - are the taxing and pricing regimes right for the required outcomes?
- **Institutional** - are the arrangements of roles and responsibilities appropriate, especially between government and the private sector?
- **Policy** - do we have the right policy frameworks in place to ensure decisions are sound and enhance competitiveness and sustainability?
- **Advocacy** - are governments advocating the appropriate positions to the community and to business?
- **Knowledge management** - are we doing enough research?
- **Asset management** - are we getting the most from our assets?

Experience in Victoria
Faced with the challenge of dealing with infrastructure for the future Victoria established an Infrastructure Planning Council to review the State’s needs twenty years ahead.

There was a need to take a long look, because of the long time it takes to get infrastructure projects up (5-7 years) and because of the impact and long life of infrastructure investments.

The Council:

\(^7\) Bureau of Transport Economics (1999) *Urban Transport Looking Ahead, Information Sheet 14,*
• Identified key projects for the State;
• In particular emphasised the significance of transport and communications for Victoria’s future economic growth;
• Noted urban congestion as a key future cost factor;
• Recognised the importance of reliable road and rail connections to ports and hinterlands for exports;
• Recognised the need to improve accessibility for an ageing population.

This and related strategic planning work for Melbourne and the State (in particular Melbourne 2030), plus the Government’s commitment to increase strategic infrastructure outlays led Victoria to review its infrastructure planning processes to:
• Improve delivery of asset investment programs;
• Promote better risk management;
• Enable more informed decision-making by Government;
• Better align asset investment programs and Government strategic objectives;
• Meet the infrastructure needs of urban growth and economic development;
• Share the investment between State and local government and with the private sector;
• Make the State more competitive globally.

The Gateway Multi-Year Strategy\(^8\) is a long-term view of asset investment aligned with Government’s strategic objectives.

The strategy:
• drives whole-of-budget sector priorities across portfolio boundaries;
• Addresses better forward planning, project scoping and ‘joined-up’ government.

The Gateway Business Case Development focuses on:
• Consistent project lifecycle guidance, focusing initially on preparation of better business cases to support asset investment proposals;
• Addresses scoping, risk assessment and mitigation;
• Includes Partnerships Victoria options.

The Gateway Review Process:
• Provides an independent review process aligned with six key decision points in a project’s lifecycle;
• Targets medium to high-risk projects;
• Addresses best practice, involves stakeholders;
• The Review Team provides confidential report to managing department.

THE GATEWAY STRATEGY

Gate 1 = Strategic Assessment

Gate 2 = Business Case

Gate 3 = Procurement Strategy

Gate 4 = Tender Decision

Gate 5 = Readiness for Service

Gate 6 = Benefit Evaluation

Competitiveness and Sustainability - the Challenges

The fundamental purpose of our concern with infrastructure is about delivering services to our economy, our communities and our environments.

It means ensuring a competitive and sustainable future. Driving for sustainability and competitiveness means thinking long term and thinking strategically. Strategic frameworks can then help prioritise investment choices and ensure that the best choices are made.

Governments need constantly to address the instruments of governance to get the mix right.

In today’s Australian newspaper\(^9\) there is an extensive article about the Business Council of Australia’s work on what is called the Scenarios Project.

Essentially, the BCA has gathered together 80 leading Australians from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines to develop and debate scenarios for what Australia could be like in 2025.

The article wonders why the BCA rather than governments is doing this. The president of the BCA, Mr John Schubert is quoted as saying that the project "...came out of a genuine concern that there was no holistic, long-term strategic planning being done in Australia.”

Now when a leading Australian businessman is saying that, you can be sure we need to be thinking about the issues too, and taking up the challenge in addressing the state of our infrastructure

Thank you

"Community Attitudes and Voter Intentions - Council Elections 2004"

Ms Kim Landers
ABC TV Stateline Host

Good afternoon everybody. I don’t know if I will be too popular after I present some of these results about whether or not mayors and councillors are to be re-elected but I am going to save that bit for the very last because I heard a couple of chaps over here just before I came up to speak saying, “we don’t have to stay for this one” and one of them said “oh stay for a little while”, so I hope to encourage you to stay by leaving that really juicy bit to the very last.

I have been a journalist for 15 years and for almost half of that time I have been working for the ABC in Brisbane as a state political reporter. For all but the last year, I have been working for radio news. In the middle of last year I switched to television reporting and then earlier this year, as was mentioned, I added to my role a second job, which is presenter of ABC TV’s Stateline program. Now I know you all watch it every Friday night at 7.30pm but I just remind you that it is the only Queensland wide current affairs program on television.

There are a couple of reasons I am a bit nervous about being here today actually. One, I have had the flu and lost my voice, so if your conference was this time last week I wouldn’t have been here because I would have been at home in bed.

Secondly, I am nervous because even though I appear on television I am not used to speaking to large groups of people. I am used to just seeing a single television camera so it was a bit daunting when I walked in here this morning and I thought “Holy Mollie” there are hundreds of people here.

Thirdly, I am a bit nervous because with a state election drawing closer, I was getting really strong rumours from Brisbane yesterday that the Premier was actually going to call an election today. I heard that he was going to come to Cairns, he was going to address you at the conference, then he was going to fly back to Brisbane and he would make his trip to Government House and announce the election and I would be stuck here. As a state political reporter, that is just an absolutely rotten start to an election campaign. I know the Premier has said quite often that there will be no election this year but I had already thought of a good excuse for why he could have called an election today and that was the recent bun fight over health funding with the commonwealth. As you know the state got done over, they say they will be getting less money. I thought this is an ideal election trigger. The Premier can just say to the people “look we are facing a very big problem, our waiting lists in our public hospitals are going to blow out, we are not going to have enough money, here is my drastic plan for trying to resolve this situation. Queenslanders you tell me what you think. I am going to be honest, I am going to be open, I am going to be transparent, I am a Premier for all Queensland, you decide”. Also the Opposition is not really very prepared and secondly, Pauline Hanson is still in jail, so she can’t campaign, so it might be a really beaut time for him to go. I have had my phone switched off for about half an hour so as far as I know there is no election yet, but I will have egg on my face if there is one by the time I walk out of here this afternoon.

My early years as a journalist were spent working in regional newsrooms. In fact I got my start in Townsville and that was when Mike Reynolds was still the Mayor. Shortly before I joined the ABC I spent some time here in Cairns, running the newsroom for a local radio station. As a journalist I discovered that council meetings and indeed, almost every aspect of a council activities, were fodder for news. Most importantly, they involved issues that the community that I was working in was most concerned about.

It is these community attitudes that form the basis of the presentation this afternoon. It was in 1997 that the Local Government Association of Queensland first commissioned a survey to allow local
government to monitor and track their performance. Since then the tracking studies have been done in 1999, 2001 and now this year to continue this analysis of community satisfaction with councils in Queensland. There is one difference this year. In addition to the basic satisfaction and tracking questions, this survey provided a chance to include some questions to pick up emerging issues and so, with the council elections due in March next year, a number of questions were added to provide feedback on electoral matters. As a journalist these provide some of the most interesting insights into next year’s council elections. As I say, they are coming right at the very end, so you have got to stay.

Those results, I believe, have their origins in the attitudes expressed to a string of issues, which have been the backbone of these attitudinal surveys for many years now. I must emphasise that these survey results aren’t the glib work of a TV journalist. It is actually an independent research paper commissioned by the LGAQ, done by an independent organisation and I am presenting the results from that research and drawing heavily on the accompanying analysis provided by the researchers. In other words, I had to steal their words to try to decipher the graphs and statistics and things like that.

In trying to present these results, in a manner, which can be understood by all of us, and so that is my polite way of saying, don’t shoot the messenger. Greg Hallam has volunteered to take all the questions at the end of this presentation.

First a little bit about how this research was done. It is based on telephone surveys of a random 700 households across the State. The methodology looks at both the importance of a function or activity to the community and the perception on how well the council is performing that function or activity. In other words, are councils doing enough to deliver the services and infrastructure that a community expects? As the researchers make plain, there is no merit for achieving excellence in an area that doesn’t matter much to people, nor is there anything to be gained from mediocre performance in areas and functions that are seen as crucial to residents.

The research covered five themes. While I will mostly focus on council performance across the board, a little later on there will be some results to indicate which types of councils are doing better or worse than others. The five themes covered by the research are basic services and infrastructure, community lifestyle services, management of the shire or city, customer services and communication and finally the qualities of the council. I will explain what each category means when we actually get to it.

These various elements were measured according to, as I have mentioned, importance and performance. They each have a five-point scale. Importance was ranked from Crucial - 5, Important - 4, Nice To Have - 3, Not Very Important - 2, Quite Unimportant - 1. Performance too, was ranked in a similar way - Very Good - 5, Good - 4, Fair - 3, Poor 2, Very Poor - 1. It is the difference between how important a service is perceived by the community and how well the council’s performance is ranked for the service, that is the key element.

The first area we will examine is basic services and infrastructure. This includes road maintenance, footpaths, curbs and guttering, sewage, waste management, public transport and traffic management. On most of these it is no surprise they are perceived as being important, although some like road maintenance for example and water supply and sewage, approach the crucial category for residents. Overall performance in this category was in the fair to good range. All services received lower performance scores than in 1997, 1999 or 2001. Public transport, road maintenance, parking facilities and footpaths again had the lowest ratings. The researchers concluded there had been a significant drop in community satisfaction with basic services and infrastructure. Given that seems to be the backbone of a lot of council activities, I would suggest that that is a worrying trend.

To illustrate, I would like to focus on transport infrastructure something about which I have heard a lot here today. Only last weekend the Courier Mail ran a newspaper feature article with the headline “Grinding to a Halt”. In the paper State editor Craig Johnstone wrote, “that south-east Queensland’s transport system is only just keeping ahead of the demands placed on it”. He said, and I quote, “The grid lock that mars places like London and most big Asian cities, is not yet a feature in south-east
Queensland but unless decisions are made now about increased public transport use and better road planning, its arrival may be inevitable.

I am not suggesting that tackling this problem is the sole responsibility of councils in the region and I have heard you debate that today. I think it is an issue that provides a good example of how the changing expectations of residents, coupled with rapid population growth, can combine quickly to overwhelm existing infrastructure. The article notes that despite a myriad of transport strategies at state and local government level, big infrastructure projects like the South East busway, the inner city bypass and the upgraded Pacific motorway, are only partial solutions to what is being described as the region’s biggest economic, environmental and social challenge. That is, overcoming the shire difficulty of moving people and goods around south-east Queensland when in a little more than a decade an extra 450,000 additional people are expected to be competing for space on the region’s transport network. I know that yesterday Brisbane City Council announced a $16 billion plan to try to end that traffic snail over the next 15 years and there was a whole range of initiatives there. Interestingly, I saw that levies and tolls are not being ruled out and they are never usually particularly popular.

As the Premier mentioned this morning, the state does also contribute to infrastructure spending but you heard the previous speaker point out by those graphs that he had, that expenditure on infrastructure is actually declining and that is of great concern. There is always a lot of debate about what proportions of budgets are being spent on infrastructure and most recently the big debate in the south-east corner appears to be in transport infrastructure.

I also noted there were divisions in the debate this afternoon on how to deal with differing competing interests of the differing regions in Queensland and that is something that is very difficult I think for the Local Government Association of Queensland to manage. There is a lot of focus at the moment on the South East corner but that is not to say that other councils don’t have similar problems and don’t need an effective voice to take the fight up to government. I noticed some of the motions spoke about wanting to take positions to the Premier and I had a little rye smile when I saw them. You realise the Premier is obviously the person that matters most in government, but I thought it is interesting you are not taking it via the Local Government and Planning Minister and that might be a wise decision because there is a lot of speculation she won’t be there in the Cabinet after the next election. There is a good chance Beattie will be, so it was the right thing to do if you like to take those issues up to him. It is true if you can catch his attention on an issue, you are half way to winning. I will speak a little about that later.

The researchers in this particular area concluded that successful initiatives in relation to public transport and traffic management would be the most effective way for councils in moving their performance closer to the level expected by the community. If I could just point out, that is horizontal distance between where something is on a graph and the upward line between importance and performance that shows the difference in meeting community expectations.

The second area that was looked at was community lifestyle services. This includes areas like community safety, services such as libraries, parks, playgrounds, sporting and recreational facilities and animal control. For residents all these services were considered less important than the roads and traffic management and public transport which I was just discussing. In other words they fell into the ‘nice to have’ category. Except for animal control, all services in this category received lower performance ratings than in the previous three surveys.

The third area looked at was managing the shire or city. This includes areas such as town planning, financial management and revenue rising and a trend is emerging. Again, overall performance of councils was much lower than previous surveys. The greatest gap between the importance and performance was for financial management. The researchers conclude that negative attitudes of the community to management and governance should be of concern to councils. Another element in this category was the rates focus. It is apparent there has been a significant increase in concern about the rates policies of councils. When you look at this revenue-raising category, the research shows the difference between importance and performance increased by almost 50%. The results are not surprising. Look at the kafuffle caused with the last round of land valuations following spiralling property
prices. You can appreciate the outcry when people started to feel their hip pocket nerve being hit. It’s all good fodder of course for media outlets but it is a reminder for councils that the rating policy is something that they have to explain to the ratepayers, they have to sell, if you like, and explain what it is that they are and are not doing. Some councils probably did that a little more effectively than others.

The next area to look at is customer services and communication. All elements in this category were ranked above the important mark on our five-point scale. Again overall performance was relatively low, meaning it was scoring around about the 3 mark, in other words, fair. Similar to the previous category of managing the shire or the city and again, no one service in this category received a higher performance rating than in the previous three surveys. Interestingly, while customer service received the highest rating, scores for consulting the community and responding to the community were the two lowest performance ratings.

Initially I found these last two results a bit puzzling. I thought in this day and age that councils are probably doing more than they ever have in the past, to get in touch with residents and ratepayers. It’s not uncommon to have newsletters, for example, included with your rate bills, to have council meetings in different parts of the city, flyers about council activities available at libraries and such things. Local newspapers still report council activities, some even carry columns from the local mayor. Then I thought of all the people that could fall through those gaps. Residents who aren’t ratepayers and don’t get the newsletters, people who are not inclined to read the local paper, people who don’t belong to residents groups.

The politicians at all levels shouldn’t underestimate a person’s desire to feel as though they have been consulted. At a state level the Beattie Government has taken its ministers, directors-general and other public servants to regular community cabinet meetings around the State. It is a two-day event. Members of the public are invited to go along to a public meeting to ask the Premier any question they like about any topic. They can also make appointments to see individual ministers and importantly the senior departmental officials who advise ministers on what course of action to take. It was the Borbidge government who actually began these community forums, albeit in a limited form but it is the Beattie government, which has refined the process. They are in a different location almost on a monthly basis and at first the cynic in me thought marvellous PR stunt, sure way of attracting saturation local media coverage. Surely, I thought, people would soon realise that despite their meetings with the ministers and departmental officials, many of their concerns would not be addressed, were never going to be addressed and that they would soon realise that nothing was being done, was never going to be done.

While some people remain aggrieved about the process of government, the turnout to these meetings hasn’t waned. People are still turning up in droves. Local interest groups, councils included, still have a long list of issues that they want to discuss face to face with decision makers. It proves to my mind that you can never do enough to try to reach out to the community that you say you are representing. Some councils I know are using a limited version scaled back model of this form of consultation and it won’t suit every situation. It is not the magic wand if you like to all problems but it does illustrate the possibilities for in part satisfying the public’s desire to feel as if they are included in decision making.

The fifth area of interest canvassed by this survey was the qualities of councils. The researchers concluded that community perceptions about elected councillors remain a challenge to many councils because to put it simply, expectations are not being met. Again in this category there was a slide in overall performance compared with previous survey results with performances judged as fair and good. The quality of the elected council along with managerial efficiency received the lowest performance rating, while the quality of indoor staff received the highest.

In summary, the results for 2003 reveal a reduction in the overall performance for each of the five categories examined. While there have been increases in the perceived importance of many of the council services, there have been decreases in satisfaction with performances. The researchers concluded that this effectively means that the gap in meeting community expectations has widened.
It is important though not to paint a picture that is too negative. Local councils are still achieving relatively high levels of performance. The performance scores in each of the five categories are considered to be relatively high even though there are specific areas or qualities where improvements can be made. However, the researchers believe that the decline in overall performance, from a community perspective, is what they call statistically relevant, meaning that it will be a concern to councils with an election due in March next year.

Now you might be thinking, well none of those statistics apply to my council, but the researchers have done some work also to analyse performance according to council type. While individual councils are mostly not singled out, you will be relieved to know they are divided into several categories, which reveals some interesting trends about councils in particular geographic locations.

First let me explain the categories. There are according to the researchers four different council types. The first is developed metropolitan which is basically Brisbane City Council. Then there is the fringe metropolitan group. This includes councils like Logan, Pine Rivers, Caboolture, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Redlands and Beaudesert for example. The third category is provincial - Cairns, Townsville, Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Cooloola and Mount Isa. Finally there is a rural category, basically all the other councils that don’t fit into the previous three. This rural sector has the most number of councils in it, but it represents the least number of people in population terms.

If we have a look at the overall performance ratings for each of the five themes that I have been speaking about, you can see that fringe metropolitan councils receive significantly higher ratings across all five categories than for any other type of council. That is fringe metropolitan – Logan, Pine Rivers, Caboolture, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Redlands, and Beaudesert, that sort of thing. This is a dramatic change from the 2001 survey where fringe metropolitan only outperformed other council types in one area and that was basic services and infrastructure. You can see in overall performance terms, the fringe metropolitan councils are perceived as dramatically improving their performance.

There is a cloud to a silver lining. Fringe metropolitan residents also scored the greatest gap for any one element, which is the difference between significance and performance and that was for revenue raising which you might remember was in the 'managing the shire' category. The researchers believe that this again points to significant concerns in relation to the fairness and equity of your rating system.

There was also a question about how residents felt about council delivery of services in terms of value for money. While almost 14% said performance was poor, or very poor, the flip side of that was the vast majority of people still have extremely positive perceptions of local government. The most positive view of performance was from the fringe metropolitan residents, hardly surprising given what I tallied but it shows fringe metropolitan councils obviously outperforming all other council types. The most negative view of a councils performance came from provincial cities and towns suggesting a much higher level of dissatisfaction there and I will talk a little about that soon.

The researchers concluded that it is possible that the drop in overall performance across council types, is once again a flow on affect, from the significant valuation changes in the last couple of years and the implications for an equitable distribution of the rate burden. They also believe that it points to a problem in communicating with residents about what is being achieved by their council. Key services generally gained sound performance scores, performance in management and governance is rated poorly. The researchers suggest marketing and communication strategies may be necessary to address these community perceptions.

The researchers also compared council services with other service providers in the community, such as Telstra, Australia Post and the local electricity supplier. The research showed 82% of people regarded council performance as being just as good or even better than those other services, an improvement on previous survey results. The helpfulness, the courtesy of council staff was also compared with staff, for example, at a local post office or a Medicare office and 87% of respondents felt that council staff performed just as well or even better. Again this was an improvement on previous years. For local councils their staff are definitely not letting them down.
As I mentioned at the beginning of this presentation, this survey included some extra questions, primarily related to electoral issues of relevance in the lead up to the 2004 council election. Amongst these were a couple of crucial ones from my perspective. Are the current mayors and sitting councillors going to be re-elected? We had trouble transferring these grafts to the power point presentation; they didn’t transfer so I am sorry I cannot put them up for you.

First of all, there was a question that was asked “assuming that your current mayor does stand again at the council election, would you be likely to support their re-election or do you want a change in mayor?” Overall those results showed that 42% of people would support the re-election of the current mayor, 35% said that they wanted to see a change. Rural residents were the most supportive of the current mayor and they came in on 47%. 47% of rural residents said, “Yes, I would re-elect the current mayor”. The responses of residents in the provincial cities were the least supportive. In other words, in the provincial cities and towns 47.2% of people said they wanted to see a change in the mayor. The responses of residents in the developed metropolitan category that is the Brisbane City Council, is also very interesting. 43% supported the re-election of the current mayor, suggesting to me that Cr Tim Quinn clearly has an upper hand over his rival Campbell Newman.

Before I move on to the councillors themselves, there was another question about mayors that I found interesting. The question was “should a candidate for mayor have to serve at least one term as a councillor before seeking the position of the mayor?” 81% said that they think the mayor should serve at least one term as a councillor first. When you actually break these down into the different council categories, there are some different results. Once again Brisbane City Council result was significant. 24% of people said it was not necessary for the mayor to have served as a councillor first and perhaps these are the liberal voters who are not going to be tricked by that question because they know that their candidate Campbell Newman is seeking to become Lord Mayor from outside the Liberal Opposition’s existing council ranks.

When it comes to the re-election chances of the councillors themselves, overall 44% of people supported a re-election and 36% of people wanted to see the change. Support for existing councillors was strongest in the Brisbane City Council area. 51% of people in BCC area wanted to see their councillors re-elected. Again there is bad news for people in the provincial category. Residents in provincial towns and cities, once again, were most negative - 46% want to see a change. As I said, mayors in provincial cities have got some work to do - 47% wanted to see a change in the mayor. Also 46% want to see a change to the councillors. That might not be very good news for some but March is a while to go yet so don’t give up hope.

I would just like to conclude by saying that people may say, "Oh well, survey results, I know better, statistics can be manipulated to say anything". I think it is important to remember that research like this is invaluable to anybody. You see successful politicians are the ones who can research well, who know the right questions to ask, who can take pointers from the research and the results that are gathered and combine it with a gut feeling about the sorts of things they should do. I speak a lot about the State arena because that is what I am mostly exposed to but we see a lot of that from the government. They can usually tap into an area, they poll, they do research, they know which way an issue is flowing, and they can respond very quickly to that. One exception that I have seen in recent times is of course with the ambulance levy and the campaign that the LGAQ mounted against that. That was just a brilliant example, if you like, of how an organisation can out smart one of the slickest outfits in town and that is the Beattie Labor Government as far as manipulating public opinion might go.

I understand you will get a full copy of the survey results. I would encourage councils to read them, take them on board, use them as a guide if you like, a way of pointing forward to where you can channel your efforts and I would like to wish you all good luck on election day.

Thank you.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper looks at how Councils use their rating and charging powers. Trends over the last decade are analysed and changes identified. A number of issues are noted, and options discussed which may assist when trying to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of rates across the community. Community perspectives on revenue raising are also reviewed.

Rates and Utility Charges levied by Queensland Local Government have grown from around $1.6 billion 10 years ago to in excess of $2.5 billion in 2002/03. General rates are the most important 'own-source' revenue for Councils, accounting for 50% of all rates and charges. Special and Separate rates account for only 7% of total general rate revenue.

When compared with other States, the general rates per capita in Queensland are very close to the national average.

Over the last twenty years, the rate base of Local Government in Queensland (Unimproved Capital Value or UCV) has grown from $12.5 billion to an estimated $140 billion in 2003/04. Using an index of 100 in 1984/85, the UCV index in 2003/04 is now 1120 compared with a general rate index of only 364. This illustrates that Local Government does not use the growth of its tax base to increase its own source revenue, unlike other spheres of government (eg stamp duty, land tax).

It has often been stated that Queensland Local Government is fortunate in having a very flexible Local Government Act that allows individual Councils to establish policies appropriate for their specific situation. This is also true in relation to rating powers. Most other States impose constraints on the use of rating powers, which is not the case in Queensland.

However, the major constraining factor in Queensland is the fact that the rate must be set on Unimproved Capital Valuation (UCV). No other State has this limitation. UCV is only used in W.A. for rural lands, with gross rental value used for other categories. Site Value is used in NSW while Victoria and Tasmania allow use of site value, capital value or assessed annual value at the discretion of the Council.

While it is the opinion of the author that UCV is the worst possible option for rating purposes, there does not appear to be much enthusiasm on the part of the State for any change in this.

Councils are increasingly recognising the potential for an inequitable distribution of the rate burden as a result of the rapid growth of UCVs for some sections of their community, with no relationship between need for, or use of Council services. This has led to an increased use of differential rating powers.

In the past, differential rate categories have usually related to land use codes eg residential, commercial, intensive agriculture, grazing, etc.). However some recent examples of criteria used to identify categories include:-

1) the intensity of industry activity (eg Cloncurry mining rate);
2) the nature of occupancy (Brisbane principal place of residence);
3) the area of an assessment (Murweh rural property area bands);
4) the valuation of an assessment (Caloundra and Whitsunday valuation bands)
An effective and appropriate minimum rate is also an important tool in developing an equitable rating system. A number of councils have recognised this and there are now examples of minimum rates in excess of $30,000 for specific differential rate categories.

The recently completed LGAQ Community Satisfaction Study shows a decline in community satisfaction with the performance of Councils in their revenue-raising role. The figures represent a 50% downward movement of this particular performance measure, and stand out within the study as the one major negativity within the community across all categories of Councils.

While it is for each Council to judge what is fair and equitable, it is important to remember that there is a choice in how rates are distributed across the community because of the flexible “tool-kit” presented by the legislation. It is not possible for Councils to hide behind the valuation system and point at the UCV as the main reason for rating anomalies within their community.

FULL ADDRESS:

How Do We Rate?

Council Rating under the Microscope

Background

This paper looks at the way in which Councils use their rating and charging powers. Trends over the last decade are analysed and changes identified. A number of issues are noted, and options discussed which may be of use to Councils when trying to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of rates across their community. Community perspectives on revenue raising are also discussed.

Rates and Utility Charges levied by Queensland Local Government are estimated to amount to in excess of $2.5 billion in the 2002/03 financial year. They have grown from around $1.6 billion 10 years ago. Of this $2.5 billion, around $1.3 billion is collected by way of general rates, including separate or special rates and charges.

Table 1 provides details of Local Government revenue for 2000/01. Unfortunately, reliable, up-to-date aggregate data is lacking beyond 2000/01.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue, Queensland Local Government</th>
<th>2000/01 $m</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Rates</td>
<td>$1,067</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special/Separate Rates</td>
<td>$94</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Charges</td>
<td>$512</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage Charges</td>
<td>$445</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing Charges</td>
<td>$202</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other revenue</td>
<td>$1,797</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$4,117</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Rates (incl. separate/special)/capita $320
General Rates/property $183

Source DLGP Comparative Data

General rates are the most important ‘own-source’ revenue for Councils, accounting for 50% of all rates and charges.
Special and Separate rates account for only a small proportion of general rate revenue. In 2002/03, they are estimated to represent only 7% of total general rate revenue.

Since 1993/94, general rates have increased in real terms from around $312 per capita to an estimated $340 per capita in 2002/03, or 9% in real terms.

The main reasons for the real increase in general rates have been identified as:

1. increasing community needs and expectations; and
2. a real terms per capita decrease in funding support from other spheres of government.

Source: Table 1 data

The average real terms growth in rating effort by Queensland Local Government as a whole masks the actual effort (or lack of effort) made by individual Councils.

Source: ABS data
For example, some Councils have been able to hold their total general rate revenue close to the actual dollar level existing some ten years ago, primarily as a result of substantial increases in untied financial assistance grants. In real terms, this represents a significant decrease in rating effort when compared with the average situation across the State.

When compared with other States, the general rates per capita in Queensland are close to the national average, as shown by the following figure. Victoria has the lowest general rate revenue per capita whereas South Australia has the highest, although the variation in dollar terms is not great.

![General Rates/capita, 2000](image)

**Source:** ABS Government Finance Statistics

### Growth in Valuations

In 2000/01, the total rateable valuation (UCV) was around $107 billion. This compares with a total UCV of $72 billion in 1993/94 and represents an increase of 48.6% in the tax base of Councils in Queensland over that seven year period.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Valuation 00/01 ($m)</th>
<th>$106,800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Valuation $m</td>
<td>$83,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial/Industrial Valuation $m</td>
<td>$13,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Valuation $m</td>
<td>$8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Valuations $m</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** DLGP

The following table illustrates this difference between the growth in valuations and general rate revenue by looking at the last twenty years. The UCV index has grown from 100 in 1984/85 to an estimated 1120 in 2003/04 whereas the general rate index has grown from 100 to only 364 over the same period.

This illustrates that Local Government does not use the growth of its tax base to increase its own source revenue, unlike other spheres of government (eg stamp duty, land tax).
State-wide averages tend to mask the extent of valuation growth over recent years. For example, Brisbane City has a total rateable value of some $63.6 billion in 2003 compared with only $23.4 billion in 1993/94, a growth of 170%. Over the same period, its general rate revenue increased by around 80%.

Since 2001, valuations have increased significantly, leading to some of the problems in achieving a fair and equitable distribution of the rate burden discussed later in this paper. This has been particularly the case in South-East Queensland where a number of Councils have experienced an increase of around 30% in a twelve-month period.

Council-wide figures distort the valuation changes within individual Council areas. Even rural Councils have seen valuations for some properties in their area more than double while others properties have had no increase in valuation.

The fact is that UCV is a very blunt instrument to use as the mainstay of rating policy. It must be sharpened if it is to achieve the desired result.

Differential rating certainly allows the blunt UCV instrument to be sharpened, but it is not the only implement in the rating tool-box capable of honing rating policy. The issue is one of how can this be done so that the result is not a lot of blood on the ground.

Use of Rating Powers

The Local Government Act 1993 provides Queensland Councils with a range of tools to deliver a fair and equitable distribution of rates and charges across their communities. However, there still appears to be some reluctance (or lack of understanding) on use of these powers to tailor-make an appropriate balance of rates and charges.

In 1990, only 17 Councils used the differential rating powers available under the previous Local Government Act. It is estimated that by 2002, around 80 to 90 Councils have some form of differential rate.

However, many of these differential rates are simply an urban and rural rate. This may not represent an active effort to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of the rate burden necessary to overcome anomalies caused by the valuation system, but rather a continuation of a long-term tradition.

Around 50 Councils make use of the separate rate/charge provision, with environmental levies being the most common. Interestingly, a number of councils are recorded as using a separate rate for a rural fire levy, which makes one wonder whether all Councils understand the difference between a special (targeted) and a separate (whole of shire) rate.

Around 46 Councils use the special rate/charge provision, with the rural fire levy being the most common type.
But as noted earlier, the amounts raised from special or separate rates or charges amounts to only 7% of general rate levies, suggesting that Councils are yet to utilise the opportunities presented by this part of the legislation.

In recent years, significant valuation changes for some sectors of the community, coupled with clear anomalies in the unimproved capital valuation system, have led a number of Councils to look at more innovative approaches to differential rate categories.

In a reasonably homogeneous local government, the UCV problem may not result in an unreasonable incidence of the rate burden when using one rate in the dollar. But in a diverse local government, the resulting rating incidence can be extreme.

This is illustrated by growing coastal centres surrounded by highly productive good quality agricultural land. The speculative value of coastal land results in a relatively high coastal valuation. The rural land, typically, has a relatively low valuation given the cyclical nature of agriculture. With urban growth in the coastal area, the relative share of valuation shifts at a greater rate than the growth in demand for services. Over time, without the use of differential rates, the rural sector may experience a real decline in rate levels even though the demand for services does not reduce. The result will eventually be an inequitable share of the rating burden across the local community.

In the past, differential rate categories have usually related to land use codes eg residential, commercial, intensive agriculture, grazing, etc.). However some recent examples of criteria used to identify categories include:

1) the intensity of industry activity (eg Cloncurry mining rate);
2) the nature of occupancy (Brisbane principal place of residence);
3) the area of an assessment (Murweh rural property area bands);
4) the valuation of an assessment (Caloundra and Whitsunday valuation bands)

In all of these cases, Councils have recognised the inequitable distribution of the rate burden as a result of the rapid growth of valuations for some sectors of their community, with no relationship between need for, or use of Council services.

For example, some canal frontage residential properties in one Council area would have faced a general rate levy in excess of $6000 compared with an average residential rate of less than $1000 if differential rates had not been applied recently.

In one shire, a rural property with carrying capacity of around 600 head of cattle was facing a general rate bill of around $30,000 whereas another rural property with a similar carrying capacity was paying less than $3,000.

Blindly accepting that UCVs are the sole factor in determining the level of the general rate can rapidly lead to an unfair distribution of the rate burden, from which it is very difficult to recover. That is why the differential rating power exists and why it is extremely flexible in the way it can be used.

The Minimum Rate

There typically appears to be no clear logic for setting the minimum general rate other than to argue how much to increase it from what it was.

The rationale for the minimum general rate is that all ratepayers gain some minimum level of service from their council. It is simply a matter of quantifying this.

Everyone uses the local road network and information is available on trip generation patterns to have some idea of what a good local road system must be worth to each household. Local Government Grants Commission figures suggest that the average cost of maintaining an unformed rural road (the base level
of rural service) equates to around $300 per kilometre per year. This could be used to develop a rationale for a minimum rural rate.

Similarly other general services such as sporting and cultural facilities have some value to all households, regardless of whether they are town based or rural.

If one looks at the minimum rates levied across Councils in Queensland it’s a variable patch. There are some 15 Councils where the minimum residential rate is less than $150. At the other end of the scale there are at least 11 Councils with a minimum residential rate greater than $550. This compares with the average minimum residential rate now being around $360.

An effective and appropriate minimum rate is an important tool in developing an equitable rating system. A number of councils have recognised this and there are now examples of minimum rates in excess of $30,000 for specific differential rate categories.

Getting the minimum rate right is essential as this then impacts on how much is raised through the valuation system.

As the following figure shows, the way in which the minimum rate is set can have a significant impact on the distribution of the rate burden.

With a low minimum, a high valued property could be paying in excess of say $10,000. If the minimum was set at say $1,400, the same property in this theoretical example would pay only around $4,500. The difference is clearly substantial.

While it is for each Council to judge what is fair and equitable, just remember that you have a choice. You cannot hide behind the valuation system, which, in my opinion, is a very fragile place to hide!

**IMPACT OF MINIMUM RATE**
What about other States?

It has often been stated that Queensland Local Government is fortunate in having a very flexible Local Government Act that allows individual Councils to establish policies appropriate for their specific situation. This is also true in relation to rating powers.

Most other States impose constraints on rating powers. For example, while NSW, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania allow a base fixed amount (not available in Queensland) plus a rate in the dollar, they all limit the amount that can be raised from this base charge (eg 20% of total general rates in Victoria and Tasmania) and in some cases (eg S.A. and Tasmania) require this base charge to be the same for all differential rate categories.

In some States, the variation in the amount of the differential rate is also limited (eg Victoria at 4 times the minimum and W.A. at twice the minimum).

While minimum rates are also an option, in some cases these are also restricted (eg $259 maximum per property in NSW).

The major constraining factor in Queensland is the fact that the rate must be set on the Unimproved Capital Valuation (UCV). No other state has this limitation. UCV is only used in W.A. for rural lands, with gross rental value used for other categories. Site Value is used in NSW while Victoria and Tasmania allow use of site value, capital value or assessed annual value at the discretion of the Council.

While I think UCV is the worst possible option for rating purposes, I don’t see much enthusiasm on the part of the State for any change in this. So maybe just give thanks for the flexible tool-box you have in the legislation for rating, and use it to overcome the UCV anomalies.

Community Dissatisfaction

The recently completed LGAQ Community Satisfaction Study shows a decline in community satisfaction with the performance of Councils across the state. The key driver of this reduced satisfaction appears to relate to perceptions of inequity in the rating system, the result, no doubt, of the rapid change in valuations for some sectors of the community.

The following graph illustrates the significant decline in community satisfaction with "Revenue Raising" - defined as "establishing fair and equitable rating for residential, rural, commercial and other sectors; applying a fair and reasonable balance between income from rates and from user-pays fees and charges".

The figures represent a 50% downward movement of this particular performance measure, and stand out within the study as the one major negativity of the community across all categories of Councils.

Source: LGAQ Tracking Study No. 3, July 2003

Certainly something to think about in the run up to the 2004 election!
"HOW DO WE RATE?  COUNCIL RATING UNDER THE MICROSCOPE."

Stephen Fynes-Clinton
Consultant King & Company Solicitors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper expands upon the issues discussed by Mr Morton. It contains a more detailed overview of the full suite of rating tools which are available to Queensland local governments. Experience suggests that the level of awareness about the existence and flexibility of the full suite of tools is extremely variable throughout the State, and that many Councils which think that they have problems with raising revenue for particular purposes, or targeting the revenue burden on those who should equitably pay it, in fact have a fairly simple solution readily available to them by the proper selection and use of an existing and available rating mechanism.

Many Councils express concern about the lack of flexibility to achieve equitable outcomes because of the requirement that the general rate be based on unimproved value. However, it is often the case that Councils which make that complaint often have not given proper consideration to the use of differential general rating or the use of the separate rating power.

As explained by Mr Morton, while differential rating categories were traditionally based solely on broad categories of land use, the legislation in fact contains no limits on the factors which can be used to define differential rating categories. The only legal requirement is that the basis of differentiation be adopted for the purpose of seeking to achieve a more equitable spread of the overall rating burden than is possible under a single rate in the dollar system.

The growing use of valuation differential as a basis for differential rating is particularly significant. When broad differential rating powers were first introduced, the existence of significant valuation differentials between different classes or types of land was one of the specific reasons given for the introduction of that power. The Supreme Court last year expressly rejected an argument that Councils are not entitled to base differential rating decisions on the relative valuation of different lands.

For those Councils which consider they have real problems with the relationship between valuation and the equity of the resulting rates burden, the separate rating power enables Councils to unlink the rating burden for nominated general services or facilities from valuation. A separate rate or charge has the fundamental characteristics of a general rate in that it applies to all ratepayers without differentiation. However, it may be a charge unrelated to valuation (as well as a valuation-based rate), and a small but growing number of Councils are using that power to require all ratepayers to pay a contribution towards identified general Council services on a basis which is entirely disconnected from valuation.

The other important rating tool which is becoming more widely understood, but is still clearly under-utilized is the special rate or charge power. Despite the significant expansion of that power in 1999, concerns continue to be expressed in 2003, particularly by small and medium sized Councils, that they lack the ability to deal with damage to, or excessive demand on, Council infrastructure (particularly roads), caused by the activities of a particular industry or a particular individual operator.

Since 1999, the special rating powers have extended well beyond the traditional concept of localized infrastructure schemes, and now enable Councils to precisely target the revenue burden in respect of particular services or facilities "targeting" is possible down to the level of a single individual ratepayer if the requirement to provide a particular facility or carry out particular work arises solely or primarily from the activities of that ratepayer. There will always be inherent limits on the capacity of ratepayers generally or particular classes of ratepayer to pay local government taxes, and legislative rating tools cannot alter that. But that aside,
whether the issue is about a more equitable spread of the general revenue burden among broad classes of ratepayer, or about targeting small groups or even individual ratepayers to meet the revenue burden of services provided for their particular benefit, the tools exist in the legislation to deal lawfully and effectively with the vast majority of such issues.

Any Council with a rating difficulty should make use of the resources provided by the LGAQ and its relevant consultants as, in the vast majority of cases, your rating issue will not in fact be unique, and we will be able to provide the information and guidance which you need to achieve your objectives.

Introduction

The reason I am up here this morning is not really to tell you anything new - at least not in terms of new rating powers or major new developments in the law about rating. What I am here to talk about today is the fact that, despite the breadth and flexibility of the rating tools at the disposal of Queensland Councils, the LGAQ's experience, in terms of the questions we get asked and the rating advice we get asked for, suggests that the level of awareness about the existence and flexibility of the full suite of rating tools is extremely variable throughout the State. What we are finding is that many Councils which come to us and think that they have problems with raising revenue for particular purposes, or targeting the revenue burden on those who should equitably pay it, in fact don’t really have a problem at all - other than a problem of knowledge and appreciation of - or possibly, in the pressure of the budget process, just remembering about - the full scope of the available powers.

So in this brief “snap shot” this morning I am going to provide a reminder about some of the powers that do exist to match the rating process with the specific outcomes you wish to achieve. The rating workshops tomorrow are there for those who are interested in some more detail about how this theory is applied in practice.

Valuation based rating

Many Councils express concern about the lack of flexibility to achieve equitable outcomes because of the requirement that the general rate be based on unimproved value. However, it is often the case that Councils which make that complaint often have not given proper consideration to the use of the twin tools that allow you to partly or completely “neutralise” the restrictive aspects of the tie to valuation - differential general rating or the use of the separate rating power.

Alan has dealt with a number of aspects of differential rating. The point I want to emphasise is that, while differential rating categories have traditionally been based solely on broad categories of land use, the legislation in fact contains no limits on the factors which can be used to define differential rating categories.

The only legal requirement relates to the purpose for which you are adopting a particular category or set of categories. Your purpose must be to give effect to a more equitable spread of the overall rating burden than is possible under a single rate in the dollar system. Within that legal limit, the basis for determining categories and criteria for categories is limited only by your imagination.

The growing use of valuation differential as a basis for differential rating is particularly significant. At least until recently, it seemed to have been forgotten that when broad differential rating powers were first introduced into the 1936 Act - around 1976 - it was the existence of significant valuation differentials between different classes or types of land that was stated in Parliament to be the primary reason for giving Councils this new power to, effectively, neutralise the previously overwhelming influence of valuation on the amount of rates liability for any given property or class of property.

The use of valuation bands as a basis for categorisation (without regard to land use) - that is, dropping the rate in the dollar as valuation increases - is an approach being cautiously embraced by a few Councils. But it is something for consideration by every Council which believes that it has an equity...
problem because of unequal valuations or unequal valuation increases. If anyone has any residual doubt about the legality of such an approach, the Supreme Court last year expressly rejected an argument that Councils are not entitled to base differential rating decisions on the relative valuation of different lands, or on the Council’s views about the equity of the rating outcome from the application of an “ordinary” rate in the dollar to the valuation the Council has been given to work with.

That occurred in the case Sunwater brought against Burdekin. Graham Webb will talk more about it at the workshop but, at the risk of a little over-simplification, the Council was handed valuations of Sunwater’s lands which were up to 10 times lower that the valuations of what it considered to be comparable adjoining land, and it used its differential rating powers to restore equity to the system by imposing a differential rate in the dollar which was about 10 times higher than that for the adjoining lands which had apparently been valued on a different basis.

That case also clarified that a differential rating category can be established for a class of land owned by a single ratepayer or used for a single purpose - so long as a rating equity justification exists - in this case the extraordinarily low valuation coupled with the unique nature and scale of the land use.

As I have said, using differential rating to achieve equitable outcomes is essentially limited only by your imagination. I add only one caution to that. The jury is still out on the extent to which you can “target” a particular individual ratepayer, even one with a unique land use or other very distinctive feature, merely because it is financially successful and can afford to pay more. Equity simply means fairness, but it is fairness to all ratepayers, including the big ones that have a lot of land and money but do not vote. It usually is possible to justify special treatment for big operators, based on relative valuation, impact of services, benefits provided for by Council for their workforce, and that type of consideration. But being big, they have the resources for legal challenges, and if we are talking 6 figure sums for rates liability, a challenge may well be taken even if their own advice is that they are speculating to some degree. Be cautious, and don’t treat them as bottomless money pits of money.

But subject to that, there are view if any general rating equity issues which are not capable of being resolved by the use, possibly somewhat creatively as compared to traditional approaches, of the differential rating powers.

Separate rates

For those Councils which consider they have a fundamental or threshold problem with the relationship between valuation and the equity of the resulting rates burden, and want nothing to do with valuation at all, remember the separate rating power - a power which potentially goes much further than the environmental levies which have been its main use in recent years, and enables Councils to completely unlink the rating burden from valuation for a very broad range of nominated general services or facilities.

A separate rate or charge has the fundamental characteristics of a general rate in that it applies to all ratepayers without differentiation. It is not a fee for service charge and it is not a charge which requires you to demonstrate particular benefit from the expenditure to any particular ratepayer. However, it may be a charge unrelated to valuation (as well as a valuation-based rate), and a small but growing number of Councils are using that power to require all ratepayers to pay a contribution towards identified general Council services on a basis which is entirely disconnected from valuation.

The purpose of a special charge must be specifically nominated for each charge, but the purpose can be as broadly expressed as roads, parks - even shire administration.

Of course, there is a downside - you lose some flexibility, because you can only spend the charge raised for roads on roads (and nothing else) and so on for each charge. The rate notice can start to look a bit cluttered or even intimidating if 2 or 3 or more line items come in as well as the general rate which will be smaller, but will still be there.
How far you can go with this, in system which is still legally interpreted as being based on a mandatory general rate in the dollar, is something of an open question. I am not saying you can abandon the general rate, or make it a purely nominal amount. But a Council could certainly raise 30% or 40%, perhaps 50% of its general revenue in this way, completely severed from any relationship with valuation, without raising any legal issue.

Not for everyone - perhaps not for most of you - but it something to know is there and to think about whenever you find yourselves asking at budget time - why can’t we get away from valuation as the basis for our rating? - to a significant degree, you can if you want to.

Separate rates

The other important rating tool which is becoming more widely understood, but is still clearly under-utilized is the special rate or charge power. Despite the significant expansion of that power in 1999, concerns continue to be expressed in 2003, particularly by small and medium sized Councils, that they lack the ability to deal with damage to, or excessive demand on, Council infrastructure (particularly roads), caused by the activities of a particular industry or a particular individual operator.

Since 1999, the special rating powers have extended well beyond the traditional concept of localized infrastructure schemes, but the issues that continue to be raised with us make it appropriate to give out another reminder of just what a powerful tool it is now.

There were 2 big changes made in 1999. First, there was a movement away from the traditional concept that the object of the expenditure had to be an infrastructure type expenditure that provides physical services to land. By introducing the concept of benefit to the occupier of land, based on its use of on the land, the way was opened up for things like tourism promotion levies and economic development levies - you can now raise funds to get on the front foot in prompting and developing the local economy, rather than simply reactively providing physical infrastructure to support new development which happens by chance, or at least as a result of factors in which the Council has no involvement. It’s probably correct that this art of the message has got through fairly well - such levies are primarily things for the larger urban Councils with a larger commercial rate base, and most of those Councils that want to use the power have done so.

Second, and this is the key issue where the full message has not got through in some areas, is that the special rate or charge power now enable Councils to precisely target the revenue burden in respect of particular services or facilities - as broadly or narrowly as is appropriate. This "targeting" is possible down to the level of a single individual ratepayer if the requirement to provide a particular facility or carry out particular work arises solely or primarily from the activities of that ratepayer. This is why we get a little bemused and frustrated from an LGAQ perspective when we continue hear about the difficulties of getting businesses which use heavy road transport to make a proper contribution towards the cost of repairing and maintaining the roads which they tear up.

There are some cases where the special rating power doesn’t help - but only where the operations occur on land which is not rateable such as a State Forestry or other reserve which is simply used by an operator without a lease or other rateable tenure. They are in the minority, and as those who were at the roads forum will recall, amendments to the LGA presently before Parliament will create a new power to require those operators to pay, albeit without the recovery security of the rating process.

However, most of the cases raised with LGAQ or me directly in recent years have involved rateable land but a simple lack of understanding that special rates are no longer necessary about "benefited areas" for local infrastructure programs, and are now a very broad and flexible fee for service troll which enables you to make any ratepayer pay the proper price for the services and facilities Council supplies specifically for that ratepayer, or specifically as a response to service demands generated by the activities of that ratepayer.
Conclusion

That is as much as time permits me to cover.

Of course, there will always be inherent limits on the capacity of ratepayers generally or particular classes of ratepayer to pay local government taxes, and legislative rating tools cannot alter that.

The simple message, at the risk of repetition, is that if you have a particular rating objective, whether in terms of equitable spreading of the broad burden, or making particular ratepayers or even one particular ratepayer pay for particular services, the tools exist in the legislation to deal lawfully and effectively with the vast majority of such issues.

Probably - not certainly, but probably, your rating issue that you think is a problem or difficulty will not in fact be unique and it will have an answer. Don’t think that any rating objective is too hard or that your rating powers are not what they need to be without really considering the full suite of tools available, and asking the question of LGAQ. Odds are, we will have some good news for you.
Hon Nita Cunningham MP
Minister for Local Government and Planning

- I’d like to acknowledge the host Mayor of Cairns Cr Kevin Byrne,
- The President of the LGAQ Noel Playford and Executive Director Greg Hallam,
- President of the Australian Local Government Association Cr Mike Montgomery,
- My parliamentary colleague and Member for Cairns Desley Boyle,
- Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg and my Shadow Minister Howard Hobbs,
- Mayors, Councillors, CEOs from throughout Queensland,
- Director General of my Department Dr Ted Campbell and his staff,
- Chairman - Grants Commission, Mr Dennis Byrnes,
- Other distinguished guests,
- Sponsors and speakers,
- Ladies and gentlemen
- And I would also like to make a special mention of the Long Service Certificate recipients who are here today. I particularly make mention of Tip Byrne from Cardwell Shire Council, who after 31 years tops the charts for the longest serving recipient at the conference here today and also Michael Edgar from Bundaberg City Council. Michael and I were the two “new” councilors on the block following the 1988 elections. And we saw many others last night who with 15 years of service also joined Local government in 1988.

But I am delighted to be in Cairns for this very important Annual State Conference of the Local Government Association of Queensland and I thank you for inviting me to address your conference for the 3rd time as Minister.

The participation of the Premier in officially opening your conference this year shows how much regard the State Government has for your Association and how much we value our relationship with local governments.

The signing of the new protocol yesterday reinforces that essential bond and commits these two tiers of government to an ongoing process of negotiation, consultation, information sharing and to seeking new opportunities for partnership.

The Premier is always a hard act to follow, but I will concentrate more on giving you details about the goals achieved and the issues we’ve been dealing with during what’s been a very productive year to date.

But “First Things First” we cannot underestimate the value that councils bring to communities because local government plays an integral part in the lives of the people it serves.

And as I’ve said on many occasions, all 125 Local Governments (Large and small) are equally important to me.

But, added responsibilities cost money and that’s why the Beattie Government supports a grants and subsidy program which has, (since we were elected in 1998,) provided more than $812 million in funding for local governments!

But this last year has been another busy and productive one for my department. Much was achieved and much continues to be achieved with new legislation, funding programs and initiatives (and just a few problems)
The implementation of our Restricted Dogs Legislation gave councils stricter controls over certain imported breeds of dogs.

Amendments to the Building Act made higher standards of fire safety in budget accommodation buildings mandatory from the 1st July this year.

We appointed the first indigenous representative to the Queensland Grants Commission.

The State Government’s Civil Liability Act has partly reinstated the nonfeasance rule giving councils a similar immunity from prosecution as existed before the High Court’s judgement.

Our new Plumbing and Drainage Act replaced the 54 year old Sewerage and Water Supply Act (1949) providing a modern framework to license plumbers and drainers and to approve their work.

We also tightened swimming pool fencing legislation to make it compulsory for fences constructed around new pools to be inspected and certified before the pools are filled and I have introduced further amendments to the parliament (to toughen pool fencing laws) which will be passed in time for Summer.

I have gained another $50 M for the Regional Centres Program.

The new protocol between the State Government and LGAQ is signed sealed and delivered.

An I.T. agreement has been signed between the State Government and LGAQ to streamline access to Government Departments for information required for property development applications and other key information.

My Cabinet colleague Stephen Robertson, the Minister for Natural Resources has today announced a new State Government Standard to help councils create and assign new street addresses. Details are available at his Department’s display at this conference and more information on a CD Rom will soon be in the mail.

The new energy efficiency codes came into effect on Monday and on Monday night I presented the inaugural Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Local Government that (to my delight) attracted 110 entries in its first year. For those of you who couldn’t make it to the presentation, the overall winning council was Kingaroy Shire; the winner of the Customer Service Award was Kilkivan Shire.

The winner of the Excellence in State/Local Government Partnership Award was Kingaroy Shire; The Smart State Community Building award went to Longreach Shire; and Excellence in Planning went to Caboolture Shire.

Once again, I say well done, not only to the winners but to all Councils who submitted entries. The standard was very high so please try again next year because I believe these awards will realize my aim - to recognise and acknowledge outstanding achievements of Councils and to give the community an opportunity to reward outstanding service.

Moving on - before the end of the year, I hope to have 3 more bills passed through the Parliament -

- The Integrated Planning and Other Legislation Bill
- The Local Government Legislation Bill including amendments to allow Local Government self-insurers to provide workers compensation for councillors.
- And of course the Swimming Pool Safety Bill.

and I also hope to have completed a Review of subsidies and grants - a number of them are reaching the end of their lives and it will be a benefit to look at how some of those older programs match up with today’s standards and expectations. And Salary Sacrificing for councillors is being considered. But the most serious issue facing local government in this state over the past 12 months was the uncertainty surrounding the phasing-in of the new methodology for the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants and I am delighted that this issue has been resolved.

For the first time in the 30 year history of these grants, the payments had been withheld causing a critical financial predicament for some councils and widespread concern.
I’m not going to go on and on about this but I would like to say that

- No other Federal Minister has ever obstructed the payment of these funds before,
- Minister Tuckey’s actions have been totally unreasonable and unprecedented
- Queensland’s Grants Commission did an outstanding job under unnecessary pressure and will now continue to review their work.
- We met every demand placed on us by Minister Tuckey.
- Letters and figures have been going back and forth with the Federal Minister since last December.
- All of my requests to meet to resolve this issue have been ignored, and
- the Premier’s office had to write twice (at my request) asking the Prime Minister to intervene
- but I was determined not to sell our Councils out.
- I understood how concerned you would all be so, we kept you informed as much as possible (and I do thank the majority of the 54 Councils whose grants are declining and who responded within 24 hours to my questionnaire about a 4 year compromise.
- we had completed all necessary book work to enable immediate transfer of these funds 3 weeks ago. So as these funds came through yesterday at 11.30 am, councils with electronic transfer will now have that money and for those who need cheques, ”they are in the mail”. Also faxes will be sent to all councils this morning from the Queensland Grants Commission to confirm the 4 year figures.
- and this morning I would like to thank all Councils who stood united (and contacted their Federal Members, the Federal Minister and even the Prime Minister - I would like to thank the LGAQ, the Urban LGA and those Federal Members in Queensland who genuinely tried to help. The agreement came 2 and a half weeks late – but I do think it was the best possible result for our Councils as a whole and we can now move on.

Delegates, in the lead up to the local government elections scheduled for March next year, 29 requests were received for electoral changes from Councils, which were referred to the Electoral Commissioner of Queensland for determination.

With those almost complete, my Department is in the process of implementing the changes by the end of October to allow the Australian Electoral Commission time to prepare rolls for next year’s council elections.

I also want to bring to your attention an area of my portfolio which relates to the impact of the drought.

While reticulated water is the responsibility of local governments, the Queensland Government is currently providing significant financial and technical assistance to at least 11 councils whose urban water supplies are severely depleted.

And whilst there has been some respite in some areas it is not right across the State, and through the Drought Urban Water Supply Taskforce (which is chaired jointly by myself and the Minister for Natural Resources, Stephen Robertson) we urge councils to keep us fully informed about any severe urban water shortages or impending failures.

And the other issue I do need to raise is the need for Queensland councils to meet the new deadline (of 30 June 2004) to finalise their IPA compliant planning schemes. This is still one of the biggest challenges facing local government in Queensland and the display my department has prepared for this conference will hopefully get the message across that time is running out for some Councils to even meet the extended deadline of 30 June next year.

The reality is that by working back from the new deadline, taking into account the various procedural steps involved, the Christmas recess and the March elections, councils will need to have their draft schemes completed and submitted to the Department for review in the very near future.
The slower councils will be in a vulnerable position legally and will risk state government intervention if they don’t have these schemes in place in time. So I urge Councilors to check the progress themselves on the displays here - and seek help from my Departmental staff (attending this conference) if needed.

Moving back quickly to new legislation – changes to the private certification system have been passed by Parliament and the regulations are currently being drafted, including

- Improved efficiency and effectiveness of the disciplinary system for private certifiers and higher skills requirements
- Consumers will be better protected regarding faulty workmanship
- Councils will be able to take complaints about private certifiers directly to the Queensland Building Tribunal rather than through the BSA
- And to address problems Councils face - when approvals are delivered to Council well after the work has started, private certifiers will now have to lodge the documents with Council before issuing the approvals. - this will certainly resolve the situations that have been occurring where neighbors have complained about a building - (and Councils have had no knowledge of it)

I must say I have been delighted with the response from councils and the general public to the tougher pool safety laws I introduced last month and I am confident that legislation will significantly reduce the risk of toddlers drowning in residential swimming pools.

The amendments include restricting pool fencing exemptions to only those needed for disabled people; introducing on-the-spot fines for non-compliant pool fences; requiring fences to be in place around pools that are constructed on a building; requiring public warning signs when a pool is being constructed; and signs illustrating the correct CPR method for new pools.

But we are living in a changing world - and there are 2 issues that I would like to leave your conference with - 2 issues that will be enormous challenges. Challenges that will need to be addressed sooner rather than later and challenges that I hope will open up wide discussions as we move to resolve them in the best interests of Queensland’s communities.

First of all -
An issue I believe candidates should be considering as they approach the March elections is the growing public calls in many areas of Queensland (and indeed Australia) for the amalgamation of Councils, and I believe this is coming from the problems and possibilities that Councils see coming from the Federal Government cost shifting inquiry.
The State Government has a firm policy that amalgamations will not be imposed without Councils agreeing - I do believe in this day and age of open government, that Councils have a responsibility to open this issue up to community consultation - to put forward the issues for and against - and to let the community (not just the Council) have a say.

I know that some Councils don’t want to know about it - but it is an issue that is not going to go away in some areas - it does need to be looked at in an open way and it does need to be addressed proactively and acknowledging the changing world we are living in and the modern technology that is playing such a major role in those changes particularly for Councilors (and this is evident by the number of Councils (14) who will have reduced numbers of councilors after the next election).

Ant the second issue - I see is the growing importance of "planning"(the Premier touched on this yesterday) and I’m sure this conference is hearing much about meeting those challenges that face us all.

The population of this State is predicted to grow by almost 1 million people in the next 10 years and there will be some hard decisions to make if we are to meet those challenges in a way that will cope with the housing, employment, transport, education, health and social demands (of that growth), while retaining the lifestyle we enjoy, protecting the environment, the open spaces, the foreshores and our agricultural lands for future generations, and ensuring that all of this is done in a sustainable way.
There is much to be done. I have my own ideas of what should be done - I was certainly disappointed in March when I had to extend the timeframe for the IPA plans to June of next year - because I was anxious to more forward with changes to the direction for planning in Queensland. However, it is not possible to make those changes while so many Councils are still preparing their own plans, but I would like to leave you with some thoughts that will need to be discussed widely as we move to address the needs of the future.

All Councils now have their IPA plans underway and that is good, but some will still not be finalized by June next year unless they change their pace. My department is ready and willing to help any Council, that will have trouble meeting that timeframe, and I hope those Councils will seek our assistance now rather then leaving it to the last minute.

Projected time frames are on display here at your conference and our staff will assist in any way they can, but as the plans will not be finished now until June next year we have lost a valuable 15 months.

I have formed an Advisory Committee comprising of a representative of each Council that has it’s plan adopted to work and identify changes that need to be made to give us a start when June comes and this committee will meet again later this month. But Councils need to discuss between yourselves the major issues that will have to be addressed - for the future, the options, the changes, the benefits and the opportunities for Councils and for Queensland.

But I believe "planning" in Queensland is at a "Crossroads”. The Government has been called on to take the "lead” with planning and to take "control”.

The Development Industry is crying out for those IPA plans to be completed - so there is uniformity and consistency between Council areas.

The Community is crying out for more open space - less building out of the foreshore and protection of green areas and agricultural land.

And Councils are crying out for protection against developer driven litigation - while some want development and others want to limit population growth clearly there has to be change!!.

While Councils have the right and the responsibility to plan for their own areas, once their plan is in place - once it has been subject to community input via submissions - once it has been through all State Departments - and once it has complied with State Plans and Policies - it becomes a legal planning scheme for that City or Shire - it can’t be taken lightly or disregarded whenever it suits.

And Governments will have to look at this closely if Councils continue to allow development of green open spaces - continue to allow uncontrolled development on foreshores and beachfronts and if they approve out of kilter developments of agricultural land.

While these decisions are currently the right of Councils - Councils are only the custodians of that right for a short time - they don’t have the right to spoil the environment for generations to come.

Calls for Government to buy green open space cannot be taken seriously when at the same time a Council is approving the subdivision of green open space for housing on the other side of the City or Shire.

There does need to be a change in direction and both State and Local Governments will have to drive that change. State Planning Policies will have to be complied with or enforced and other models from other states need to be looked at, like the NSW model for control of foreshore development where the Minister retains control after a certain level.

But clearly there are a number of issues that need to be considered and we will be far more successful if we work together. The State Ministers believe the Federal Government should also play a role in
planning – nationally. But that was rejected by Minister Tuckey at the recent ministerial council in Darwin - but “good planning” will be our major challenge and I leave you with these thoughts for continued discussion.

Delegates, I would like to say how pleased I am to work with Queensland’s local governments and my department will continue to play a valuable role in establishing and encouraging the best possible local government system for Queensland.

I would like to congratulate your Association on arranging another successful conference - and pay tribute to your President, Cr Noel Playford and the Host Council, Cairns - who have clearly worked hard to make it such a success.

And I would also like to mention that good work done during the year by the Urban Local Government Association and the Local Government Women’s Association who continue to encourage women to follow a career in Local Government both as elected members and as executives.

In closing, the State Government will continue to work in partnership with all the local governments of Queensland, to help meet your increasing responsibilities to the people of this state.

I had deputations most of the day yesterday and I will be available to take 1 or 2 more before I leave after lunch, so ladies and gentlemen - it has indeed been a privilege to attend and to address your conference and I wish everyone well for the remainder of the conference. I pay tribute to those Mayors and Councilors who have served Local Government well and will be retiring at the March Elections and wish good luck to those who will be standing again.

Thank you.
FIGHTING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cr Mike Montgomery  
President, Australian Local Government Association

LGAQ President, Noel Playford, The Mayor of Cairns, Kevin Byrne, Executive Members, Delegates

It is always a great pleasure to be with you here in Queensland and especially here in Cairns, a thriving and dynamic community that is a tribute to its civic leadership.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of LGAQ and its member councils.

We follow your campaigns and activities with great interest and congratulate local government in Queensland on the vigorous and energetic way you represent your communities.

In the time I have available, I’d like to run you through the priorities ALGA has set at the national level.

First and foremost, local government needs to secure a fair share of taxation revenue from the Commonwealth.

We need to move away from the current system for determining growth in financial assistance grants - a system that’s almost 30 years old and creaking at the seams.

The Commonwealth’s ‘hand-out’ approach to distributing financial assistance grants is grossly out-of-date and needs to be replaced by a fair and modern system for ensuring a fair distribution of the nation’s taxation revenue.

Our Budget submission argued for financial assistance grants to be paid at a rate equivalent to five per cent of GST revenue.

However, over time, the quantum should be linked a fixed percentage of overall taxation revenue.

Such a move would see a significant increase in local government funding and see annual allocations move in line with increases in national taxation revenue.

ALGA has vigorously pursued this with the cost-shifting inquiry, with the Senate inquiry into tax reform and with the new Secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Dr Peter Shergold.

Securing a fair share of taxation revenue for local government will not be easy. But we must press home the case for reform until we get it firmly on the Commonwealth’s agenda.

Secondly, we need decisive action to address the problem of cost-shifting.

As we all know, cost shifting is rampant. It is done by both the Commonwealth and state governments.

The House of Representatives economics committee is now nearing the end of its inquiry into cost shifting and its report is expected within the next two months.

For our part, ALGA has put a five-point plan to the committee.

The Commonwealth should:
1. acknowledge cost shifting is a substantial problem;
2. identify and quantify the extent of cost shifting through a Productivity Commission inquiry, conducted in collaboration with the State Local Government Grants Commissions;
3. initiate measures to ensure public sector revenue is fairly shared across all three spheres of government;
4. develop an inter-government agreement (IGA) on local service provision; and
5. enforce the terms of the IGA through appropriate compliance provisions.

The committee’s report will be critically important to us.

There are both threats and opportunities.

One of the biggest problems we have is that - in setting the committee’s terms of reference - the government has insisted that the inquiry is to be conducted - and I quote - “on the basis that the outcomes will be budget neutral for the Commonwealth”.

Nonetheless, if we are able to redress the issue of cost-shifting through an IGA, it is conceivable that we could increase the quantum of funding provided to local government by ensuring transferred services and responsibilities are agreed and fully funded.

Once the report is tabled, the battle will begin in earnest to help shape a Cabinet submission that will - we hope - go a long way to giving local government both a fair go and a fairer share of the national tax take.

Thirdly, we need to secure the future of the $1.2 billion Roads to Recovery program.

This program is due to expire in June 2005. While this program has been highly successful, the backlog of local road work is still substantial.

The program needs to be renewed and we need to get a commitment from the Federal Government before the next election. We must not let them off the hook.

We will be making the case for renewal of the program loud and clear to all Federal members and senators.

In June, for example, around 35 MPs and senators attended a breakfast briefing where we made the case for renewal.

In particular, we raised the results of the Roads to Recovery Review, jointly launched in June by ALGA and the Deputy Prime Minister.

There are two key points made in the report. These are:

1. The Roads to Recovery Program has gone a good way toward addressing the local roads problem, but many deficiencies remain.
2. To maintain local road assets at their current level, Roads to Recovery funding needs not just to be continued, but be twice its current level. If the program is not continued, local roads will quickly revert to their previous rate of decline.

It is critical that we all work to bring the findings of this report to the attention of our local Federal representatives.

I know that LGAQ and many individual councils are already pressssing the case for renewal.
But we also need to get your communities on the bandwagon, including community groups and business organisations that benefit from R2R projects.

At the national level, we have already secured the support of the National Farmers Federation, the Australian Automobile Association and even the Rural Doctors Association.

We must continue to build alliances as we press home the case for renewal.

We all fought hard to win Roads to Recovery - we must fight hard to keep it.

Fourthly, we need to secure extra funding for the AusLink land transport policy.

ALGA, and many other stakeholders including state governments, are concerned that the program is to be implemented within existing Commonwealth outlays.

We have argued that fresh funds are needed to ensure the success of AusLink and they will need to flow from next year's Budget.

John Anderson says he is committed to doing something for regional roads. While we welcome that commitment, we don’t want to see funding after 2005 that should properly be dedicated to a renewed Roads to Recovery program lumped into a contestable regional roads pool.

As regular readers of ALGA News would know, AusLink is having something of a difficult birth.

The Federal Government's white paper - or final plan - was expected earlier this year. We now know that some Commonwealth agencies have raised concerns about the AusLink paper.

The expected early retirement of the Transport Minister - John Anderson - from the frontbench - has also cast some doubt on the timing of the AusLink paper.

Despite these setbacks, I think we may well see a white paper delivered by Mr Anderson - perhaps by way of a swansong - sometime next month.

We will need to review the paper carefully and be prepared to work hard to ensure the concerns of our communities are protected.

Fifthly, we need to see a much stronger role for local government in natural resource management.

The regional structures that have been set up to fund both the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and the Natural Heritage Trust Extension, have not been successful in fully engaging local government.

Regional models can work, but only if they have local government - the keystone of regional development - at their heart - not at their feet.

I might add that ALGA is working hard to ensure that - under the newly agreed national water initiative, communities that are adversely affected by the introduction of a national water market can access part of the $500m package by way of a community focused-structural adjustment program.

Sixthly, we need to get the Commonwealth re-focussed on regional development.

While there has been a focus on regional development over the past few years, the issue has gone off the boil. And it has gone off the boil at the wrong time.
The impact of drought, the threat of a global economic downturn and growing regional inequality mean we should be concentrating greater resources on regional development.

This also means a higher priority for encouraging economic activities such as tourism and regional aviation. These are particularly important to communities in Queensland.

Last week, the Deputy Prime Minister released a regional business development action plan.

While local government will not agree with all the suggestions put forward in the plan, it does highlight the problems local government faces with cost-shifting, road funding and regional development.

For example, the report found that, faced with a declining rate base, the capacity of many local governments to maintain, let alone improve, infrastructure was a matter of serious concern. It cited reports that described local roads as being in a ‘disturbing state’.

There is an enormous reluctance on the part of the Federal Government to undertake what some describe as nation building activity.

We are - however - a young country and there is still a compelling case for government to increase investment in regional Australia. Europe is doing it. The US is doing it. Failure to substantially assist regional development will see Australia put at an international disadvantage.

I might add that ALGA has lent its voice to the push to have the Commonwealth more engaged in urban agendas. It has recently supported an inquiry into the sustainability of cities. That’s a start.

But we would like to see an increasing commitment from the Commonwealth to assist metropolitan centres come to grips with the pressures that confront them.

Our seventh priority concerns the impact of an ageing population on local government.

The challenges for local government are profound, with the proportion of working age people set to drop dramatically over the coming decades.

That will have a direct impact on our revenue streams and on service provision.

We have asked to work with the Commonwealth on this agenda and for funding for pilot programs to look how we might best meet the challenges of providing services for an ageing population.

The impact of an ageing population on councils will also be the focus of this year’s State of the Regions Report, jointly produced by ALGA and National Economics.

I’m pleased to see that a recent meeting ALGA has had with the Minister for Ageing, Kevin Andrews, has been encouraging and we hope to see some further progress on this front during the next few months.

Finally, we need to closely monitor the impact and effectiveness of the public liability insurance reform package announced last year.

The package is aimed at checking the increases in premiums and ensuring insurance products are widely available.

As insurance companies are now announcing increasing profit margins, we need to ensure that the reforms are working for the community - not company profits.

If the reforms fail to halt escalating premiums and fail to increase product availability, we must consider more drastic measures to bring order and sanity back to the insurance industry.
These, then, are ALGA’s core goals. How do we go about securing these goals from the Commonwealth?

Three significant opportunities present themselves over the coming 12 to 18 months.

Firstly, the Federal Budget. As expected, this year’s Budget had slim pickings for local government.

With a relatively modest Budget in 2003-04, the Federal Government has effectively squirreled away billions of dollars for what is likely to be the biggest single event on the 2004 political calendar - the Federal election.

With money in the bank, they can work away on crowd-pleasing spending ideas - or ‘barbeque stoppers’ as the Prime Minister calls them - over the next 12 months.

And therein lies the opportunity for local government.

Next year’s Budget - a fiscal pre-election scene setter - will be of much greater significance than the effort we saw in May.

So, next year’s Federal Budget offers greater hope for all those keen to see improved Commonwealth funding outcomes.

The second opportunity concerns the election policy commitments that will be prepared by the major parties over the coming 12 months.

Local government must sell its ideas to the right politicians at the right time.

In particular, ALGA will be attempting to influence the groups and individuals who will be formulating election policy options over the coming 12 months.

But we must also make sure our policy proposals provide a win-win situation for both federal and local government.

Governments - whether Liberal or Labor - are unlikely to simply hand over additional funding to local government simply because we have a sound argument, a genuine need and a just cause.

It is far more likely to agree to funding commitments that will also:

1. provide the government with recognition for what it has done;
2. provide government backbenchers with an opportunity for involvement; and
3. address a problem that is clearly on the public radar. They want to be seen to be fixing the problems that the public are worried about.

At the end of the day, the Coalition holds government by just 1.5 per cent. It’s a slim margin - and slim margins help governments to listen.

A further opportunity that may arise in the coming months may be the outcome of the House of Representatives Inquiry into cost-shifting.

As I mentioned earlier, the report is scheduled for release later this year - probably late next month. While the report will be important, it will be the Government’s response that will really matter. It will be the task of the Federal local government minister to put together a submission and get it on the Cabinet agenda.

And while ALGA will continue to push for the case for a substantial increase in the quantum of funding, I think we have already seen some positive outcomes from the inquiry.
Most importantly, there is a growing recognition in Canberra that local government is under real and sustained pressure.

In particular, it is becoming widely recognised that local government’s ability to raise additional revenue through rates is severely limited.

The penny is beginning to drop.

We must now make sure that the major parties, in putting together their policy responses, don’t come up with the wrong answer to the right question.

There is a further opportunity that may yet arise for local government and that’s the possibility of a Constitutional referendum.

Last week, the Assistant Treasurer, Helen Coonan, gave a significant speech to a leadership forum where she discussed, in some detail, the issue of Senate reform.

There are now some 20 pieces of Federal legislation that have either been stalled or are about to be stalled in the Senate.

And with both major parties expressing from time to time frustration with the Senate, it is quite conceivable that a reform agenda could gain bipartisan support.

If that is the case, we may face the prospect of a constitutional referendum at the next poll.

And if the major parties are going to give bipartisan support for constitutional change, we might also have a chance at getting bipartisan support for recognition of local government.

So, to re-cap, next year’s Federal Budget, the coming Federal election and the outcomes of the cost-shifting inquiry represent significant opportunities to secure change for local government.

Securing support of outspoken and influential MPs and senators is critical if we are to be successful.

In fact, the level of support for local government is significant in Federal Parliament, not least because so many MPs and senators have a local government background.

The importance of backbenchers particularly those in marginal seats cannot be under-estimated.

ALGA is working hard and will continue to work hard to help inform key MPs and senators of the importance of the local government agenda.

I urge you all to keep in contact with your local Federal Members and senators and to keep pressing them hard on the issues that matter most to you and your communities.

Dealing with Federal politicians reminds me of the words of a namesake of mine, Field Marshall Lord Montgomery, who said and I quote:

"I have spent much of my life fighting the Germans and fighting the politicians. It is much easier to fight the Germans."

Thank you.
“STATE OPPOSITION UPDATE”

Hon Lawrence Springbord MP
Leader of the Opposition

Thank you very much Mr President of the Local Government Association, Cr Noel Playford, the Mayor of Cairns, Cr Kevin Byrne, Greg Hallam Executive Director of the Local Government Association of Queensland, to Howard Hobbs my good friend and parliamentary colleague and Shadow Minister for Local Government, amongst other things. I would like to commend Howard on his interest and the insight, on the importance of local government and the operations of local government, which he brings into our joint party rooms and also to the Parliament in general. He told me earlier that he first became a councillor in 1975. I was only seven years old at that stage Howard. He went from their into parliament in 1986, following a period as the mayor of the Tambo Shire. He represents the interests of local government very well in the coalition, I can assure you.

To councillors, CEO’s, council staff, ladies and gentlemen; it’s great to be here. This is my first opportunity as leader of the Queensland Coalition to be able to address you in that capacity and to pass on some of the views and some of the things, which we actually have planned as well. The Queensland Coalition has always very strongly viewed the importance of local government and we have always felt that there needs to be a strong and equal partnership between the state and local government, in delivering services and facilities to our communities and I do believe if one reflects upon our performance in Government over varies times, we have certainly been able to do that.

In the late 1980’s, and it’s not my intention to go through an extremely protracted history lesson other than give you a potted idea of some of the things which we’ve actually done in Government, we moved to recognise in the Queensland Constitution local government because we felt that it did need to be recognised in the Queensland Constitution. When we were in Government for a very brief period of time between 1996 and 1998, we made sure that the subsidy scheme, which was available to Local Government to assist them with regards to certain facilities, was enhanced. Into that particular scheme we put $600 million over 10 years, we doubled the subsidy rate which was available to Local Government from 20% to 40%, but importantly, we established the Small Communities Assistance Program and set aside $150 million over 10 years to assist local government in being able to provide those necessary facilities or services, in their areas, particularly the smaller communities around the state. I believe that it’s been a great program. I used to be on Di McCauley’s ministerial committee when she was the minister, and she was always saying to me how quickly it was being subscribed to by councils throughout Queensland, as they sought to address the many issues, which they had with regards to infrastructure, needing to be updated. Not only that, but importantly dealing with the matter of the growth of Queensland and the need to deal with growing communities as well.

I arrived last night and walked into an environment where people were saying there must be an election there’s so many politicians in town. I was able to tell the local radio station this morning that I actually had my trip scheduled some three or four months ago when I had received the invitation from LGAQ to come along and speak here with you today. There have been a number of ministers that have been trotting through far-north Queensland over the last couple of days, and certainly a number of them have been here with you as well. I simply raise the question, how many commitments have been given to you which provide the certainty which you need, in so far as those very important programs provided by the State Government to you in the services you are required to deliver to the communities that you represent right throughout Queensland? I suspect the answer to that question is probably not too much.

I want to go through some of those issues which I believe need to be addressed. If you look at the history of the representation of local government in the Queensland Cabinet, over a long period of time, it has always been represented by a senior minister. And that was the case back in the days of the Bjelke Peterson, Ahern and Cooper governments. Certainly it was the case with regards to the Goss government and the Borbidge government. What I can say here today, is that because of the importance of local government.
government, when we win power in Queensland under a Springborg led Coalition Government, one of the most senior ministers around the cabinet table will represent the views of local government.

Howard Hobbs is one of our most senior parliamentary members. He’s been in parliament representing the National Party now since 1986, and holds a senior position, and he will hold that senior ministerial portfolio in government. We believe that that’s the way we have to recognise the importance of local government and the co-operation between yourselves and ourselves in state government. One of the difficulties which we have had in being able to come up with new policy initiatives, and funding commitments for current programs which are due to expire, is the fact that we have now got three budget deficits in a row. This year’s deficit budget is about $150 million. That has in some ways dealt a very severe blow to our costing process. Some would say almost a crippling blow because we are trying to sit down and to work through our various priorities. Our priorities have to be balancing the books in Queensland, but not only that, we need to be dealing with the issues which are extremely important to Queenslanders. When myself and Howard, and the shadow cabinet team have been working through the initiatives, which we would want to provide to local government in this state, we’ve had to consider those initiatives, and funding them against the backdrop of the funding deficit. At this stage we are working on certain preconceptions about what that budgetary situation may be.

Another important consideration for us is that we move towards action rather than just talking about things. One thing that seems to be coming through as I move around the state, is that we’ve had plans, and we’ve had studies, and we’ve had more plans, and we’ve had years and years of butcher’s paper being put up around walls around the state, and in a couple of years time we have another lot of butcher’s paper, we have some more plans and some more studies, but nothing really happens. I think whether you go from the New South Wales/Queensland border to the tip of Cape York Peninsula, we’ve probably had enough of planning. Now its time to consolidate all that information which we have, and much of it is in very very usable planning form, and we start to put it in action to deliver some outcomes for the people of Queensland, to be delivered by the State Government and by councils working together in partnership.

I would like to explain to you today just very quickly, two very important portfolio areas which we’ve established, because they are priorities for us in the Coalition. One is our new portfolio where we are dealing with urban infrastructure; the other one is dealing with de-centralisation. Some would say that that may be duplication over existing departments, well it isn’t. We’re not dealing with existing departments we are dealing with senior people within the Coalition that will be dealing with senior portfolio areas, and this will be an office that will be established for them to oversee. Certainly if you look at the urban areas of Queensland there has been a lot of things, which have not been dealt with properly. One of those has been essential infrastructure development in the area of transport.

Transport in south-east Queensland for example, has been ignored. There are certainly issues in this local area as well, where there needs to be a collaborated commitment with regards to transport. So you’ve got transport, an important issue, an important planning issue, but an important investment issue. Bob Quinn, who is the Shadow Treasurer and the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, would have the portfolio looking after urban infrastructure. It’s a responsibility that would attach to the second most senior member of the government. That would mean that departments would have an obligation to ensure that the priorities of government are being implemented by those particular departments. It is not about putting another layer of bureaucracy in place. It is about taking those planning tools, which are out there, which have already been done, and making sure that we implement them in accordance with the coalitions priorities in this state. Our priorities as I have indicated, or will indicate in a moment, include such things as exceptionally significant investment in the area of transport not only urban, but also regional and also rural throughout this state. So it’s about having an office, it’s not about having a separate department, it is not about duplicating. It is about making sure that a senior member of the Government will be there driving it.

Similarly, with the portfolio with decentralisation under Jeff Seeney, who is the deputy leader of the National Party, is that we want to make sure that we have a decentralisation focus. This state has more than half of its citizens living out side the capital city and we want to keep it that way. But just picture
this over the next 12 or 15 years an additional one million people are envisaged to move into south-east Queensland somewhere between Noosa and Coolangatta and going back into the Lockyer Valley. That is a lot of people requiring something like a quarter of a million additional housing blocks alone. Now people will go where people want to go, and that is fine, but we want to have a decentralisation focus where the decisions that we make as government provides investment in necessary government services in areas right throughout the state which will enhance a decentralisation agenda. If people want to live in south-east Queensland that’s fine but there should be no reason why they don’t want to live in other places whether they be Roma, or Emerald or Cairns or Townsville, or Rockhampton, whatever the case may be. It is about making sure the fair share goes into those areas as well and we have investment of government services and we have a range of other incentive type processes which attract business and investment in those areas. That is what it is about. It is not about additional levels of bureaucracy, it is about priorities of a Springborg led Coalition Government.

A couple of things, which are extremely important for us to deal with. When we are re-elected in the state, we will do away with the hurdle, which has been placed in front of local leaders wishing to contest state elections and having to resign. We believe that it is the right of a councillor in Queensland to contest a state election as a candidate and not be penalised. What the government has put in place in that area will be done away with. That hurdle, which is put in place of local leaders throughout Queensland in wishing to contest local government elections, will be removed. You should not have to resign if you want to do that. The electorate is the ultimate arbiter. The electorate is the one that decides whether the decision, which you make, is the right decision to make. It is not up to the State Government, in some sort of get square, to decide that you as a councillor have to, in effect, resign your council position in order to contest a state election. The state legislation barring councillors from standing for Federal Parliament was found to be unconstitutional by the High Court, and rightly so. The only way that we can fix it at the state level, is to legislate and we will legislate to fix that. It’s extremely important that we do that and we will do that.

Recently I announced, and I just want to remind you today, that under a Springborg led Coalition Government, we would put in place a $5 million per year, three year program, to assist local governments overcome the problem of beach erosion. We know that it might be somewhat larger than that, but it is a big help and a step in the right direction. That is restoration works, and it is also aimed at assisting those local governments that have beach erosion issues, to put in place programmes that will be able to ameliorate that problem before it becomes greater.

Also under a Springborg lead Coalition Government there will be no forced amalgamations. We made that position clear when we were in government previously and I re-state that position here today for you as well.

You mentioned by way of resolution yesterday, country racing and also investment in roads infrastructure. Two extremely important areas for us in the Coalition. We have recently announced a $10 million programme to invest in the racing industry in Queensland. This is state government money, $4 million of which would go into country racing to be administered by a Country Racing Council, in order to reinstate many of those 199 meetings which have been lost throughout Queensland during the course of the last year because the government sat on its hands and hasn’t moved to do something about it. This is an issue of community. This is an issue of keeping communities together. I’m afraid a lot of people don’t know, but that one race meeting that used to be held somewhere like Torwood in my electorate, or picnic races somewhere else, was how the P & C raised their money for the year. That’s how the Flying Doctor in some cases raised money in a particular area. Not only that, 55,000 people in Queensland directly or indirectly derive their livelihood from the racing industry. This is not about supporting gambling; this is about supporting an industry, which is so vitally important to Queensland. An analysis done by the University of Southern Queensland, in my area just recently, found that the changes, the cuts to country racing, would lose 650 jobs in that area of southern inland Queensland just on its own, just on its own. So $4 million of that $10 million would go into country racing providing the prize money and giving the support which is necessary. Now there will be more that will come between now and the next state election and it is fully costed as well. Howard might like to touch on that. It is
an important industry, and I commend you for your interest in this area because it does make a
difference.

With regards to roads, and I note that that’s an extremely important area for local government, and
certainly whilst issues vary around the state in their importance, the electorate that I represent, roads is
always there as an issue. When we left government, about 28% of the capital works budget was spent on
roads. This current year it’s 14%. We have to lift that, and we know that it’s a difficult task to actually
lift it back up to that level, but we need a greater range of investment in roads, and we are going to
have to do that in government, and we will be prepared to do that in government. We are going to have
to look at public/private sector partnerships, that’s where the money is going to come from. In some of
the areas to be able to assist us, there is no doubt about it. But we have got to get that money because
otherwise we are going to have continual congestion problems and lack of investment in roads, which is
so important across Queensland to develop this state’s economy.

You would have been noticing in the press in the last couple of days that there are a couple of extremely
important areas, which I have already announced. One is that we would introduce in government a
subsidy or assistance programme, to assist local government control mosquitos on state controlled lands.
We know that there is a big problem with mosquito borne diseases, and we have got to do something
about addressing it. It’s very difficult for councils to do it on their own, and I think that it’s not right to
say to private land holders “you go out there and you fix this problem” if we’re not prepared to deal with
it on state owned lands or state controlled lands. That’s why we will put in place a $2 million per annum
programme to assist local government in controlling mosquitos on state controlled lands. We’re also
committing to the local government capital works subsidy scheme, and it will be continued over the next
nine years, by way of contribution of $450 million. The SCAP programme will also be continued with
$144 million over nine years. We believe that it has been extremely important; it’s made a difference,
and you need that long-term assurance and certainty to be able to go about planning that necessary
infrastructure in your council areas, to provide services for your rate payers and your residents.

Also, under our Quieter, Green Neighbourhoods plan, we will waive the stamp duty on council purchases
of land for environmental purposes. This is a ridiculous tax on green space. It is something that the
government can do; it is something the government should do, that will cost the state government $2
million per annum. But I look at it as an investment in the future. It is absolutely senseless to me that
we place stamp duty on councils throughout Queensland that are purchasing land for green space for
their communities. This is about to enhance the lifestyle of the people in your local council area. It is
about preserving areas of the natural environment that deserve to be preserved, but not only that, it is
about providing recreational and open space opportunities for your residents. And we will be prepared
to forego $2 million per annum. We believe that that is a sensible investment in partnering with local
government to deliver good outcomes for your citizens.

Also we will set aside $34 million over three years as a pool for green space acquisition throughout
Queensland. Green space as I said, is an important issue, and when you look at the expansion of this
state’s population, the way that the demographics are going to go over the next few years, we need to
be identifying those areas now, and we need to be acquiring those areas now for the future. We cannot
afford to be sitting back and waiting for our populations in various areas to develop to a certain stage
where they overrun those essential areas of green space that we should be acquiring now. It is not only
about people having access to good quality health services, transport etc. etc. but it’s about having lifestyle, and that $34 million over three years, as a pool, will ensure that. It’s not going to be arbitrarily
spent by the state government. It will be done in partnership with local government. The state
government did collect money over about 5 or 6 years by way of a levy on conveyancing to purchase
green space. It never went into doing what it was set up to do. What we are saying is that it will under
us, and it will be done so in partnership with local government, and it will provide quieter, greener
suburbs. It will provide an opportunity for you to be able to do that long term planning which is
extremely necessary.

Mr Chairman I’ll leave it at that, but it’s great to be here today. It’s great to have a chance to outline
some of the issues, which are extremely important to us. We see our role as the State Coalition as being
in partnership with you. We want to work with you but we want to be in the situation of saying "yes" here are our programmes; we believe that they will make a difference; we believe that they recognise your priorities and that’s what we will be doing. I do hope that there is probably a little chance to have some questions, but I’ll leave it at that and we’ll see what Howard has to say.

Thank you.
“STATE OPPOSITION UPDATE”

Hon Howard Hobbs MP
Shadow Minister for Local Government, Planning, Regional, Rural Communities and Racing

- President of Local Government Association, Cr Noel Playford OAM,
- Australian Local Government Association President Cr Mike Montgomery
- The Mayor of Cairns Cr Kevin Byrne,
- Hon Nita Cunningham Minister for Local Government
- Lawrence Springborg Opposition Leader and Leader of the National Party in Queensland
- Councillors, CEOs
- Other State and Federal Parliamentary Colleagues,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Well 2003 and has been another busy year for Local Government and considering we have elections for Local, State, and Federal Government coming up next year, 2004 will be no different.

I want to take this opportunity to thank councillors for the big effort you put into Local Government, you are nearing the completion of your first four year term and many will be considering whether to run again or not for a further four year term. Thank you for your contributions to your community.

Lawrence has just given you a good outline of a conservative Government’s agenda and support for local government. As the forthcoming election draws nearer further policies and initiatives will be released.

Queensland Workplace Agreements

I wish to announce today that a National Liberal Coalition Government will make Queensland Workplace Agreements (QWAs) available to Local Government.

In todays competitive world we don’t need to be operating with one hand behind our back and neither do employees.

Some councils in desperation have gone to Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) however this is not ideal and QWAs are more appropriate in Queenslands industrial environment.

Planning Disputes

Councils in Queensland have been going through a torrid time developing and implementing new planning schemes.

The IPA has not worked out as well as most of us has envisaged however I believe everyone is committed to making it work and further refinements have to be made to achieve this.

Consequential amendments to the original IPA legislation have been slow and coming through which has compounded the problems.

One important area that can be improved is the resolution of planning and development disputes.
I announce today that a National Liberal Coalition Government will commit to investigating and establishing an appropriate dispute resolution process for individuals, Local Government and Developers.

It was not the intention of the original IPA legislation to have expensive court room battles on planning matters running into million of dollars.

While it is important to have an efficient appeal process it is equally important to have an efficient and affordable dispute resolution process. We will do that.

Financial Assistance Grants

I am disappointed at the Mexican stand off we saw with out State and Federal Ministers on the distribution of the 2003/04 FAGs.

Clearly an arbitrary process must be put in place once again to resolve disputes. I don’t agree with another inquiry into Queenslands Federal assistance grants, it is another unnecessary distraction that will foster disunity and create expectations and disappointment for others.

Queensland local governments greatest strength is unity, being able to work together and stick together through the good and bad times.

As a result of this unity recent Federal Department of Territories and Regional Services Local Government report highlighted that the $437 million in 2002/03 provided to Queensland Councils was the highest aggregate per capita level of state government support in Australia.

Incidentally I would like to remind delegates that Queensland Local Governments position in leading the nation in infrastructure subsidies from a State Government, can be predominately attributed to Coalition initiatives that supported Local Government in this State. To their credit the Beattie Government have continued to fund these initiatives.

Since I last addressed your conference in Maryborough a number of significant issues have occurred.

IPA Planning Schemes

When it became evident Councils may not meet the time frame to implement their new planning schemes I introduced a Private Members Bill into Parliament to extend the time for 12 months.

I am pleased the Minister chose to follow my legislative option and extend the time to 30th June 2004.

Community Ambulance Tax

I congratulate Local Government for their campaign against the State Government proposal to charge the ambulance tax on rates.

Further changes now need to be made so no one pays the ambulance tax more than once.

Truth in Science

I wish to report to you a trend that has been evident to us for some time and difficult to prove and that is the reliability of scientific data provided by the State Government.

Clear evidence has now been provided by several sources such as court cases and independent scientific assessments that some State Government reports and data provided to the public is not true and in same cases deliberately misleading.
I refer to water management plans, salinity reports and Reef Water Quality Protection Plans and Vegetation Management.

Queenslanders have in the past relied on Government Departments to be the honest broker and provide scientific data on which to debate an issue. That is now not the case.

I am not aware of any credible group of people who would deliberately harm their environmental and their livelihoods by carrying out unsustainable practices if clear scientific and practical evidence shows that changes should be made.

I support looking after our environment and want to leave it a better place for our children.

I am calling on the State Government to have truth in science and until the matter is resolved for Local Government to be one of the watchdogs.

The examples I have are numerous and range from Government scientists lying in court, using only data that was detrimental to a river system and not what was favorable, using historical soil types maps and portraying them as immediate salinity hazard maps, even after more advanced testing technology and test holes proved no problem existed.

The Reef Water Quality Protection Plan was released in May this year despite the fact scientific data was provided showing the report was seriously flawed.

Queensland Vegetation Management is in melt down with maps and criteria constantly changing, conflicting statements from one officer to another and the State Government now excluded by the Commonwealth in negotiations with landholders because landholders cannot trust the State Government.

These are some of the examples we know about, how many others are out there. Truth in science is gone. I don’t want to place further burdens on Councils, however I ask you to be vigilant if you consider the data you have been provided is doubtful there maybe an opportunity to jointly fund with other local governments and stakeholders independent assessments.

It may save you millions of dollars in the long term.

**Racing**

Major changes have occurred in the Racing Industry and delegates need to aware where those changes will take Racing in Queensland in your own Shire, City or community.

Prize money in Queensland has fallen behind southern states and many top trainers jockeys and horses have relocated out of Queensland.

In an effort to address this problem the Government put in place a new Board. That Board appointment was made under very controversial circumstances and involved a lengthy CMC inquiry.

The new Board now called Queensland Racing is attempting to increase prize money and streamline administration.

The problem they have is that their main funding source from UniTAB was reducing, Sky Channel conditions and funding are becoming more difficult.

The position of authority has changed since privatization of the TAB where the TAB now called UniTAB and Sky Channel dictated where we race when we race and how many times we race. The tail is presently wagging the dog.
In an effort to increase prize money a 40% cut in race meetings has occurred across Queensland. This is on top of 15% cut in year 2000.

These cuts are not only in country areas, they were in provincial areas as well. Some of your race meetings have been cut back to uneconomical levels and it will only be a matter of time before some major race clubs will be in financial difficulties and demands will be made on you.

The problem commenced with the shocking deal race clubs got in the sale of the TAB.

The TAB was fully set up by the Racing Industry with no finance from Government. It was sold for $304 million in 1999, $10 million was given to the Racing Industry, $34 million used to pay out the old Racing Development Fund and the Beattie Government kept $260 million. Each year for 15 years the Government was to receive $50 million which has grown to $60 million for 15 years.

In other words the Government will receive over $1 Billion from Racing over 15 years for no original investment and have now walked away from any involvement in the Racing Industry.

The Racing Industry receives approximately $100 million annually from UniTAB and the Thoroughbred Industry get approximately $76 million. This figure will go back this year as no real increase was factored into the sale.

It is extraordinary that the third largest industry employing up to 55,000 Queenslanders is being hung out to dry.

The Government argue that the Australian Rules of Racing prohibit Government assistance to Racing, this is incorrect. The ARB state:

1. the control body should not have members who are direct Government appointees and
2. have the control and general supervision of thoroughbred racing within its territory

Queensland Racing have recently announced a funding package and this is welcome. However it generally recycled funding from slashing country race dates, an unexpected increase in product fee (one benefit of drought when race meetings are not cancelled due to wet weather) and administrative savings and will not protect the industry from future cutbacks.

What do we need to fix the problem?

An additional $10 million per year with indexation will put Queensland Racing back on the front foot.

It must be understood you cannot fix country racing without fixing provincial and metropolitan racing and visa versa - they go hand in hand.

The Coalition has proposed, based on good research a $10 million rescue package - comprising $6 million for Provincial and Metropolitan racing and $4 million quarantined to country racing under a Country Racing Board that will be located in a country centre and will control country race dates and prize money.

I urge you to take proactive action and make representations to the State Government to return some of the UniTAB dividends back to the industry and keep racing strong in Queensland.

Conclusion

I hope you have had a successful conference, I wish all sitting Councillors every success at the next local government elections in March and those retiring thank you for your service to your community.