01. Assist

1.1 Assist Introduction 7
1.2 Member Services 9
1.3 Ambassadors 10
1.4 On-Call Support Services 11
1.5 Member Services Center 13
1.6 Other Assist Highlights 14
1.7 Better Councils, Better Communities 15
1.8 Media & Communications 16
1.9 Media & Communications Forum 2014 19
1.10 Council Leader Turns 100 19
1.11 Faces In Places 20
1.12 Innovation 21

02. Advocate

2.1 Advocate Introduction 27
2.2 Strategic Policy & Intergovernmental Relations 28
2.3 Planning Development & Natural Environment 29
2.4 Infrastructure, Economics & Regional Development 33
2.5 Workforce 40
2.6 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Councils Representation & Support 42

03. Advance

3.1 Advance 47
3.2 Introduction 47
3.3 Total Solutions 49
3.4 Disaster Management 51
3.5 Business Partners 53
The Local Government Association of Queensland has one overriding goal - to serve you, our members.

We can be proud of our performance in 2014-15, a financial year during which we excelled in our stated mission to Connect, Innovate, Achieve. We engaged our stakeholders, helped secure an additional $700 million in funding for local government, expanded our services and fought hard for policy wins.

These successes have been carefully orchestrated and implemented and are testament to the tireless efforts of the LGAQ’s Board, Policy Executive, staff, subsidiaries and, of course, Queensland’s dedicated councils.

Local government won its long battle to convince the Federal Government of the value of using council workers, rather than contractors, to recover and rebuild communities in the wake of natural disasters.

Relentless lobbying in Canberra led to additional road, bridges and drought relief funds for Queensland councils.

Our new self-insurance scheme, LGM Assets, commenced on June 30, providing cover for council assets including motor vehicle, machinery, marine and personal accident.

The Better Council, Better Communities project also began this year, enabling individual councils to assess their performance in relation to their counterparts and to pursue productivity improvements to build financial sustainability.

We have kept our overall membership subscriptions at 2.5 per cent. This increase has been more than offset by the sustained performance of, and strong membership commitment to, the two local government self-insurance schemes, LGM Queensland and Local Government Workcare, which are returning a total of $4 million in surplus funds to scheme members.

Propel Partnerships, a shared services firm owned by the LGAQ and Aegis Australia, struck two major strategic partnership deals. Propel will work with Mackay Regional Council to deliver Northern Australia Services, an initiative that helps councils realise efficiencies in their operations while remaining in touch with the needs of their communities. The firm has also entered into a 10-year arrangement with Liverpool City Council in New South Wales to deliver a major programme of business transformation across many of the council’s front and back offices.

Just recently, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission confirmed its support for a single modern local government award, marking a significant win for those of us who have fought for an industry approach to award coverage in local government.

The LGAQ has been advising, supporting and representing local councils since 1896, supporting their drive to innovate and improve delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions, delivering to them the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence and connecting councils to people and places that count.

The employees of our three streams – Assist, Advocate and Advance - have collectively received more than 4000 calls each month, travelled over 1,081,840 km and made a record number of submissions (131 in total) to the State and Federal governments.

And at all times, we have a firm eye on how we meet your needs in the future. As we near the end of this council cycle, we are entering a process of renewal to determine how the LGAQ will operate and perform over the next five years.

LGAQ CEO

Greg Hallam, PSM
For yet another year there has been growth in both the volume and frequency of enquiries from councils. Increasingly, council staff and elected members are making the Association their ‘first call’ when seeking advice or guidance – or even just information and support. That’s a good thing.

Part of our DNA is to help members, and for the last couple of years we have been actively improving the way in which we can help.

In the past year we have further strengthened our frontline member services team in terms of its staffing and breadth of capabilities and responsibilities. Now, more than ever, the person who answers your call or email can connect you to the answers you seek.

This customer service model helps ensure that you can get on with the business at hand.

Behind this stands the collective experience of the Association’s many experienced and professional staff. So if it’s a unique issue or a particularly curly problem the matter can be easily escalated.

The largest project of the last year has been the launch of the Better Councils, Better Communities initiative.

This campaign responds directly to the financial sustainability challenges councils told us was their number one issue.

Several initiatives were launched throughout the year including:

- A new public website to further promote the good work of local councils;
- A new portal within LG Online called LG:Hub to collate and showcase local government best practice from here, interstate and around the world;
- An active communications campaign to collect local examples of innovation, productivity and efficiency called #77stories; and
- A new benchmarking service to assist councils with assessing and comparing performance called Ready. Set.Go.

Significant preparatory work, including regional filming, was also completed in preparation for a state-wide media and television promotional campaign that first went to air on the 20th of September.

Of particular note is that all of these initiatives have been able to be delivered without any additional cost to members, further reinforcing the value councils receive from their ongoing membership to the Association and LG Online.

The stream also delivered its annual Elected Member Update (EMU) program to over 500 participants from 61 councils and oversaw the delivery of the 3rd Local Government Finance Summit in April.

Finally, we have continued to release new tools and resources including expansion of our compliance resource library and further technical improvements to our Legislative Compliance Service. Whether its advice, guidance, information, support, tools or resources, we’ve got members covered.

Glen Beckett

General Manager - Assist
This year we celebrated 15 years of member services online.

Here is a snapshot of just the few services that have branched out from its inception:

**2015**

**Better Councils, Better Communities**
Highlighting best practice

**2013**

**Member Services Center**
Your very own dedicated call centre. Averaging 4200 calls per month.

**2001**

**Local Buy Contact Directory**
LGAQ and its subsidiaries save LG $100 million each year.

**2000**

**IR Tribunal Representation**
Approximately 8600,400 hours dedicated to IT representation since 2000.
2.3

Ambassadors

Local Government Ambassadors Shane Webcke and Heather Foord attended 16 regional events supporting local councils and local communities.

2.4

On-Call Support Services

24/7 access to resources and services through LG online.

The Website:

Have we gotten more interesting?

Our web visitors now spend nearly three times longer on the site than they did in the previous 12 months, and nearly five times longer than the 12 months before that.

Average Session Duration

72,911

New visitors over the past 12 months

189% increase

9min 57sec vs 3min 26sec
Are our campaigns finding their target?

In just shy of four months the Better Councils, Better Communities website has collected nearly 10,000 page views – and the real marketing hasn’t started yet!

Better Councils, Better Communities Website

9,532 Pageviews

25% Returning Users

75% New Users

Has our social media integration made us more relevant?

60% ↑↑↑↑↑ increase in Weekend Pageviews

Do our members turn to us for advice?

Yes! They have visited the Legislation Portal for information nearly 5000 times in the past 12 months.

The Legislation Portal

Sessions

4,473

Pageviews

17,806
Are our members finding it easy to access our professional services?

In just six months they have visited LGAQ Total Solutions website pages nearly 50,000 times.

Total Solutions Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Users</th>
<th>Pageviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,996</td>
<td>7,544</td>
<td>49,476</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.5 Member Services Center

Highlights of the Members Services Center include:

- October saw a new record peak in calls of 4935
- Averaging well over 4000 calls a month
- First Call Resolution (FCR) – now at 58%
- Well advanced on Customer Service Accreditation under the International Customer Service Standard (ICSS) which is expected to be completed in late 2015.
- Frontline MSC team now 6 team members strong
2.6
Other Assist Highlights

2300 guests visited LG House

260 Members & VIPs accessed the members lounge

Executive Team

On-Call 24/7

Legislative Services

30 new legal opinions published on LG Online.

Elected Member Updates Program

40 Locations 500 Participants

61 Queensland Councils
Better Value, better insights.

Keeping with the Better Councils, Better Communities project plan, we are pleased to announce the addition of 12 new performance indicators in the performance benchmarking tool, Ready. Set. Go.

Now with 25 performance indicators, Ready. Set. Go. provides users with more insights to their council's performance than ever before.

Councils can track their performance over time, identify trends by comparing correlating performance indicators and benchmark their performance against similar councils.

We're very excited about the campaign and want the rest of the state to know about the good work of councils, so we have also implemented a public image campaign which includes a public website featuring councils across the state and their case studies of best practice.
2.8

Media & Communications

Increasing our online presence

Digital communications platforms have been used to make sure news and updates from the LGAQ are timely, personal and easy to access.

Our social media following is growing rapidly.

Social media is an effective tool for getting messages to the masses. For the LGAQ, social media has become vital in assisting our local government news to be heard by a wider audience, particularly the media.

For example:

- Tweets this year: 2011
- Audience: 3611 followers
- How many times did the audience engage?: 1802
- Potential account reach: 2,134,101
- Potential impressions: the population of China

Increase of social media followers in the past 12 months.

Social Media Network Contribution:
Twitter

As our growing number of Twitter followers engages with the LGAQ’s tweets (via mentions, @ replies, retweets and favourites), even more users see a story about Queensland local government in their news feeds.

Local Govt Assoc QLD @LGAQ Mar 15
ON THIS DAY: March 16, 1922 - Abolition of Qld’s Legislative Council, makes Qld the only state in Aus with just one House of Parliament

Reaching potential total users: 4,728

Day 2: #bushcouncils15 Balonne Mayor Donna Stewart welcomes delegates to the region. @BalonneBeacon

Local Govt Assoc QLD @LGAQ Jul 29

Reaching potential total users: 5,319

Facebook

Two of the year’s top posts linked to LGAQ media releases, in turn resulting in more people viewing our news:

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
Published by LGAQ - 16 June 2015

Queensland councils have won their long battle to convince the Federal Government of the value of using council workers rather than contractors to recover and rebuild their communities following natural disasters.

http://lgaq.asn.au/news/-/asset_publisher/pG32/content/councils-welcome-key-breakthrough-on-natural-disaster-funding

1.6k people reached

Queensland has come together today to help Vanuatu in its greatest hour of need. The Queensland Local Government Vanuatu cyclone relief appeal has been launched. Find out more.

http://lgaq.asn.au/vanuatu-appeal

Reaching potential total users: 4,728

Instagram

The LGAQ uses Instagram to share Queensland local government themed images with a growing community of followers.

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
Published by LGAQ - 18 March 2015

Queensland councils have won their long battle to convince the Federal Government of the value of using council workers rather than contractors to recover and rebuild their communities following natural disasters.

http://lgaq.asn.au/news/-/asset_publisher/pG32/content/councils-welcome-key-breakthrough-on-natural-disaster-funding

3.9k people reached

Queensland has come together today to help Vanuatu in its greatest hour of need. The Queensland Local Government Vanuatu cyclone relief appeal has been launched. Find out more.

http://lgaq.asn.au/vanuatu-appeal

Reaching potential total users: 5,319
Competition

The LGAQ ran a competition on Social Media to engage with its followers and increase its presence to a wider audience on Twitter and Facebook.

The LGAQ’s target audience for social media is Queenslanders aged 18-plus so we chose the State of Origin as the theme of our competition.

Working to a tight budget, the competition prize was to win a State of Origin jersey signed by Queensland rugby league great and LGAQ ambassador Shane Webcke.

Council eNewsletters

Your news. Your choice to subscribe. Your interests.

The LGAQ eNewsletter open rates are well above the industry standard percentage of 21.2%.

A comparison of various campaign open rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eNewsletter Open Rates (industry std. 21.2%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Councils Better Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Management Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Relations CEO Updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Relations Reforms Update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Courier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGM Claims</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blog

Most Read Blog Post

Going into bat for Day Labour
26/02/15 4:07 PM

The destruction and dislocation caused by TC Marcia forced councils to get their workers out into the field rapidly to assess impacts on council assets. However, the continued prohibition on using council “day labour” under natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements led to rising fear among councils affected as to how much their communities would have to spend to get back on their feet.

1606 views – 666 up from 940 last year.
2.9

Media & Communications Forum 2014

The LGAQ’s annual Media and Communications forum is growing in the footsteps of each year’s success.

2.10

Council Leader Turns 100

This year marked 100 years of the Council Leader publication (differing titles over the century) sharing local government news across the state.
2.11

Faces In Places

From 14 July - 15 June LGAQ officers have:

- **1,081,840 km** collectively travelled
- **1014 engagements** have had
- **40 individual LGAQ officers** which involved
Travel Testimonials

Elizabeth West
Manager – Solutions Delivery

“I loved the beautiful drive from Normanton to Karumba with brolgas and other birds in the wetlands.”

Greg Hoffman
Manager – Advocacy

“My fondest memory when travelling this year was the spectacular sight of the sunrise at 10K feet on a charter flight from Mt Isa to Burketown for an early morning meeting with the council.”

Brett Reeman
General Manager

“I discovered the arts and culture of the Mackay region when I visited Artspace Mackay, the regional art gallery and museum in the centre of the city.”

2.12 Innovation

Connect Innovate Achieve is the cornerstone of the LGAQ’s philosophy.

In the Innovation area, the LGAQ continues to deliver on a strategy that aims to help councils to be the best possible in terms of improving productivity while playing a key role in the local digital economy.

This is being achieved by raising awareness of what is possible in their local area, future directions and trends, piloting and testing technology and ongoing lobbying of the Commonwealth and State governments to ensure telecommunications remains on the political agenda as it delivers those critical networks for participation in the digital economy.
The recent announcement of the Commonwealth Government’s $100 million Mobile Black Spot Program will result in $385 million in infrastructure being spent nationally for 499 new mobile phone base stations and the associated backhaul. In Queensland, $53 million will be spent on 68 new sites.

Importantly, the commonwealth has already announced that it would provide an additional $60 million for Round 2 of the scheme.

The LGAQ continue to lobby and raise awareness with key Commonwealth and State leaders about the need to ensure that our towns and strategic highways and developments have the necessary infrastructure to ensure genuine

The past 12 months has seen some significant achievements:

**WPSS – Wireless Priority Service System.**

Queensland councils are the only councils in Australia participating in a Commonwealth Government scheme that allows voice calls on a congested mobile phone base station to have priority. The main use is during a severe weather event or other disaster activity, as WPSS allows key decision-makers and LDMG members to stay in contact whereas calls made by the general public could fail because of congestion.

An allocation of 250 licences to the LGAQ has seen about 120 services in operation, which includes numerous mayors and CEOs having the service available on their existing mobile phones. In addition, the LGAQ provided Telstra-ruggedised handsets to front-line managers who are on the ground managing events.

**Rural and Regional Telecommunications**

Participation in the digital economy relies on having access to telecommunication network and services.

In Queensland, some councils still do not have the basic telecommunication infrastructure – scalable backhaul in the core network and access services such as mobile phones and other exchange-based infrastructure that provide consumer and enterprises services.

"Participation in the digital economy relies on having access to telecommunication network and services"
participation in the digital economy.

At the same time, work is underway to look at areas in the Gulf, Cape York and Torres Strait region as well as continuing to assist councils in southwest Queensland improve their towns.

Innovation Roadshows

The LGAQ has developed a concept called the innovation roadshow which aims to raise awareness of productivity through the use of technology. It involves raising awareness about existing and planned telecommunications infrastructure, future directions, case studies of what councils are doing in other parts of Queensland and Australia in regards to improving productivity through innovation.

Nineteen councils have attended workshops this year, in which presentations from organisations such as Apple, Telstra, Navman & the QLD Government provide detailed examples of programs that are aimed to assist councils to improve their digital awareness and the opportunities that results

Drones

The LGAQ is working closely with LGIS in a market-sounding exercise to understand the opportunity of applying UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), or drones, to the local government market. The study aims to identify those suppliers with the skills and capability as well as exploring the plethora of applications that could be used in a local government environment – ie animal and pest management, disaster management, asset management etc.
 Advocate
1.1 Advocate

Introduction

The past 12 months continued the hectic pace of the previous year with a change of State Government and the ramping up of significant reforms at the Federal level.

With the Newman Government pushing its reform agenda prior to the election in January 2015, followed by the election of the Palaszczuk Government and Federal moves to reform the federation, taxation and natural disaster funding arrangements, the LGAQ’s advocacy activity reached record levels.

Our policy development and representation initiatives saw record expenditure on the key issues of planning and development changes, resource sector impacts, rural and remote council road funding and workforce sustainability, land tenure reform, coastal management and climate change impacts, indigenous councils priorities, industrial award modernisation as well as federation and taxation reforms and natural disaster funding.

Representing Queensland local government across this extensive agenda requires non-stop engagement with members involving multiply reference groups, task forces, Regional Organisation of Council meetings and district conferences. In addition, Advocacy team members travelled far and wide attending more than 30 ROC and Regional Road and Transport Group meetings. This engagement supported the record number of submissions, 131 in total which is 11 up from last year, and numerous appearances before parliamentary committees.

We were quick off the mark following the election of the Palaszczuk Government with 45 briefing notes to the incoming ministers. The new government’s strong support (7 out of 10) for the LGAQ’s 10 Point State Election Policy Plan and open door policy has provided a solid basis to building a successful relationship with the government and increased financial support for councils.

Greg Hoffman PSM
General Manager Advocacy
1.2 Strategic Policy & Intergovernmental Relations

The 2014-15 year was a busy time on the intergovernmental relations front. Significant achievements in the last six months of the Newman Government included a state indemnity and comprehensive training to assist councils manage and enforce rules covering domestic asbestos, reduced administrative requirements under the Queensland Plan and clear recognition of council concerns about State Penalties Enforcement Registry (SPER). Positive outcomes were also achieved in relation to alcohol-fueled violence, disaster district boundaries and housing.

The second half of the 2014-15 year saw a change of government, with Annastacia Palaszczuk’s Labor Party claiming the Treasury benches following a shock turnaround in the LNP’s electoral fortunes.

This required a change in strategic focus on the policy agenda of the new State Government.

Concurrently, federal issues continued to develop including Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs), Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) and the Federation and Taxation white paper process.

The change of State Government with the pivotal role now played by the cross-bench has required a re-ordering of intergovernmental priorities. Our focus is squarely on building relationships with ministers, ministerial officers and departmental staff and pushing the broad range of issues that impact local governments in Queensland whilst engaging the Opposition and the cross-bench for their support.

“…Our focus is squarely on building relationships & pushing the issues that impact local governments…”
Planning Reforms

In May this year the State Government announced its objectives for planning reform, including the introduction of a new planning bill in late October. Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the Hon. Jackie Trad MP, also released a directions paper titled ‘Better Planning for Queensland’.

In response, the LGAQ developed a Local Government Planning Reform Position Paper which outlines the reforms local government wants the Government to embrace.

Those proposed reforms – 11 in all – include restoring councils’ ability to set conditions relating to trunk infrastructure, automatic indexation of infrastructure charges and tighter rules to protect community rights.

Development Assessment Monitoring Project

With the Council of Mayors (SEQ) we are continuing to develop an electronic reporting tool for development assessment processes. The tool connects with existing council software to extract relevant development assessment data to generate performance reports.

Importantly, this project will replace the need for the time consuming and expensive State Government Development Assessment Monitoring and Performance Program (DAMPP).

Liability for Planning Decisions Affected by Climate Change and Natural Hazards

The LGAQ continues to pursue a statutory limitation of local governments’ exposure to liability for reasonably-based decision-making and actions through amendments to the Local Government Act 2009 and City of Brisbane Act 2010.
Coastal Council Adaptation Task Force (C-CAT)

The C-CAT, an alliance of Queensland coastal councils, was established in February 2014 to improve local government capacity to adapt to coastal climate change challenges. Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Whitsunday, Mackay, Gladstone and Moreton Bay are all members of the task force.

The task force delivered several projects in its first year including communication guidelines to support local governments in public participation processes around coastal adaptation, a series of presentations covering legal issues, and governance assessments.

Collectively, these projects delivered an estimated $80,000 in value, nearly double the value of the membership’s investment.

These legislative amendments would protect actions that councils take in good faith using best available information. They would also encourage councils to undertake ‘best practice’ approaches to natural hazard management that increase development certainty and economic growth.

Sustainable Ports Legislation

The LGAQ has given broad support to the Sustainable Ports Bill 2015, with its promise of a coordinated approach to planning for port infrastructure across jurisdictions.

However, we identified concerns for local government, particularly: the lack of regard to impacts on council infrastructure; inadequate public consultation time frames; a lack of transparency for Ministerial consideration of submissions; and appeals against decisions by local government for State Government interests.

We are working with the Department and affected local governments to ensure council interests and the interests of the communities they represent are protected and maintained.

Invasive Plants and Animals Co-Investment Project

Local governments invest about $20 million a year into the management of invasive plants and animals on top of other in-kind contributions. They also contribute $5.5 million each year to the Land Protection Fund, demonstrating their commitment to reducing the impacts of invasive plants and animals.

The LGAQ and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) have launched a project to provide more local government input into the way that existing $5.5 million annual council payment to the Land Protection Fund is spent.
Drought Assistance for Priority Pest Animals

The LGAQ won councils direct access to an additional $10 million provided by the Federal Government to help reduce the impact of weeds and feral animals on drought-affected farmers.

As part of a statewide program oversight committee with Biosecurity Queensland, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and AgForce, the LGAQ will assess and oversee evidence-based projects put forward by regional consortia.

Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan

The LGAQ represented the interests of reef councils in the Federal Government’s preparation of the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan.

The plan, Australia’s response to the World Heritage Committee’s recommendation for a long-term plan for sustainable development to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the Reef, was released in March 2015.

It recognises the significant contribution of local governments to reef conservation as it identifies councils and the LGAQ as ‘contributing partners’ in 39 of its 139 actions. These actions reflect existing activities of reef catchment councils.

The LGAQ will continue to argue that local governments deserve financial support through access to the Reef Fund for actions contributing to the plan’s implementation.

Climate Change (Coastal Hazards) Adaptation Program

Although the State Government committed to establishing a $15 million fund over three years to help councils develop coastal hazard adaptation strategies, the Budget confirmed that $3 million of the fund would be reserved for the Government’s climate change adaptation strategy.

The LGAQ will lead in ensuring the $12 million Climate Change (Coastal Hazards) Adaptation Program over the next three years optimises the outcomes for councils.

The program will enable coastal local governments to prepare plans to address climate change related coastal hazard risks in the long-term. The program will aim to produce high quality information to help councils make timely and effective decision adaptation.

Long term, it is designed to build knowledge and capability between the private sector, research and government sectors to deliver on-ground results for Queensland.

In regard to the Queensland climate change adaptation strategy, the LGAQ is represented on a group charged with ensuring the strategy is delivered in an efficient and effective manner.

Stock Route Management Legislation

The State Government plans to introduce new legislation

LGAQ will lead in ensuring the $12 million Climate Change Adaptation Program optimises the outcomes for councils
governing management of stock routes in early 2016. This is the latest stage in the lengthy process of establishing a fair and equitable cost recovery model for the use of Queensland’s stock routes.

While stock routes will remain primarily for travelling stock, emergency agistment and short-term grazing, the LGAQ has negotiated changes enabling local governments to charge a fee for static grazing on the stock route network.

Councils could use the funds generated to manage stock routes and invest in improved pest and weed control, protect the environment and reduce fire risks. Under the new system, it will be the users of the route paying for its maintenance and management, rather than the ratepayers in a council’s area.

Flying Fox Management

The 2014 LGAQ Annual Conference resolved that the LGAQ make representations to the State Government to “…provide a centralised, coordinated approach for monitoring flying fox management activities…”.

A workshop in May this year sought to identify what councils wanted to achieve through such an approach and what data and information would be required to facilitate meeting those outcomes.

The LGAQ used the information it gathered to prepare a draft Flying Fox Management Monitoring and Reporting Framework. After consultation with local government, we will use this to engage the State and other key stakeholders to achieve agreement on the roles and responsibilities for data capture, management and delivery.
1.4 Infrastructure, Economics & Regional Development

Infrastructure Funding

The LGAQ continues to advocate for improvements to legislation, regulation and funding programs so that councils can provide essential infrastructure and services to their communities.

As vertical fiscal imbalance in revenue collection is likely to remain a feature of Australia's Federal system, a large part of the LGAQ's activity involves advocacy to achieve a fair and equitable redistribution of revenue from the Commonwealth and the State to local government.

Throughout the year, the LGAQ met ministers, departments and agencies, appeared at hearings, and lodged numerous submissions to Government inquiries and reviews on matters affecting local government.

The 2015 Federal Budget included several funding measures affecting councils. These included the $100 million from the Bridges Renewal Program exclusively for councils on a competitive application basis, a share of the $1 billion National Stronger Regions program for smaller proposals to benefit councils, $100 million for priority Northern Australia beef transport roads, and an extra $33.7 million for remote airstrip upgrades.

Importantly, the Roads to Recovery program provided additional funding to Queensland councils of $224.7 million over the next two years, and a share of another $200 million to address road safety 'black spots' around Australia.

In the lead up to the 2015 Queensland State Election, the LGAQ developed its 10 Point Policy Plan to identify key issues and provide major political parties with the opportunity to develop appropriate policy and funding responses.

This was followed by a series of briefing papers prepared for incoming ministers to provide them with information on the key issues.
Subsequently, the July State Budget included several measures to provide funds to councils. These include $59.4 million over the next five years ‘to deliver a better planning system’, $59.4 million over three years to invest in urban infrastructure that ‘unlocks development’ and creates long-term employment; and $23.55 million this year for the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program.

The influence of the LGAQ’s 10 Point Policy Plan on the Government’s fiscal thinking was apparent in the $30 million a year increase in Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme funding. A boost to TIDs funding was one of the key features of the policy plan.

Another key “ask” of the plan was reflected in the Government’s Building Our Regions program to provide funding, quarantined to councils, for critical infrastructure in regional areas of the state. This program included a Regional Capital Fund of $70 million over two years, a Remote Communities Infrastructure Fund of $15 million over two years and a Royalties for Resource Producing Communities fund of $55 million over two years.

Another commitment that was in direct response to the LGAQ’s 2015 State Election Local Government 10 Point Policy Plan was the $40 million Community Resilience Fund to help local governments mitigate the impact of natural disasters on infrastructure. The LGAQ continues to call on the Federal Government to match this commitment from the State.

Natural Disaster Funding Reforms

The LGAQ has been at the forefront of discussions on proposed reform of natural disaster funding arrangements. Throughout the Productivity Commission’s Inquiry and subsequent release of its report, the LGAQ continued its representations to both the Federal and Queensland State governments for the best possible outcome for councils and their communities.

The minister responsible for natural disaster funding, Michael Keenan, has stated that the Federal Government would not adopt the commission’s extreme proposals to radically reduce funding to local government.

The Government subsequently proposed a unit-rate based ‘grant’ model to replace the current claim-based ‘reimbursement’ model. At face value, this approach could provide advantages over current arrangements. It would also remove the issues around day labour and plant hire rates, as it would be based on the assessment of reconstruction costs against benchmark costings and not be concerned with how or who undertook the work for the State or local governments.

However, there is ongoing debate about the amount of funding the Federal Government would contribute to reconstruction costs.

The Government has proposed that it reduce its contribution...
from the current 75 percent to 70 percent, with the 5 percent being put into a fund for mitigation works that would be available on a matched funding basis.

The State Government has rejected this, a stance the LGAQ supports as it represents a cost-shift to councils which would have to find an additional 5 percent of reconstruction costs and would only be able to access mitigation funding if it was fully matched.

The LGAQ will continue to forcefully advocate on behalf of councils and their communities and rejects any cost shift to councils for reconstruction works.

Roads and Transport Alliance

The efforts of Regional Roads and Transport Groups (RRTGs) to once again ensure full expenditure of their Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) greatly assisted the LGAQ when it lobbied for the TIDS program to be increased as part of the Association's 2015 State Election Local Government 10 Point Policy Plan.

Funding to RRTGs has been increased by $30 million a year, to $61.2 million, for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 financial years.

The LGAQ will lobby for this increase to be made permanent and for critical roads infrastructure funding programs being maintained in real terms.

RRTGs have also effectively used the state-wide Capability Development Fund (SCDF) for initiatives in training, asset management and procurement.

Key initiatives included:

- The Workforce Sustainability Pilot – a project with the North West Queensland RRTG along with Croydon and Etheridge Shire Councils to identify sustainable road maintenance and renewal arrangements consistent with State Government policy and fiscal responsibility objectives.

- The First and Last Mile Freight Pilot – a project with the Eastern Downs and Western Downs RRTGs to develop a RRTG Regional Transport Strategy to align priorities and TMR strategic freight routes as identified in the Heavy Vehicle Action Plan.

Work with indigenous councils outside of Cape York to become full members of their local RRTG is expected to be finalised by the end of 2015.

The Alliance continued with a major review of its operational framework. It is timely to review the objectives of the Alliance and how it can best support RRTGs to embrace the broader transport planning agenda. We expect revised guidelines to be implemented by the end of 2015.
Heavy Vehicle Management

For local governments the compliance responsibilities under the National Heavy Vehicle Law has placed significant additional pressure on their already stretched resources.

To ease the burden, the LGAQ has worked with the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) to establish pre-approved routes, effectively becoming an ‘authority’ for the Regulator to act on behalf of a road owner. Industry is still required to apply for a permit.

Pre-approval of local government roads will free up resources to concentrate on the ‘complex’ applications and reduce the compliance expense for councils

Pre-approvals have proven to be successful in other jurisdictions, with permit processing times being drastically reduced as a result. The average road manager consent response time in Queensland was 13.08 days in February 2014 to January 2015, well behind the timeframes achieved in Victoria (7.23 days) and South Australia (5.94), where pre-approvals are in place.

Electricity Reforms

The LGAQ and Local Buy have continued to represent local government on a wide range of regulatory issues including contestable metering, demand-based tariffs and street lights through engagement sessions hosted by Energex, Ergon and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER).

The AER’s determinations for the 2015-2020 Regulatory Control period provide substantial savings to councils, particularly in relation to street lights. The LGAQ and Local Buy will continue to ensure the AER appreciates local government’s concerns in the lead up to its final decision on 31 October 2015.

The Energex Public Lighting Management Standard is on its website, the first time a service charter has been made available. The LGAQ has commented on Ergon Energy’s draft service charter, to be finalised by the end of 2015.

The Newman Government pushed through changes to the way councils pay for street lighting. From 1 July 2014, 10 percent of non-energy street lighting charges was passed through to Ergon Energy customers.

The recovery of the remaining 90 per cent is subject to the development of a price path that will seek to recover these charges over time.

These charges are currently paid via a Community Service Obligation (CSO) payment from the State Government directly to Ergon Energy. The LGAQ has convinced the new State Government to provide a 12-month hiatus in any further pass through to allow for further negotiations.
The LGAQ’s first preference is for these charges to be covered by the existing CSO payment. If this proves impossible, we will try to ensure the adoption of a sensible price path that limits the impacts on councils. We expect an outcome by the end of 2015.

Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program

The Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP) covers 43 percent of the state’s area, services 46 percent of the state’s population outside of southeast Queensland and represents over $2 billion worth of water and waste water infrastructure.

A mix of large and small regional water and sewerage service providers with varying capacities participate, as well as regions with high and low population and development pressures.

Each region brings together knowledge, skills, and experience to help those managing and operating water and waste water services increase efficiency. Their activities over the past year include joint training sessions for operational staff; a review of Drinking Water Quality Management Plans and audit dates for those plans; price benchmarking studies; and joint procurement arrangements.

The Outback Water Regional Alliance became the first region to formalise an alliance in June 2014. The Whitsunday Regional Organisation of Councils has created the Whitsunday Isaac Mackay Water Alliance in June this year. The Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils has also agreed to formalise an alliance and is working through the final stages of the organisation and governance.

The LGAQ included continued funding of $600,000 for the next three years for QWRAP as part of its 2015 State Election Local Government 10 Point Policy Plan. The new Government delivered on this commitment in the June 2015 budget.

There is potential for two additional regions to join the program. The newly formed alliances will work to develop a strategic approach to their operations, which will then guide their activities to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Regional Water Supply Security Assessment Program

A range of water security assessments began in early 2014 in response to the changes and challenges facing the Queensland water sector. A partnership between the Department of Energy and Water Supply and local government has developed the assessments to help build a shared understanding of the water supply challenges ahead and better position water service providers to deliver secure supplies. The program publishes reports with up-to-date information on the security of water supply systems for regional urban centres across the state.

The program will guide decisions on regional growth and water supply capability. The LGAQ is on the program steering committee to ensure assessments and reports are useful to local government.

Four assessment reports for Cairns, Townsville, Hervey Bay and Maryborough have been completed and published on the Department’s website.
Assessments are currently underway for Rockhampton, Mt Isa, Bundaberg, Mackay, Whitsunday, Charters Towers, Gladstone and Gympie.

Local Government’s Role in the Assessment of Major Projects

With the coordination of State Government responses to the complex challenges in resource regions needing improvement and communication between State and local government on resource sector issues ambiguous, councils often struggle to manage resource industry impacts on their communities or capture the benefits.

One big challenge is the capacity of local governments to respond to multiple and overlapping Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) processes during the most recent resources boom. Smaller local governments had neither the internal capacity nor the budget to get the support needed to adequately respond to these processes. While market conditions are currently softer, now is the time to address these issues.

The LGAQ is working with KPMG to help identify improvements in the role of local governments in resource project assessment.

KPMG has examined seven case studies, including one project from Western Australia, and also met with key agencies including the Coordinator General’s Office. Its draft report contains eight key strategies covering consistency in local impact assessment governance and impact identification. It also urges a ‘fit for purpose’ resourcing model in relation to responding to EIS requirements and a decision on whether local governments are willing to help facilitate community engagement.

The LGAQ has highlighted to Minister Anthony Lynham, Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines the issues raised by KPMG’s assessment. We will continue to do so to ensure local government is not just engaged, but empowered to take action in resource community planning.

Review of Fly In, Fly Out Arrangements

The Government’s ‘Strong and Sustainable Resource Communities’ Policy proposes an end to 100 percent FIFO operations near regional communities, introducing choice for workers and requiring mining proponents to utilise existing housing when applying for an EIS.

The LGAQ’s Policy Statement 2014 states that local government is opposed to 100 percent FIFO developments in established resource communities because it discriminates against workers outside identified FIFO hubs, has negative impacts on social cohesion and diminishes economic benefits to local and regional communities.

The LGAQ’s submission to the Queensland Parliament’s Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee inquiry into FIFO stated that a suitable level of FIFO / non-resident workforce versus local workforce had not been established.

We believe further research to establish the extent of impacts on local government is warranted and, where the use of non-resident workforces is relevant, proponents need to engage the receiving local government from an early stage.

The Government has also established an expert panel to review and provide recommendations on how to end 100 per cent FIFO operations near regional communities and introduce choice for workers to live in the resource communities near to where they work. Isaac Mayor Anne Baker and Mackay Mayor Deirdre Comerford are on the panel. In June, the LGAQ appeared before the panel to discuss the issues from a local government perspective.

Pending the recommendations of both the inquiry and expert panel, the LGAQ will seek to be involved in the development
Conferences, Events and Reference Groups

Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) Assembly

The LGAQ again convened its Regional Organisations of Councils (ROC) Assembly in April as part of its work to support the various ROCs across the State. The event brought together 13 ROCs to discuss key issues such as the Federation and Taxation Reviews as well as case studies of best practice across various ROC regions.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the Hon Jackie Trad MP visited the assembly, as did the then Director-General, Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, Richard Eden, and General Manager, Priority Sectors and Client Services Division, Trade and Investment Queensland, Adam Stevenson.

2015 Bush Councils Convention

The Association convened its second Bush Councils Convention in St George in July as part of its segment-based approach to meeting member needs.

With the theme of “As the Seasons Rise and Fall”, the convention saw the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jackie Trad MP, her Cabinet colleagues Mark Bailey and Bill Byrne, Opposition Leader Lawrence Springborg, Shadow Local Government and Main Roads Minister Fiona Simpson MP and Federal Member for Maranoa, Bruce Scott MP, address more than 150 delegates.

Whilst there was much attention and discussion focussing on roads, water, energy, regional development, and natural resource management, the convention also raised $22,000 for Aussie Helpers, a charitable body which directly assists farming families during times of drought.

Reference / Advisory Groups

In the first half of 2015, the LGAQ held meetings of its: Regional and Economic Development Advisory Group; Water and Sewerage Advisory Group; Resource Communities Advisory Group; Roads and Transport Advisory Group; and Planning and Development Reference Group to discuss advocacy priorities in light of the election of the new State Government.

Some 36 councils are represented across these advisory groups, ensuring that councils have direct input into the LGAQ’s policy development processes.
Industrial Relations

The LGAQ succeeded in achieving a single local government industry award. While the content of the modern award did not entirely meet with our satisfaction, we achieved conditions of employment that better serve the interests of councils as employers of an efficient and sustainable local workforce. Councils, to which the new award immediately applied, reported the significant benefits in its administration and application in contrast to the pre-modernised system of awards.

The new award removed a number of historical practices that were no longer relevant to contemporary local government and/or were best addressed through enterprise bargaining.

The LGAQ supported several councils through the transition to the new modern award and assisted with their enterprise bargaining. This was in the face of unions refusing to support or participate in enterprise bargaining and their efforts to coerce councils from moving to the new award.

Unfortunately, the new State Government suspended all enterprise bargaining activities and subsequently legislated to have the earlier decisions of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on the new award reviewed. The LGAQ rigorously argued against the Government’s direction and at the time of publication was putting its case to support the retention of the single award and oppose the return of dated and irrelevant employment conditions.

Building Capability and Capacity

The LGAQ continued to support councils to lift workforce capability across the sector.

In recent years, Queensland non-Indigenous councils have had access to more than $15.75 million of Government funding.

A $1.6 million skills development program for the 16
Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils achieved an 87 percent completion rate with 961 personnel in remote indigenous communities gaining a formal qualification or accredited skill set. This exceeded the program target of 200 enrolments with a 50 percent completion rate.

These results demonstrated the benefits of an industry-led and managed approach to skills development through collaboration between the LGAQ and key State Government agencies. The program was so successful the LGAQ has been invited to apply for a further round of funding.

**Strategic Workforce Planning and HR Metrics**

A total of 20 councils have provided human resource metrics data to the LGAQ to help them better manage workforce matters and provide a foundation for strategic workforce planning. We have also worked with state and territory local government associations to develop an agreed set of national local government HR metrics due to come on line in 2016.

Interest in HR metrics and strategic workforce planning continues to grow and planning is underway to convene a regional workshop in late 2015.

The LGAQ’s annual collection of Workforce Census data, the only set of consistent time series data for 2001 to 2015, features in our Industry Skills Workforce and Development Plan which has been used by State and Federal government departments as well as the Productivity Commission.

The data allows us to make key representations to the State and Federal governments on legislative and policy change, funds allocation and other government and industry interventions.
1.6

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Councils Representation & Support

The LGAQ has sought collaborative partnerships between the Federal and State governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments to improve the economic and social wellbeing of these communities.

We have also sought to ensure State and Federal bureaucracies are responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils’ considerations and views prior to development of policy options.

We have particularly worked to redress the disconnect that often occurs between the stated position of ministers and the subsequent actions and advice of departmental officers.

The Indigenous Leaders Forum (ILF) continues to grow in status with the LGAQ receiving regular requests from State, Federal and other government bodies to attend ILF meetings.

ILFs were convened in October 2014 in Mackay and May 2015 on Palm Island following the success of the 2014 Thursday Island ILF. This was the first significant local government conference convened on Palm Island. It was consistent with our determination to hold ILFs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help the local economy and provide an opportunity to showcase the local community.

The October 2014 ILF was complemented by a “Conversation with the Queensland Police Service” attended by the Police Commissioner, other executive members of the Queensland Police Service and elected representatives. The Police Commissioner also attended the Palm Island forum.

The Palm Island forum also served as a Ministerial Roundtable, with Curtis Pitt MP, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and his Cabinet colleagues Leanne Enoch and Coralee O’Rourke able to meet and converse directly with local government leaders of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities for the first time.
Key outcomes from the ILF included: agreement on the conclusion of the reviews into alcohol management plans; an iteration of the call for the restoration of the SGFA funding levels; support for a constitutional recognition website; agreement on air travel subsidies in far north Queensland; support for the James Cook University research into the impacts of drugs other than alcohol within indigenous communities; and agreement to formulate a position on the issue of government ownership of retail stores in communities as a matter of priority.
03 Advance
3.1

Advance

Introduction

The 2014/14 year has been enormously successful for the Advance Stream. The year has seen significant new business growth, the positive impact of restructuring, exciting new products delivered to the market and financial returns to both the LGAQ and member councils. The commercial activities of Advance now have a collective annual turnover of nearly $140 million and management of approximately 400 staff and contractors.

The most significant new business has come from the success of Propel Partnerships securing two new strategic partnership deals. The first being the formation of Northern Australia Services with Mackay Regional Council, the largest of its type in Australia and the second the Liverpool Services Alliance, the first of its kind in New South Wales. The new revenues from these two partnerships total more than $300 million over the life of the contracts and cement Propel as the leader in the Australian market for these type of arrangements. Propel has also delivered growth in the 24/7 out-of-hours, rate arrears collection and digitisation of records services in partnership with Ipswich City Council and now has over 20 clients receiving support through Services Queensland.

Propel has also further integrated with Resolute Information Technology and the two entities are now delivering a combined offering to the market.

Local Buy has also seen growth in its revenues as it successful transitioned from construction panels for natural disaster reconstruction to a permanent civil construction panel for normal council annual works programs.

Following the successful transition to full ownership by the LGAQ, Local Government Infrastructure Services has redesigned the way it operates and is now delivering a range of local government focussed services and products. The most significant new products areas are the Geothermal Energy project that will assist remote and regional councils with their future energy security as well as offset increasing energy costs and the development of a range of solutions to
help councils with managing their assets.

The LGAQ’s professional services business unit Total Solutions continues to grow its suite of services following a review of its strategy and structure in the previous year. Total Solutions has grown its revenue by 46 percent on last year and provided services to 74 of the 77 councils in Queensland.

2014/15 has also been a significant year for the LGAQ’s insurance schemes. Through good management of claims and prudent investment both LGM and LGW has each returned a special dividend of $2 million to the councils that participate in the schemes. The $4 million is the largest ever return to members and almost offsets LGAQ membership subscriptions of $4.3 million.

Late 2014/15 also saw the launch of LGM Assets, a property and general mutual insurance scheme. At the close of the year 30 councils had elected to join the scheme and have already benefited from approximately $1 million in savings on brokerage fees.

The coming year will see each business unit continue to review its structure and strategy to ensure it is best placed to deliver services to their clients.

Further detail on the achievements of the individual commercial operations are outlined below.

Brent Reeman

General Manager – Business Enterprises
3.2 Total Solutions

Total Solutions provides a wide range of specialised local government training and consulting services to our member councils on a fee-for-service basis.

2014-15 has seen a significant growth in our business with an overall increase in revenue of 46 percent.

Total Solutions trained about 1750 council staff members and worked with 74 of the state’s 77 councils during the year.

We focussed on regular meetings with our council clients to understand their specific needs and skills gaps and developed several new courses, including Industrial Relations Workshop, Leadership Development Program, Call Centre Training and De-escalating Aggressive Behaviour.

Total Solutions offered courses at 26 different locations in regional centres.

Combined with in-house courses, we delivered training at 38 different locations around the state.

This year, Total Solutions has delivered 21 full qualification courses plus a number of individual accredited units and 130 short courses, with a total of about 300 days of training.

We have established new online learning arrangements providing improved flexibility and contractual arrangements to councils and created a full-time position to manage our eLearning platforms.

“Combined with in-house courses, we delivered training at 38 different locations around the state.”
Our tailored eLearning content reaches clients who cannot attend on-site training due to budget and time constraints. With the release of the new Award, our Workforce team has assisted over 35 councils with their certified agreement strategy, payroll transitioning or negotiations.

Total Solutions has upgraded its capability and is now providing a wide range of financial, regulatory and internal audit services. We have supported many Category 3 councils in establishing Audit Committees as well as establishing a panel of independent Audit Committee members available to councils.

We are currently providing internal audit services to 10 councils. Recruitment services are expanding this year, with the appointment of a full-time recruitment executive and the purchase of an electronic recruitment system designed to bring significantly more capacity to the function within Total Solutions.

These initiatives will mean Total Solutions can offer members extended recruitment services in executive search, labour hire/short term contracting services and flexible offerings in talent attraction and management.

---

**2014-15**

- **Overall Revenue Increase**: 46%
- **Total Staff Trained**: 1750
- **Queensland Councils**: 74

---

46% Overall Revenue Increase

1750 Council staff members trained located across 74 Queensland Councils
3.3 Disaster Management

The LGAQ is committed to providing Disaster Management (DM) support to councils.

Despite the withdrawal of direct state funding, the LGAQ has maintained the position of the Principal Advisor Disaster Management to provide direct support to councils and to ensure broad-based representation at various state level forums and committees.

The LGAQ continues to provide strategic operational representation at the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) during events and have developed a strategy to expand this capacity to honour our long-standing commitment to be in the SDCC whenever councils are at stand-up during disaster events.

The key roles and responsibilities of this area are:

- Direct engagement and communication with councils to ensure DM issues are identified, understood and communicated to ensure there is a coherent council perspective of local disaster management issues;

- Engage directly with state agencies to facilitate consideration of the local perspective and consultation with councils to ensure the best development of DM policies and strategies; and

- Providing representation at key state level committees to reflect the fundamental importance of local issues to influence the development of strategic and political directions

Additionally, the DM area provides direct support and information exchange to all councils through the monthly DM Update - and where required ‘flash alerts’ - to ensure councils are aware of any proposed changes or new arrangements that could impact on their local arrangements.

The LGAQ will continue to provide representation at important forums including the State Disaster Coordination...
During disaster events, the LGAQ recognises the significant impact on councils in the affected areas and will provide operational support through our ongoing commitment to be amongst the “first in and last out” in the State Disaster Coordination Centre Joint Intelligence Group. This is our key to representing local issues whilst also providing a point of contact with the DM arrangements for activated councils.

1. Direct engagement and communication with councils to ensure DM issues are identified, understood and communicated to ensure there is a coherent council perspective of local disaster management issues

2. Engage directly with state agencies to facilitate consideration of the local perspective and consultation with councils to ensure the best development of DM policies and strategies

3. Providing representation at key state-level committees to reflect the fundamental importance of local issues to influence the development of strategic and political directions
Propel Partnerships

Propel Partnerships has enjoyed an extraordinary year of growth and has generated $300 million in new forward revenues. The business executed major strategic partnership arrangements with two of Australia’s most forward looking councils – Mackay Regional Council and Liverpool City Council (NSW). The creation of Northern Australia Services (NAS) with Mackay RC will enable the council to embark on a comprehensive performance enhancement programme which will see the transformation of its entire customer facing and high volume transitional activities. NAS incorporates a broad range of functions, including: customer services; ICT; rates; AP/AR; payroll services and licensing. NAS is located in a fully integrated customer service centre, ensuring that it is perfectly positioned to provide shared administrative service to both the public and private sectors across Northern Australia.

The expansion of Propel into the New South Wales local government sector demonstrates the extent of the capacity which now exists with the LGAQ’s business entities and the increasing ability to operate across state boundaries. The creation of the Liverpool Services Alliance (LSA) is the first strategic partnership in NSW and is positioned right in the very heart of the fast growing region in Australia, western Sydney. This will enable Propel to establish a broad shared services footprint in NSW in the coming years. This coincides with the State Government’s ‘Fit for the Future’ reform agenda, which will seek to modernise the provision and delivery of local government services in NSW.

Propel has also deepened its relationship with Ipswich City Council. The expansion of the Services Queensland Partnership into the provision of 24-7 out-of-hours services, rates arrears administration and digitisation/archiving services has been a huge success. Services Queensland is now providing shared services to 20 organisations, including councils in both Queensland and NSW. Propel and Ipswich have now enjoyed a highly productive working relationship for eight years – a great example of joint-working for the
benefit of local people. Gold Coast City Council is a welcome new addition to the Propel’s expanding portfolio of clients.

Propel can support all councils in Queensland with either the in-house modernisation of service provision or via hosting in a shared service environment. The cost savings are increasingly self-evident. The uplifts in performance have been proven year after year.

Resolute IT

Resolute has been working hard to meet the rapidly changing ICT demands of local councils across the state. The evolution of cloud-based technologies has disrupted the way in which councils have traditionally provisioned ICT services, and Resolute has been there to provide the strategic advice and support that many of small and remote councils depend on. Resolute has listened carefully to its customers and has taken the long-term view to concentrate its activities on specialist networking, hosting, cloud and ICT security-based initiatives.

Fast Facts about Resolute IT:

- Resolute IT provides support for:
  - Over 2000 desk top users across 1.83 million square kilometres
  - 112 web sites that collectively received over 10,087,868,368 hits
  - Provides 250 terabytes of storage for councils in Queensland.
  - 70% of our clients are more than 200km from Brisbane
  - Longest remotely managed client is 1,716 kilometres away
  - Provides Hundreds of days on-site support by skilled technicians – from Toowoomba to Winton and beyond
  - Provisioned, installed, racked, populated and commissioned entirely new data centres for remote councils

Local Buy

Local Buy has had another very successful year in 2014/15 with strong returns back to the shareholder.

The civil construction contract launched last financial year has had a full year of operations and the take up rate of the contract has been better than expected. Councils previously accessing the flood damage contracts have moved seamlessly across to the new arrangement.

Local Buy has undertaken a minor restructure which has provided capacity for a Client Relationship Manager based in North Queensland which will provide us with a greater scope
to service the North and North West Queensland councils

We have continued to build our relationship with the State Government with a full-time employee promoting our contracts and services to the State Government and its entities, Government-Owned Corporations and also the universities and not-for-profit sector.

Local Buy has also developed a number of training packages this year to assist those councils with their procurement training needs. Six modules that have been developed and many councils have already taken advantage of the training. Modules are Basic Procurement, Stores & Inventory Management, Specification Writing, Contract Management, Tendering Requirements and Advanced Purchasing. In 2016 we will be launching the first every local government-specific Cert IV Procurement.

The Board of Local Buy has revised its strategic plan this year and over the next three years we are looking at entering into an expansion phase from a contract perspective and expenditure flow through the contracts on offer.

LGIS

In 2014/15 LGIS has capitalised on the opportunities derived under its new ownership by the LGAQ. The new ownership has allowed LGIS to dramatically evolve its value proposition, to better serve local government to deliver greater infrastructure management outcomes.

LGIS’s service offering now aims to overcome some of the key infrastructure challenges facing local government, including but not limited to areas of market failure (such as energy), providing advisory services in areas of complexity and risk, and supporting the introduction of innovation and technology.

Key achievements this year have been:

Energy

This year Winton Shire Council progressed to the concept design phase of the Geothermal project which is expected to deliver savings of more than $15 million on electricity bills over 20 years. Murweh Shire Council has also commissioned a concept design assessment for Charleville, with energy savings of more than $12 million anticipated over 20 years. A further three councils (covering four towns) have signed up for pre-feasibility assessments and LGIS is in discussions with a further 12 councils to investigate the Geothermal potential for their communities.

LGIS has also supported McKinlay Shire Council to procure more than $500,000 of solar energy systems for council-owned buildings.

Asset Management

With recent focus from Queensland Treasury Corporation and Queensland Audit Office, LGIS has built a tailored set of services for local governments to develop capability for robust and strategic asset management. A number of councils have already committed to the LGIS Asset Management Program with significant growth forecast for the next financial year. With this LGIS is continuing to explore and develop innovative tools that can support councils to drive improved efficiencies and potential financial savings in managing assets.

Advisory

LGIS has undertaken a diverse range of advisory services in 2015. From assessing swimming enclosure investment in Redlands City Council, a waste collections review for Cairns Regional Council, to a property strategy in South Burnett Regional Council. The scope of general advisory services provided has demonstrated that LGIS is a trusted advisor to local government, particularly in areas that contain significant risk and complexity.

LGM Queensland
LGM Queensland (LGM) is Queensland local government’s legal liability self-insurance scheme that operates with the sole objective of delivering benefits to councils and local government-controlled entities. Since inception it has provided a range of covers including public liability, professional indemnity, councillors’ and officers’ liability, employment practices liability and cover provided to casual hirers of council facilities. On 30 June 2015, LGM successfully launched a new fund to provide cover for local government assets and the full range of related covers required by councils including motor vehicle, machinery and personal accident. A key objective of LGM Assets is to directly assist members enhance asset management processes and outcomes.

With the new assets fund in place, LGM provides councils with a local government controlled one-stop shop for all insurance and risk servicing requirements. LGM’s continuing objective is to provide reliable, local government-specific cover and maintain a significantly more stable cost environment for members than traditional insurance arrangements.

The ongoing strength of LGM’s financial position enabled the LGM Board of Management to determine that further surplus funds were available for distribution to members. With the support of the LGAQ, arrangements have been made for a total of $2 million to be distributed to continuing LGM members as part of the 2015/16 member contribution invoicing process. This distribution follows the membership dividend provided by way of a reduction in 2014/15 member contributions resulting in total 2014/15 contributions being less than in 2013/14.

Members also continued to receive contribution rebates based on implementation of risk management procedures. LGM’s ongoing risk management support again included development and updating of advisory guides for management of risks associated with major local government responsibilities, upgrading of LGM’s free JRS risk management software and on-the-ground professional support provided by Regional Risk Coordinators.

Local Government Workcare

Local Government Workcare (LGW) is a joint undertaking by Queensland councils, council-controlled entities and the LGAQ to hold a worker’s compensation self-insurance license.

Scheme members are provided with full workers’ compensation cover and pro-active claims management, injury management and injury prevention services. LGW seeks to maintain a more stable and predictable cost environment, and directly assist members to reduce the incidence and cost of workplace injuries.

During 2014/15 LGW’s consistent financial performance was again underpinned by effective, local government specific claim and injury management service outcomes. LGW continues to achieve performance outcomes that exceed state averages in all key areas of workers’ compensation management. These achievements enabled the LGW Management Committee to determine that a further $2 million in surplus funds was available to be distributed to members during 2015/16. The distribution brings the total of surplus funds distributed by LGW since its inception in 1998 to $14.4 million.

A priority of the scheme during 2014/15 has been to minimize the financial impact on members of ongoing uncertainty over workers’ compensation legislation and particularly the right of access to common law damages.
for workplace injuries. LGW has taken a prudent approach to recognising savings from legislation introduced by the previous Queensland Government limiting common law access rights. This recognised the risk of a new government altering or reversing the limitations. That is now in the process of occurring. LGW’s approach again reflects the objective of maintaining a stable and predictable financial environment for members.

LGW has also continued to refine the broad range of injury and risk management services provided to members. Further enhancement of the SAFE PLAN safety management system audit program has provided members with new electronic tools that reduce the time taken to complete internal audits and prepare action plans. The internal audits form part of an integrated audit program that include follow up audits by LGW WH&S consultants and support from the LGM LGW Regional Risk Coordinators.

Queensland Local Government Health Plan

The Queensland Local Government Health Plan is a joint initiative of the LGAQ and Health Link Consultants and is supported by the national health insurance fund HCF. The plan involves a new approach to reducing health insurance costs by establishing an excess refund pool that will refund the policy excess payable by plan members if they need to go to hospital. This allows plan members to achieve significant premium savings by taking on a policy excess with their hospital cover but not being required to meet the cost of the excess if they need to make a claim for hospital treatment. The excess refund pool used to refund policy excess payments made by plan members is funded by the plan’s supporting health fund, HCF.

This approach to health insurance provides employees with an additional workplace benefit specific to local government and supports efforts to identify councils as attractive employers. The plan is open to council employees and elected members. During 2014/15 over $14,000 in excess reimbursements were paid to council employees.

Awards & Recognition

The LGAQ received the Gold Award for its sustainable workplace wellness program Well@Work.

Through the provision of wellness-based policies, programs and placed-based initiatives, employees are given the opportunity to make healthier lifestyle choices and reduce their risk of chronic disease and injury. Hettler’s ‘6 Dimension of Wellness’ (Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Spiritual, Emotional, Social) is used as a framework to target the SNAPOM risk factors for chronic disease – Smoking and Sun-safety; Nutrition; Physical activity; Obesity and Mental health.

LGAQ Bean Lockyer Ticehurst Journalism Award 2014

With one of the highest cash prizes on offer in Australian journalism awards, and with no entry fee required, the 2015 LGAQ Journalism Award is a prestigious and lucrative opportunity for journalists designed to highlight and draw attention to journalistic excellence in Queensland.

This regional award honours the work of Australian Broadcasting Corporation figures John Bean, Paul Lockyer and Gary Ticehurst, who lost their lives in a helicopter during 2011.

The 2014 LGAQ Bean Lockyer Ticehurst Journalism Award winner was Warwick Daily news journalist Candyce Braithwaite for her series of reports aimed at forcing State and Federal governments to fund improvements to a deadly stretch of highway in her region.

The Award winner is announced each year at the LGAQ Annual Conference.