LGAQ

Executive Report

to

105th Annual Conference

2001
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Delegates and Observers

In accordance with the LGAQ’s Constitution and Rules, the Executive reports to each Annual Conference on the direction and activities of the Association during the previous year. In keeping with precedent the Annual Report provides commentary on the wider environment in which Queensland Local Government operated over the past 12 months. This report also sets out the corporate goals and strategies of the LGAQ, as well as the noteworthy major initiatives of the Association, during this time.

This report does not contain a full seriatim list of LGAQ policies, programs or initiatives for the period in question. It is not possible to achieve that outcome in such a report, moreover, that level of detail is readily accessible to members in the Executive Minutes together with circulars, via the medium of LGAQNet.

External Environment

The past year can be characterised as one of a continuing shift towards a consensus model of politics, at both state and federal level. The public policy debate has continued to both broaden in its coverage and narrow in respect of the differences between the major parties with less public emphasis on micro economic reform. The LGAQ continued to advocate a moderate reformist line, emphasising the need to consider people and place in decision-making by higher levels of government.

The conduct of a state poll and a series of federal by elections in the lead up to a federal election later this year, and the attendant uncertainty which surrounded both processes has resulted in a surreal political environment. Reform agendas have been minimised, whilst listening and consultations with peak bodies and communities have been largely the order of the day. In turn this has presented an opportunity for the LGAQ to more aggressively and proactively advance Local Governments own agendas.
**Federal Government**

*Over the last year general relationships with the Federal Government have continued to improve, with a very major new road funding program initiated and considerable Networking the Nation Funding being directed to Councils. Superficially this détente could be ascribed to the proximity of the federal poll or the standing of the Coalition Government in the electorate. However, this would not recognise the very considerable efforts of the LGAQ over the past two years and the ALGA more recently to engage and enlist the Federal Government to Local Government's cause.*

In the context of improving relationships with the Federal Government it would be remiss not to acknowledge the genuine efforts of the Federal Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Senator the Hon Ian MacDonald and his office in addressing concerns expressed by the LGAQ. Whilst we have not always reached consensus, real dialogue and cooperation have been the norm.

The advent of the Federal Government’s $1.6b for Roads to Recovery Program in November 2000, was a major fillip for Councils across Australia. There can be no doubt, that in large part, the attainment of these funds came as a direct consequence of the LGAQ’s continued efforts to organise a national road funding campaign in the lead up to the federal election.

As addressed in last years Executive Report to Annual Conference it has only been through the persistence of the immediate Past President and current LGAQ President that the ALGA resolved to run such a campaign. Furthermore, in the intervening year the LGAQ and the Member Councils have raised twice as much in voluntary campaign levies than any other state. Moreover, the campaign to date has been organised and conducted out of the LGAQ offices.

Beyond influencing the quantum of the $1.2b in funds flowing directly to Councils, through forceful advocacy, the LGAQ in its own right ensured that all Member Councils received a share of the Road to Recovery funding pie.

Despite the real success of our efforts and because of the ongoing crisis in road funding which has been exacerbated by the recent High Court decision over-turning the non-feasance principle, it has been the strongly expressed opinion of our members and the Executive that the campaign should continue.
Still on Federal Road Funding, at the time of the compilation of this report, the ALGA’s campaign is still scheduled to be conducted in coming months. This eventuality is dependant upon an announcement on future Blackspot funding commitments by the Federal Government. The most recent Federal Budget paper does not provide for Blackspot funding beyond the current financial year.

Importantly the Executive’s previously stated concerns over the potential impact of the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act have not materialised during the last year. The Federal Government have used their new found powers in planning and land management both sparingly and appropriately.

The LGAQ through the Executive also took a prominent position on fuel pricing, forming strategic alliances with road user group to combat escalating fuel prices, leading to the abandonment by the Federal Government of automatic indexation. The Association also has and is continuing to lobby Canberra to rectify the current discriminatory and anomalous diesel fuel rebate scheme in so far as it relates to Local Government.

In terms of the all important FAGs the past year was marked by the inquiry by the Commonwealth Grants Commission into the operation of the current federal legislation. The LGAQ made two (2) submissions to the inquiry. While the Commission has recently reported to the Federal Government, neither the Government nor Opposition have yet adopted a formal response. At the state level, the Queensland Minister for Local Government and Planning, the Hon Nita Cunningham has secured an agreement with her federal counterpart on a one year moratorium on any Council receiving a cut in their allocation in the 2001-2002 financial year.

The LGAQ was able to secure two (2) separate grants of $7.4m under the Networking the Nation’s (NTN) program to develop common online services for Queensland Councils. This money will enable the LGAQ to deliver state of the art online services, including e-commerce, in particular e-procurement. The Executive have put great emphasis on doing all it can to assist Councils to fully participate in the online revolution.

Of real note, is the significantly improved performance of the ALGA over the past year. This has come about as a consequence of the appointment of a very capable CEO, more clearly defined corporate strategy and streamlining of operational arrangements. LGAQ President Cr Noel Playford was appointed as ALGA Senior Vice President at the December 2000 ALGA AGM.

State Government

The State political process was convulsed for at least half of the year by an electoral rorts scandal, division in conservative ranks, a landslide victory to the Beattie Government and a significant realignment of the political power balance in Queensland. After six years of a minority or single seat majority government, the current government enjoys an historic parliamentary mandate.
The Executive oversaw a major effort by the Association to advance the genuine and realistic goals and aspirations of Local Government in the leadership to the February 2001 State poll through a 16 point State Election plan. Whilst the Association received a good hearing from both government and opposition, it received only minimal support from the current State Government. By way of contrast the Opposition were very encouraging and supportive of the great majority of the 16 points.

This development reflects the more “political” rather than policy driven nature of the Beattie Government, the very tight fiscal circumstances facing the State Government (as evidenced in the most recent State Budget) and a prevailing view within the senior ranks of government and the bureaucracy that Local Government has done relatively well over the past six years.

As a consequence of the political upheavals in the state since mid 2000, the policy development processes of the state have slowed markedly, to the point that major legislative review and production on both the Rural Lands Protection Act and Integrated Planning are two years behind schedule. Importantly little new policy has been initiated despite the Beattie Government enjoying historic majority and have completed almost six months of their second term, there is no clear evidence on an emerging agenda. Having said that considerable ongoing work has continued on previously initiated major reforms such as the Water Act etc.

The Executive have recognised the relative policy vacuum and sought to capitalise on it, by proactively filling the void with Local Government agendas, most notably reworking the States Natural Resource Management arrangements, the prospective MRD/LGAQ Roads Alliance, simplification of the Local Government financial statements, second wave National Competition Policy initiative aimed to maximise bonus payments to Councils, Private Building Certification review etc. In short, the LGAQ has generated an unprecedented number of front foot initiatives to advance Local Government’s position across a broad range of matters. In many instances the LGAQ is clearly driving the policy agenda. In doing so it has dedicated an enormous amount of resources to this task while that window of opportunity is present. Importantly the Executive has sought to fully engage its Member Councils in the policy development process.

One of the few major developments during the year in so far as the State Government is concerned has been the appointment of a new Minister for Local Government and the downsizing of the former mega Department of Communication, Information, Local Government Planning and Sport to the Department of Local Government and Planning. Consequential to those changes Dr Ted Campbell was appointed as Director-General of the new Department.
The LGAQ has enjoyed good access to the new Minister with regular meetings taking place. Similarly the Association has maintained regular contact with the Opposition spokesman Mr Howard Hobbs.

A matter of real concern to the Executive during the past year was the decision of the State Government to introduce legislation to require Councillors to resign before nominating for State or Federal Parliament. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, this initiative was politically driven and partisan in its intent. When coupled with the Governments proposition that the current entrenchment of a requirement for a referendum to remove the system of local government be deleted from the State Constitution, this represents a grave concern to the LGAQ and Councils, and heralds a major shift in what has been a bi-partisan approach to Local Government institutional issues over the past 13 years.

**The Association**

The last twelve months was marked by the election of a new President, Cr Noel Playford OAM, and three office bearers including the LGAQ’s first ever woman office bearer ie Cr Paul Bell Senior Vice President, Cr Les Tyrell Junior Vice President and Cr Ann Bennison, Hon Treasurer. All of these office bearers have undertaken substantial travel and/or major tasks on behalf of Local Government.

The Executive has used the past year as a period to reflect, review and reinvest in the Association’s capacity, direction and operations. Both a community attitude and a member attitude survey were undertaken in recent months, which have, and will continue to inform the macro and micro organisational settings over the next few years.

A third Community Satisfaction Study was conducted by the Association during the period with funds provided by the Fred Rogers Memorial Trust. All councils received copies of this valuable corporate planning tool. The Executive are concerned with a trend of declining community attitude with respect to the efforts of elected members, but welcomed improvement in the Basic Services and Infrastructure, Community Lifestyle Services and Managing the Shire/City’s categories.

The Executive also oversaw the conduct of the third LGAQ Members Attitude Survey which confirmed continuing very high levels of overall satisfaction with the Association’s direction and performance. Much detailed information was gained from this process which will drive the LGAQ’s strategic direction and operations over the next two years.
A major thrust of the Executive has been greater engagement with Member Councils. To that end the Association has undertaken a record number of visits to councils during the last year. The President has led that process by example. Furthermore a real ongoing effort was made to continue personal correspondence with all councillors on key issues. In the same context a one size fits all or bureaucratic approach by the Association has been eschewed at all costs. Over the past year real and personal assistance has been afforded through direct financial support and resource assistance to diverse groups diverse such as Aboriginal Councils, Coastal Councils, major provincial cities and the Local Government Women’s Association as well as rural shires on the wild dog barrier fence. This flexibility and attention to individual Council concerns have been a by-word for the Association.

All of the Association’s reference groups and representatives on external bodies were reviewed and changed as appropriate during the last twelve months, so as to ensure the LGAQ remains a truly representative body. A major plank in that strategy was a survey of all councillors special interests, qualifications and talents in an effort to harness their capacities.

A review of the LGAQ Executive Electoral boundaries was undertaken during the year in accordance with the wishes of the 2000 Annual Conference. Upon consideration of a report by an external consultant, the Executive determined it was unlikely that any of the options put forward would either improve the current arrangements and/or attract the necessary two-thirds majority support of member council votes at Annual Conference. The matter was left to individual councils to further pursue as deemed appropriate.

The Executive has continued with its focus on maximising the value for money for member subscriptions through investing in technology that improves productivity and access for members, as well as reducing overheads and redirecting resources into ‘front line’ and/or newly emerging areas. Through careful stewardship the Association has achieved its (5) year financial strategy of increasing reserves to the equivalent of 20 percent of at risk revenues in eighteen months. This was done without the need to resort to above CPI subscription increases or curtailing services to members. Indeed the reverse has happened.

The Executive have continued to pursue cost saving undertakings for Councils, most prominent being LGM and LG Workcare and CAPS. The insurance market has been hit savagely by the collapse of both GI0 and HIH, as well as the High Court decision on non-feasance. All attempts to limit premium increases have occurred, but significant ongoing increases are inevitable for the next few years. The original plan for CAPS to become a corporate entity owned by the Association and the States 10 largest councils did not materialise, however the existing CAP’s operation is being fully commercialised, into the Local Buy entity and placed on-line.
In its continued pursuit of relevance and excellence, the Executive has initiated a review of the Association’s IR strategy and training delivery methods and commenced a major Local Government traineeship program in conjunction with the State Government.

A high level of contact was maintained at both elected level and senior party official level with all of the major political parties in Queensland. This policy continues to ensure high level and unfettered access to decision makers at State and Federal level.

In terms of continuing to promote Local Government in the community the LGAQ achieved a high level of media coverage with 3740 mentions in the year gone (2244 print and 1496 electronic). In addition, Local Government Awareness Week was extensively promoted including a first ever Courier-Mail lift-out and an external Website was maintained.

**Directorate**

During the previous year demands on Local Government House resources have continued to rise. At the same time overall staffing was reduced by two positions. The Association continues to answer and assist Councils across an ever widening range of issues. There is a high reliance by a significant number of Councils on the LGAQ for day to day operations.

Reorganisation of the corporate structure took place in the executive wing, training section and CAPS/Local Buy areas consistent with changing demands and forecast future member needs. This continues a trend of aligning systems, structures and resources with the external environment.

Over the past twelve months some very major new organisational systems were investigated ordered and initiated. Most notable is the new Knowledge and Resource Management Application (KARMA) which replaces the previous SOAR electronic information system. KARMA which has been developed with the Queensland Treasury Corporation will provide a state of the art knowledge capture platform and a relationship management application. This will not only greatly assist and empower LGAQ staff, but with the assistance of NTN funding and greater bandwidth will open up all the LGAQ’s knowledge and information for online use by Member Councils. It is hoped to achieve this outcome within the next year to eighteen months.
In the last period the LGAQ has also undertaken a corporate health project, including an updated Human Resource Management system, developed new IT and marketing plans for the organization.

Unfortunately the Association experienced its most significant staff turnover for many years. This came about from staff accepting promotions into other organizations, new corporate directions and two redundancies. The Executive thanks all of its staff for their sterling efforts on behalf of the Association's members during the past year.

As with previous years the outputs of the Association grew again during the last year. The LGAQ attended some 40 plus ALGA, District Association, ROC and professional body meetings. In all the Directorate handled 218,800 phone calls (approximately 880 a day), together with approx 7000 incoming items of correspondence, faces and emails. At the same time the Association produced 37 submissions to inquiries and/or legislation, policy and funding reviews, as well as 500 plus circulars, 90 media releases and over 40 speeches.
ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC POLICY SECTION

Roads and Transport

The roads and transport portfolio has again been one of the key areas of policy activity for the Association over the last twelve months. Whether it was at the Federal, State or Local Level, the Association has engaged in a number of significant issues pertaining to this portfolio. This has been most evident from the focus and ongoing commitment to issues such as ALGA's National Roads Funding Campaign, The Roads to Recovery Program, our participation in the Mildura National Rural Roads Congress, the continuing implementation and refining of the Damage to Roads Policy and of course, the proposed Roads Alliance between Main Roads and Local Government.

National Road Funding Campaign

It was at about this time last year that the State and Territory Associations promoted the idea of a "National" Roads Funding Campaign in the lead up to the next Federal Election. In December 2000, ALGA's National Roads Campaign was officially launched at the National General Assembly.

The aim of the Campaign was for a doubling, in real terms, of Federal Government road funding within ten years.

Around the same time the Campaign was launched, the Federal Government announced its Roads to Recovery Program, of some $1.6 Billion dollars over four years.

In response to the Roads to Recovery Program, and the horrific road toll during the Christmas/New Year holiday period, ALGA decided to refocus its campaign strategy. In essence, the new strategy will seek a commitment from the Federal Government to road funding through an enhanced Black Spot Program.

This campaign will comprise three main stages:

1. A submission seeking commitment from the Federal Government, the Opposition and minor parties to the following objectives:

   - A commitment to the Black Spot Program beyond 2001/2002
   - An increase in Black Spot funding from $40 million per annum to $100 million per annum.
   - Greater flexibility in the criteria for nominating Black Spots for local roads.

3. A national media campaign, targeted at marginal seats in the lead up to the Federal election, if commitments to the campaign objectives have not been given by the Federal Government, Opposition and minor parties.

The submission to the Federal Government also refers to the Roads to Recovery Program. It specifically identifies that the current Roads to Recovery funding falls well short (approximately 40 – 50%) of the financial commitment required to bring Australia's road network up to an acceptable standard. The submission also outlines that the Program requires a greatly enhanced time frame to ensure long-term road funding similar to that of the Salinity (seven years) and Defence (ten years) commitments.

These arguments were earlier articulated by the Association in its submission to the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services on the "Guidelines and Conditions" of the Roads to Recovery Program.

Still on the National front, in March 2001, the Association participated in the Mildura National Roads Congress. The outcomes from Mildura, and the earlier Moree Committee, indicate that Local Governments are committed to prove the case for long term on-going adequate funding for local roads based on infrastructure management principles.

The ALGA is also supportive of these initiatives, and through the National Campaign has sought “Federal Government Financial support (estimated at $2M over 3 years) for, and participation in the creation/assembly of comprehensive and integrated data on the condition of the nation’s road network. This will enable informed decisions to be made on a required level of national road funding and prioritisation of construction and maintenance works”.

**Road Network Strategy**

Whilst the past 18 months has seen a number of actions at the national level to investigate a process to help address the current roads infrastructure problem in Queensland, the Main Roads Department and the Association have been investigating the formation of a potential strategic roads Alliance.

Over the past year, LGAQ and the Main Roads Department have raised concerns for the existing and future condition of Queensland’s road network. These concerns have highlighted the mutual benefit to further investigate and seek opportunities for resource sharing and improvement to the effective and efficient management of the total road network.

Further discussion on a potential alliance was prompted at the Roads and Transport Forum in May 2001. With support from the Deputy Prime Minister, submissions regarding the hypothesised Alliance and considerations for funding alternatives were progressed. Consequently, the LGAQ has been working collaboratively with the Department of Main Roads to initiate investigations into the possible alliance.
The outcomes, principles and elements underpinning the proposed alliance investigations were outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed in July 2001. This document signifies the commitment of the Association, on behalf of its member Councils, and Main Roads to commence investigations into a Road Management and Investment Alliance. Importantly, the MOU is not an Alliance, only an agreement as to what issues should be considered in the possible forming of an alliance.

To progress the investigations, a working group was established with joint representation from LGAQ and Main Roads. Two road reference groups provide ongoing support to the working group. One reference group comprises of Main Roads representatives, whilst the other is a Local Government representation consisting of elected members, council senior management and nominated representatives across the state. These Local Government delegates including Cr Paul Bell (Chair) of Emerald Shire Council and Senior Vice President, LGAQ; Cr Bill McCutcheon, Mayor of Chinchilla Shire Council; Cr Roger Nunn, Mayor of Kingaroy Shire Council; Mr Bob Fredman of Cooloola Shire Council; Mr Ray Hicks of GJ Brandon & Associates; Mr Kev Kerr of George Bourne & Associates; Mr David Stewart of Brisbane City Council; Mr Peter Taylor, CEO of Toowoomba City Council; Mr Peter Way of Logan City Council; and Mr Dawson Wilke of Townsville City Council; continue to provide invaluable practical input into the investigations.

In early August 2001 the Association issued a road asset management survey seeking information in relation to Councils current road asset management capabilities and road investment planning practices. This information has been collated and will greatly assist future investigations to establish the minimum information, mechanisms and resources required within Councils to manage the road network.

Recognising that other Australian states face similar issues, the Association and Main Roads have sponsored a Western Australia study tour. In August, the study group gained valuable exposure to current and well established road partnerships and asset management practices of relevance to the proposed Queensland Alliance.

LGAQ will continue to maintain an active role in the alliance investigations in the coming year and will ensure that the issues for Councils in managing our Queensland road and transport network are identified and addressed.

More importantly, the Association will not agree to proceed with the alliance unless the concept and its implications are fully identified as part of these investigations and the outcomes for an Alliance are agreed as advantageous to State and Local Governments.

**Damage to Roads Policy**

Another important issue associated with the management of Queensland’s road network is industry related damage to roads. Councils are well aware that during the past few years, Main Roads have been working collaboratively with the Association in developing a "Damage to Roads" Policy. This policy provides a framework for improved and more equitable legislative
and administrative processes that will enhance the capabilities of Local Government and Main Roads to deal with damage to roads issues from specific industry activities.

In the early drafting stages of the policy paper one of the major deficiencies identified by Councils was that improved arrangements were required to deal with adverse impacts on roads from specific types of industry activities (e.g. minerals, petroleum and forestry industries).

In response to these issues, the Department of Main Roads in consultation with the Association has revised the Damage to Roads Policy to better address the impact of forest harvesting activities on roads (especially local government roads). The policy includes a commitment that arrangements would be introduced to subject forest-harvesting activities to road impact assessment and developer contribution processes comparable to those applying to other industries under the Integrated Planning Act (IPA). Whilst this work is still in its infancy, it is proposed that any arrangements will be formalized through the Department of Primary Industry and Rural Affairs entering into a MOU between LGAQ and Main Roads.

In regards to petroleum industry activities, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines has released a draft Petroleum and Gas Bill that includes provisions to deal with the road impacts of certain petroleum activities. Under this Bill, road authorities will now be regarded as landholders and hence secure new rights to have their concerns considered in the granting of licenses with accompanying rights to compensation for any adverse impacts on their land, i.e. Roads.

The LGAQ will continue to work closely with Main Roads to progress these issues on behalf of member Councils.

**National Competition Implementation Grant**

Under the Local Government Act 1993, the largest 18 local governments in Queensland were required to consider some form of NCP reform for their significant business activities. The remaining 107 local governments were encouraged to consider the reforms on the basis of good management.

The Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) assesses reform progress and recommends payments to local government from the $150 million Local Government NCP Financial Incentive Package (FIP) implementation pool.

A significant number of local governments are missing out on their bonus payment entitlements. On current trends, Queensland councils may not access $50 – 70 million of the FIP payments.

Consequently, the Association has created the BMAP program, designed to assist local government to progress the implementation of NCP reforms and other business and financial management reforms. The aim is to improve the capacity of councils and enhance their effectiveness in providing services to their community through an improved understanding of financial management tools and information.
With an extension of the timetable for the Financial Incentives Package from the 30th June 2002 to 30th June 2003, the Association has been successful in securing up to $600,000 from the FIP Implementation pool to fund BMAP to provide a regional support strategy for local councils.

All local councils will be invited to participate in Council briefings, attend regional technical workshops, receive guidelines and checklist material, and access technical assistance by telephone and e-mail from regional consultants/mentors. It is, however, anticipated that the real benefit of this program will be to the medium and smaller councils as the larger councils are generally well advanced and better resourced to complete any reforms.

**Water Reform**

With the introduction of the new *Water Act 2000*, the Association has directed considerable efforts toward issues of implementation of the requirements of the Act. The Act provides for water use planning, management and allocation; a regulatory framework for water asset management, customer service standards and dam safety; and governance of water supply statutory authorities of the State Government.

With local government concerns on the directions of implementation in mind, expert local government consultant Alan Morton has been commissioned to examine the likely impacts on councils of new water allocation processes arising from the Act. His review will also look at how councils and ratepayers may be affected as a result of pricing policies accompanying the corporatisation of State Water Projects. The Association has engaged Alan to examine council concerns on the potential for substantial increases in bulk water charges associated with new contracts.

The review will be of particular interest to the 30 or more Queensland councils that source all or part of their bulk water supplies from SunWater, formerly known as State Water Projects. Case studies will be used to illustrate the likely effects of current policies upon councils and ratepayers. The final report will provide background on issues and concerns raised by councils as well as providing a basis for the Association to develop responses to government on behalf of members.

As regards the Act’s provision for regulation of service provision (asset management plans, customer service standards etc), and subject to the State Government finalising implementation guidelines, the Association will this financial year commence a series of Council seminars to promote understanding of, and provide advice on, implementing these particular requirements.

**Financial Reporting Reforms**

Councils and the LGAQ have continually raised the issue of the appropriate framework for financial reporting for Local Government entities in Queensland. As Local Governments
continue to implement competition reforms and their businesses begin to operate in a more competitive environment it is essential that Councillors (as the Board of Management) and community members (as the shareholders) be presented with information that is both useful and informative. Effective management and resource allocation decision-making can only be achieved if relevant and reliable information is presented in a timely manner.

In addition to AAS27 requirements, Queensland Local Governments prepare extra financial statements that many believe are onerous and of little value. Similarly, little attention is given to the preparation of appropriate/complimentary financial management reporting. This does not mean that Councils are not focused on prudent financial management. The problem appears to be that there is no mechanism that allows this information to be prepared independently of public sector general-purpose financial statements.

The need to comply with public sector accounting standards and provide Councillors and the Community with useful and understandable financial management information is an ongoing challenge.

The Association has taken up this challenge through a Simplified Financial Management Project funded by the Local Government Incentive Program. This project proposes to reduce the external reporting environment and seeks to improve the internal financial management systems of Council.

To this end the Association has negotiated, with the Department of Local Government and Planning, a reduction in external reporting requirements from 7 statements to 4. The Association has also secured a consultation period of 12 months with regard to additional information requirements. This change will allow Local Governments to be on a level footing with other industries and indeed Local Governments in other states.

To address internal reporting requirements, the Association has committed to consulting with identified users of financial information, an initiative that has previously not been undertaken.

Elected members, Chief Executive Officers and Senior Managers, Regulators, Accountants, and Accounting Systems Providers have been identified as key stakeholders for this consultation.

In pursuing this issue the Association has been overwhelmed by the expression of interest and show of support member Councils have given to this project.
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH POLICY

Natural Resource Management

Natural Heritage Trust

One of the principal roles of the LGAQ Bushcare & NRM Project was to enhance the capacity of Local Governments to develop eligible, technically sound and feasible applications for the NHT program. A review of the progress for the 2000/2001 funding period identified that this project assisted Councils to successfully secure funding as sponsors for 64 NHT projects, and participants as partners in more than 80 other NHT projects. The 2000/2001 year has seen the highest level of participation with over 70 Local Governments contributing to NHT projects throughout Queensland. The training provided by the Association through the series of 12 regional workshops across Queensland during the period August to October 2000 produced a high level of participation.

Best Practice NRM Publication

As part of the work undertaken by the Association's Bushcare and Natural Resource Management Project and Local Government Farm Forestry Project in 2000/2001, an 81 page document outlining 32 case studies of Local Government natural resource management projects was produced. Over 500 copies of the report titled "Natural Resource Management in Queensland Local Government" have been distributed to Local, State, and Commonwealth Governments, landcare and community groups, universities, and industry stakeholders. The publication demonstrates the leadership role that Local Government has provided through good practice natural resource management across Queensland. The benefits of participation by Local Governments include:

- access to external funding to initiate sound on-ground natural resource management projects;
- increased wider community involvement; and
- improved nature conservation with each Local Government area.

The projects profiled within the report evolve around the themes of Bushcare, Coast and Clean Seas, Endangered Species, Forestry, Murray Darling 2001, National Landcare program and Rivercare. One of the case studies included within the report, characterises the success of the Queensland Land for Wildlife program. The Association believes many of the projects are portable at the local and regional level.

LGAQ NRM Project

Since early 2001 LGAQ has been working closely with the State Government Department of Natural Resources & Mines (DNR&M) to ensure Local Government's interest are considered as part of the development of the State plan for the National Action Plan for Salinity & Water Quality (NAPSWQ). In early 2001 a paper was developed which detailed how the Regional
Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) process included in the Integrated Planning Act 1997 (IPA) can provide the necessary coordination and integration of both natural resource management and IPA requirements.

To further enhance Local Government’s position in relation to the framework model, as well as representation on the DNR&M NAPSWQ Reference Group and discussions concerning the provision of future sustainable natural resource management, LGAQ convened a one-day workshop in early August. The purpose of the workshop was to obtain comments from a representative group of Mayors/Councillors/CEOs/Officers from the four target regions on the proposed framework model and current work being progressed by DNR&M. The Association anticipates that the State Government will release a State discussion paper regarding future proposed institutional arrangements for NRM and, as such, the work progressed by LGAQ will ensure the interests of Local Government have been explored extensively prior to a consolidated position being advocated to the State Government.

Waste Management

Regional Waste Management Planning Funding Scheme

Since 1998 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has provided funding to Local Government to facilitate the advancement of regional waste management planning strategies. The total funding provision was $800,000 with last year’s allocation of $300,000 completing the program. The funding scheme has seen over 100 Local Governments commence various projects to advance regional waste management planning.

The Association has been actively promoting Local Government waste planning on a regional basis. It is imperative that this approach is embraced to encourage the development of sustainable waste and secondary resource industries throughout regional Queensland. As the provision of funding to regions is now complete, an active program of support for Local Governments will commence to ensure that the objectives of the program are met.

LRAP

The Landfill Rehabilitation Assessment Program (LRAP) is a $7.5 million program which can provide up to 50 percent subsidy to Local Governments to investigate closed landfill sites which may pose an environmental threat. Specifically the objectives of the program are to facilitate, through financial support and guidance, an assessment by Local Government of their former waste landfills to determine:

a) the level of environmental damage/risks,
b) rehabilitation work required (if any); and

c) the cost of necessary rehabilitation work.
The Association has successfully lobbied the Department of Local Government and Planning to extend the program to include all closed landfills rather than only those closed prior to 1 July 1998.

Funding for 74 sites across 30 Councils was provided in the third round of funding that has recently been completed. The Association will continue to encourage Councils to apply for funding as part of round four.

**Resource Exchange Register (RXR)**

Launched in May 2000, the Queensland Resource Exchange Register (RXR) web site has achieved all initial LGAQ aims and objectives. The Association is now entering a new phase in the RXR life cycle and will now work closely with all Councils to achieve direct and indirect diversion from landfill. On the basis that the State Government will deliver programs as per the Waste Management Strategy 1996, then the RXR will flourish even further with waste generators actively seeking out opportunities to reduce waste disposal fees. It is now time for Local Government to actively list the "waste" being sent to their landfills on the RXR. A number of opportunities can be explored once this "map of resources" is established.

The RXR achievements to date include:

- approximately 400 hits per month or 20 per working day;
- estimated 500 match notifications;
- 20+ exchanges registered (i.e. voluntary reporting, more assumed but not reported) with 127 tonne estimated initial diversion from landfill;
- significant regular diversions occur through long-term exchange partnerships via the likes of commercial recyclers, reprocesses, waste to energy facilities etc.;
- ARNnetwork reported exchanges higher in Queensland, than other states;
- interstate and international interest in Queensland "waste" resources (with some known exchanges);
- community benefit through not for profit organisations;
- significant media exposure (TV, radio and print).

The RXR has also grown to offer users access to a host of other resources including Case Studies, Directory of Recyclers, recycled content suppliers, links resources and guides and more.

The Association has and will continue to encourage Councils to actively promote the RXR to business, industry and the general community as it represents a proactive approach to diverting waste from landfill. This in turn promotes ecological sustainability, reduces Councils risk and maximises resource value, not to mention the opportunity to develop new secondary resource industries in each Council region.
Public Health

Mosquito Management

The issue of funding of mosquito management on unallocated state land has been raised by several Local Governments and the LGAQ over recent years. In spite of several submissions, until this time the issue had not been satisfactorily resolved with the State Government. In order to examine this and other related issues a Working Group was established by the Department of Premier and Cabinet to develop a protocol.

Following receipt of comments from all Councils on a draft Protocol in early 2001, State Cabinet endorsed the protocol in mid July. The Working Group identified a number of key areas for which action plans have been developed as part of the Protocol including the identification of priority management areas; development of appropriate management programs; undertaking a legislative review; the establishment of practices to improve communication between all State Government agencies involved in mosquito management and Councils when undertaking control programs locally; and, the development of an appropriate funding mechanism to support the identification and management of high priority areas for mosquito management. During 2001/2002 the Association will work with Councils and other key State Government agencies to implement the Protocol.

Forestry

The LGAQ Local Government Farm Forestry Project has been progressing the development of private forestry within Queensland on a number of fronts over the past 12 months. Of particular note, the major activity for the project has been the development of a draft Private Forestry Model Planning Framework (PFMPF). The PFMPF provides a consistent planning framework for private forestry which helps avoid duplication of effort between Local and State Governments, and comprehensively addresses impediments associated with complex regulation systems, conflicting conditions, or other disincentives for potential private forest growers.

This is achieved within a framework which recognises that there is a need to adequately provide for variations in local environmental, social, or economic conditions faced by individual Local Governments. The PFMPF builds on the socio-economic experiences of other State and National bodies, incorporates National and State ecological sustainability principles in all planning requirements, and is designed to be seamlessly integrated with the Queensland Forest Practices System (QFPS).

In December 2000, a broad outline of the proposed PFMPF was developed and distributed to the Local Government Private Forestry Advisory Committee (LGPFAC) and QFPS Steering Committee for their information. General agreement was reached on the scope of the PFMPF.
After another six months of information collecting and drafting, the draft PFMPF was released to the LGPFAC for their review. Following their endorsement, the draft was also presented to consultant planners and Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Officers, who also were generally supportive of the document. The draft PFMPF was then released to all Local Governments across Queensland in early July.

The draft PFMPF is now undergoing final drafting, and is expected to be released by October 2001 in a structure that is directly compatible with IPA planning schemes.

**PLANNING AND SOCIAL POLICY**

**Telecommunications Funding**

The LGAQ has extended its previous Networking the Nation Program successes by obtaining an additional $6.4 million. The LGAQ has now received a total commitment of $7.4 million from the NTN Program for Queensland Local Government – and leads all others State and Territory Associations in terms of the quantum of funds received.

This is a major achievement for the LGAQ, and it will have significant implications for all of Queensland’s regional, rural and remote Councils.

When completed in around 2 years time, the Networking the Nation Project will have delivered an online services environment for the majority of regional, rural and remote Councils in Queensland that will offer highly interactive websites giving access to a broad cross-section of Council and community information, the ability to conduct a wide range of financial applications online, and the ability to access geographic information system databases online.

Additionally, the project will enable Councils to conduct e-procurement, provide improved access to LGAQNet and pilot a videoconferencing project. It will also improve the general availability of State and Local Government databases online, provide a number of Councils with upgraded information technology and telecommunications infrastructure, and initiate a project with the Island and Aboriginal Community Councils to determine their online service needs.

It will also enhance library internet access and provide a number of libraries with specialised equipment and software to enhance access to individuals living outside the major Queensland population centres with certain sight, learning and physical disabilities.
Building Certification Review Initiated

Given the passage of nearly three years of operation of Building Certification in Queensland and given the continued concerns expressed by many Councils, the Executive determined it timely to undertake a review of the impacts of the system on Councils and local communities.

The aim of the Review was to produce a range of recommendations to improve the effectiveness of building certification and to develop a report for submission to the State Government for consideration and implementation.

To give the outcomes of the Review credibility and therefore greater likelihood of adoption by the Government, support for the Review was sought from other key stakeholders in the system, namely the State Government (Building Codes Queensland), and the Queensland Building Services Authority (QBSA).

Interest in the Review by Local Government and industry alike was very high with submissions received from a broad cross-section of Councils and peak industry bodies. Regional hearings were undertaken in Brisbane, Barcaldine and Mackay. At the time of writing the review report was still being finalised.

Planning and Development Issues

The Association has continued its representations on behalf of Local Government with the roll-on of the reforms relating to Queensland’s planning and development regulation system.

Of principle concern has been the IPA Operational Review, which at the time of writing, was finally about to be released for consultation. The Association has undertaken a good deal of effort in encouraging the Government to finalise the Review and to address to priority concerns of Councils.

In addition, reforms over the last year which the Association has been advocating on behalf of Local Government include: the consequential amendments to the Integrated Development Assessment System to include the Water Act and Coastal issues; amendments to the Infrastructure Charges Provisions of the IPA; the development of the State Coastal Plan; the review of the Temporary State Planning Policy for Acid Sulfate Soils; the regulation of telecommunications facilities; Building Fires Safety issues following the Childers backpackers fire, the clarification of State Interests in the planning system, the need to address spiralling Planning and Environment court costs and the initiation of a review of the Planning Protocol between the State and the LGAQ.
Prostitution

A big issue for the past year has been the clarification of roles and responsibilities for Local Government with regard to processing brothel applications. To this end the Association has been represented on the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA), the formal body that officially approves brothel licences. This group has recently developed an Interim Code of Practice to identify Licensee roles and responsibilities across a range of issues including work cover, employment conditions, health and safety, compliance with local laws and so on.

The LGAQ continued to voice concerns over the environmental health management aspects of running brothels. A Health Advisory Group was formed to progress these concerns and alternate models were made available for considered by the Prostitution Advisory Committee, a body that was primarily concerned with the social issues around prostitution. Discussions will continue into the later part of the year to progress the above concerns and in particular to seek clarification on the role of local government with regard to the ongoing management of these facilities.

Social Policy Support

The LGAQ continued to work across a large number of social policy agendas to represent the interests of Local Government. Youth issues continue to be high on the agenda as the Young People and Public Spaces Project gains momentum. In December last year the Association launched the Creating Safe Spaces package. The Queensland Police Service and the State Government partnered with the Association to fine tune this crime prevention and community safety initiative. This project also saw the production of a Skate Facilities Manual in conjunction with Brisbane City Council to guide Councils in the development and management of these facilities. A Forum to bring together youth officers is planned for November in Caloundra.

Native Title

The Association has continued its support of Councils in dealing with native title issues. As well as answering numerous calls from Councils and visiting Councils around the State, the Native Title Work Procedures Manual was developed to give Councils a practical guide to working with native title.
The 2000 Community Development and Planning Conference held in Mackay was again a great success.

A broad range of activities has been undertaken in Queensland Councils to promote inclusive and harmonious communities. The Local Area Multicultural Program (LAMP), a partnership between Local Government and Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, has been at the forefront of many of those initiatives. These activities have included recognition ceremonies for Australian South Sea Islanders, Centenary of Federation celebrations, innovative participative programs for youth and aged groups.

The past year has also seen the updating and re-signing of the LGAQ/Department of Families protocol and the finalisation of the IPA Community Wellbeing Guidelines.

**Libraries**

The LGAQ continues to make strong representation to the State Government in a bid to address the inadequate funding levels for libraries. A report into state funding for libraries showed that while Queensland Councils' have doubled library funding in per capita real terms, State Government funding had declined by 10 per cent per library member over the same period. The Association has recommended that a 40 per cent increase or $7 million extra in state library funding is necessary to bring Queensland up to the national average. In the later part of the year Councils will be encouraged to make direct representation to the State Government to raise awareness of the negative impact this lack of funding will have on progressing Smart State initiatives.
MEMBER AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

The Member and Corporate Support Branch is charged with the responsibility of providing internal corporate services management and support as well as delivering value adding services to Member Councils.

INTERNAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Financial Management

The key plank of the Association’s financial strategy has been to ensure that maximum resources are directed towards progressing the interests of Member Councils. To do this, the Association has strived to minimize Member subscriptions by augmenting revenues with value adding, user pay, services to members. As well, the Association conducts a range of commercial activities.

The financial position of the Association is reported upon elsewhere in this annual report.

Communication

Effective communication strategies are vital if the LGAQ is to provide strong representation and best possible service to and on behalf of its membership. To this end, the LGAQ harnesses all forms of communication media, namely voice, print and electronic.

The LGAQ continued to monitor Queensland newspapers, television, and radio coverage of Local Government issues and examines all reports and interviews so as to ensure that any bias or non reporting in specific regions are addressed with the respective media outlets. A synopsis of all newspaper, television and radio reports are distributed early each morning to all Councils through LGAQNet.

Visitations to individual Councils. District Association meetings and other forums are regularly conducted by the President, Office Bearer and staff. This activity is aimed at ensuring communications are two-way.

www.lgaq.asn.au is the URL for the Association’s website. This site is designed to inform the wider community of the issues confronting Queensland Councils and of course the achievements of Local Government. The LGAQ website averages some 3,000 hits per month and the most distant hit last year was from Russia.

LGAQNet/Communications

The primary information dissemination medium for LGAQ is LGAQNet. During the last twelve months, more than two thousand passwords have been issued, enabling elected members and councils officers to access LGAQ information through the internet. Further development will be
programmed over the next months to ensure more and more information is available through convergence technologies. The LGAQ ultimate aim is to have Councillors and Council office with the ability to tap into the LGAQ knowledge management system (Karma) which will be a key to providing membership with enhanced levels of democratisation. Information sharing is all about empowering members.

**LGM Queensland**

Worldwide liability insurance costs continued to significantly increase during 2000/2001. This situation was exacerbated by the collapse of a major Australian liability insurer, HIH, and overseas based insurers. Whilst LGM Queensland cannot avoid many of the cost pressures affecting liability insurers it continued to offer member Councils with a more orderly and predictable cost environment. The cost of claims against members between 1994 and 1998 is still impacting on LGM’s balance sheet position. Since 1998, participation in the national Local Government liability insurance program has produced considerable benefits for members and played a major role in LGM’s cost management strategy.

The recent High Court decision on the nonfeasance principle will require Councils to pay even greater attention to inspection and maintenance programs for roads and footpaths. The LGM Liability Management Service already has in place roads and footpath maintenance manuals that will provide direct assistance to member Councils in developing or reviewing relevant programs.

**Local Government Workcare**

2000/2001 was Local Government Workcare’s third year of operation. A major focus during the year was implementation of the SAFE PLAN workplace health and safety improvement program in all LGW member Councils. The self-insurance scheme’s fully integrated injury prevention and injury management programs pursue savings for members by minimising statewide workers compensation claim costs.

During 2000/2001 LGW member assets, represented by the scheme’s net asset position, continued to show strong growth. A fundamental feature of Local Government Workcare is the capacity for any excess of contributions over claim costs to develop member assets and be used solely for the benefit of participating Councils. It has been particularly beneficial for members that the strong asset position has been achieved in conjunction with maintenance of highly competitive scheme contribution rates.

**Contracts and Purchasing Services**

The Contracts and Purchasing Services program (CAPS) is aimed at providing Councils with fully tendered or quotation arrangements in order to drive down procurement costs. CAPS has been very successful in this regard and as foreshadowed in the last annual report, it is now time to make a more strategic use of technology in driving down the processing costs associated with
Council procurement. To this end, the LGAQ is transforming the CAPS program into a fully commercialised collaborative electronic procurement business which will be available for use by all Queensland Councils.

This business will be named “Local Buy” and have as key components the ability for Councils to use local suppliers, become involved in electronic tendering, have e-procurement systems fully integrated with their financial systems and have their payments made through electronic funds transfer through an arrangement with the Queensland Treasury Corporation.

The Management fees collected by the LGAQ from its CAPS program augment Member Council subscriptions to enable a greater effort in the areas of Association core business.

**Finances**

Appendix _____ contains the Association’s consolidated and audited financial statements for the year ending 31 May 2001.

The final position reveals an operating profit of $16K above revised budget. This result includes an unbudgeted expenditure of $108K, which was incurred as a result of a change in accounting policy for the QTC loan from market value to book value.

The balance sheet shows an increase in net assets of $1M since 31 May 2000. This is attributable to the increase in general reserves of $.3M over the past year and an increase of special project reserves of $.7M. The Association currently holds $1.8M in special project reserves.

The increase in general reserves has been achieved as a result of the successful implementation of the financial strategy set by the Executive. With the increase in general reserves of $330,000 in 2000/2001, this strategy has been accelerated from a 5 year plan to a 2 year plan with a further $170,000 increase in general reserves budgeted in the upcoming financial year.

**ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES BRANCH**

The Organisational Development Services (ODS) Branch undertook an extensive analysis of its responsibilities and activities during the year. This resulted in a new Branch structure which reflects our commitment to industrial relations strategy, advice and services, and continues to build on the training and development platform that offers Local Government focused
opportunities to our members. The dichotomy of member service verses fee-for-service continues within the new paradigm, which makes it imperative that industry-wide strategies and services continue to be developed in order to offer all our membership opportunities for engagement with the Branch.

The ODS Branch continues to compete with external providers of industrial relations, human resource management and training and development consultancies. The advantages offered to Councils through LGAQ’s intricate knowledge of their operations and structures often ensures success in obtaining the work when it goes to a commercial tender.

In order to compete with external providers, the Branch invested in resources over the last year. The Training and Development Unit completed a review of its record management, with new systems for course administration, video retrieval, student records and consultant records. Information gathered from revamped Evaluation Forms used at the completion of each training session will be collated into a report back to the Council, in order that the purchaser of our services can evaluate the overall effectiveness of the program.

The successful Council Reference Groups continued to meet, notably the Human Resources Consultative Group, which is now in its 22nd year. The reconstituted Training Consultative Group also continued to give advice and support. Councils allow staff time to attend these important meetings, which impact and shape future policy directions.

The Industrial Relations Advice Line continued to be one of the most used services of the Branch. It is provided for the benefit of all Councils and is extremely popular with numerous calls received daily, seeking help or advice on awards, legislation, enterprise agreements, and employment issues.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Executive Director and the Director, Organisational Development Services met through the year with the State Secretaries of both major Local Government unions, namely the Australian Workers Union and the Australian Services Union. The opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest, and to keep open and constructive dialogues between the LGAQ and the unions was appreciated by both parties.

Enterprise Bargaining

Enterprise Bargaining remains a feature of the industrial landscape of Local Government. Many Councils are now on their third or fourth agreement, with some reporting bargaining commencements for their fifth agreement. Bargaining continues to provide Councils opportunities to pursue maximum flexibility and enterprise specific benefits. However, a number
of Councils during the year reported extreme difficulties and frustrations with enterprise bargaining. A close examination of the reasons reveals the following:

- Many Councils believe they have run out of things over which to genuinely bargain.
- Many Councils believe that their unions are no longer interested in genuinely bargaining, but see the exercise only as an opportunity for a pay increase.
- Some Councils have moved significantly away from the award rates of pay, with three Councils now paying in excess of 23% above the award. Ironically, while this is the very outcome that enterprise bargaining sought (ie customised arrangements that suit the individual workplace), in this industry it has the potential to be divisive.
- Some union organisers have sought to highjack the process, and not allow Councils their legislated right to bargain directly with their workforce where the employees choose to do so.

**Employment**

The Industrial Relations Unit completed a survey of employment trends in the Local Government Industry. The survey revealed that Councils, at the end of June 2001, employed 33,363 persons with 52.8% employed under Queensland State Awards and the remaining 47.2% employed under Federal Awards.

**Contracts for Chief Executive Officers**

The Association’s application to vary the *Queensland Local Government Officers’ Award 1998* to allow for the employment of Chief Executive Officers outside the confines of the Award was granted by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. The only stipulation applied was there must be genuine agreement between the CEO and the Council, and while signing a contract can be a condition of employment for new CEO’s, existing CEOs cannot be forced to move from the Award.

**Industrial Commission**

The trend, particularly in the State Commission, for unions to pursue industrial change on a State and industry wide basis continued as evidenced by the following matters:

**State Wage Case**

The Queensland Council of Unions’ (QCU) and Australian Workers Union’s (AWU) applications for Award Safety Net Adjustments sought to flow on the Australian Industrial Relations Commission’s (AIRC) National Wage Case decision of $13 increase in award rates up to $490, $15 increase in
award rates of $490 to $590, and $17 increase in award rates above $590, and adjustment in allowances of 3.1%.

The applications were granted on 1 August 2001 to take effect from 1 September 2001.

Long Service Leave State Award Employees

The amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 for conditions applying in respect of long service leave operated from 3 June 2001.

The main features of the amended legislation are:

- Initial entitlement for the granting of leave to be after 10 years service (8.6667 weeks) in lieu of current 15 years
- Further entitlement to leave after an additional 5 years service
- Proportionate payment on termination after 7 years service in identified situations
- Cashing in of leave where an industrial instrument provides for that arrangement and there is signed agreement between the employer and employee; or by order of the Commission where compassionate grounds or financial hardship is established.

Unpaid Parental Leave - Regular Casual Employees

A Full Bench of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission issued a Decision to establish a Test Case Standard for the granting of unpaid Parental Leave to regular casuals. The new Test Case Standard will be combined with an earlier Parental Leave Test Case Standard.

Loading for Casual Employees

A Full Bench of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission brought down its Decision on applications to increase the casual loading under State Awards. The Decision results in the loading being increased from 19% to 23% on a phasing in approach. The applications by the Queensland Council of Unions and the Australian Workers Union sought to increase the loading from 19% to 28.5%.

Union Encouragement Provisions

Following the release of a Statement of Policy and a draft Union Encouragement Clause by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, State Awards applying to Queensland Local Government were varied in accordance with the Commission’s Policy. During the year, the LGAQ suggested that Councils discuss this matter in order to have a defendable position, should
the unions seek to have this clause inserted into the Enterprise Agreement. The LGAQ supports of the rights of all workers to join, or not to join, a union.

**HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Human Resources Conference**

The two day Human Resources Conference was held in Brisbane on 29 and 30 March 2001. It is a key event in the Association’s professional development calendar and was well patronised with 100 delegates, observers and sponsors attending on each of the two days. The number of trade exhibitors increased from the previous year, with many businesses taking the opportunity to meet with Council representatives.

Feedback from the delegates was very positive and will encourage the Branch to conduct a similar function during 2002.

**Industrial Relations Forums**

Renamed from the old Human Resource Forums, the Director, Manager Industrial Relations and Human Resources and the Industrial Advocate visited 12 regional centres to advise Councillors and staff of the latest developments across a broad range of industrial relations and human resource management issues, including enterprise bargaining and recent State and Federal cases, plus an examination of the possible future industrial relations environment.

**Human Resource Consultancy Services**

Individual Councils, over the past 12 months have sought the advice and expertise of the ODS Branch staff in the following areas:

- organisational reviews
- salary reviews
- position reclassifications
- executive recruitment and selection
- as well as assistance with disciplinary and dismissal matters. In particular the executive recruitment and selection service has grown significantly, with Councils using the Association to recruit for Chief Executive Officer, Director and Senior Management positions.

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Councillor Update 2001**

In April/May 2001, Directors and LGAQ staff conducted 24 x 1 day update workshops throughout Queensland to provide Councils and senior staff with important information on
current and emerging agendas affecting Local Government. The Updates were also provided in-house for those Councils specifically requesting such a service.

Over 370 people attended, and LGAQ is proud to have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many of our elected members and managers.

Roads and Transport Forum 2001

The Annual Road Forum again provided an excellent opportunity for the many parties associated with road and transport issues and Local Government delegates to hear from and question the federal and state government representatives as well as private industry. The extensive range of trade displays showcased the latest products, techniques and innovations and added to the overall excitement of the Forum.

Foreman’s Forums

The third round of Foreman’s Forums was conducted around Queensland in April/May 2001 to assist road construction and maintenance supervisory staff further develop their technical and supervisory knowledge and skills. The 2001 program focused on skills development in dealing with difficult people and handling difficult situations and road maintenance practices.

Specialist Training Programs

In conjunction with experts in specific fields, LGAQ presented a wide variety of specialist training programs which catered for staff in diverse areas within Council. Each of these programs was highly successful and will be offered again in the 2001-2002 year:

- Animal Management
- Investigation Skills
- Accidents and Incidents Investigation
- Contract Law: a practical perspective
- Community Consultation (three levels of workshops offered depending on requirements)
- Managing the Media; Advanced Media Skills
- Understanding Local Government in Queensland
- Professional Development for Elected Members

Staff Training Programs

In the year past, the LGAQ offered an array of training courses for Council managers and staff designed to challenge thinking and develop skills in relation to the following:-
EMployment Project

Breaking The Unemployment Cycle (BTUC)

The LGAQ was pleased to contract with the Department of Employment and Training to deliver the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Traineeships program to Councils for the year 2001 – 2002. The project is designed to facilitate the allocation and management of traineeships within Local Government. Councils placed their bids for places with the LGAQ’s Employment Officer, and 1,100 traineeships were offered across a range of qualifications. The value of these traineeships to Local Government is $17.6M.

The 1,100 places comprise 800 under the existing Public Sector Employment Initiative and 300 under the Youth for the Environment and Local Communities Program.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Unit

ATSIEU Project

The ATSIE Unit is on target to meet its contractual employment responsibilities within the next three months. The Unit was successful in gaining 25 additional traineeship positions from the State Government’s Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative for 2001/2002.

All Queensland Councils were supplied with a set of New Apprenticeship Information manuals that cover the range of choices specific to Local Government. This information is also available at www.atsieu.lgaq.asn.au.
Although 30 September 2001 is the last date for Councils to access the $6,000 incentive for Indigenous trade apprenticeships or permanent placements, traineeship grants will continue to be offered after that time through the LGAQ.

**Summary**

The past year has been one of continued success on many fronts for the Association. The Member Attitude Survey results confirmed the continued good work of the LGAQ on behalf of its Member Councils.

Importantly the last twelve months has seen much strategic review, and future investment undertaken to guarantee further success in the years ahead.