ANNUAL REPORT 2014
CEO FOREWORD

The Local Government Association of Queensland represents the interests of you – our members.

The activities of the LGAQ are as diverse as the 77 councils we represent. From the furthest reaches of the Cape to the sands of the coast, along the outback plains of the west and in metro southeast Queensland, we pride ourselves on tailoring our activities and services to suit your needs.

Our 2014 Annual Report provides an insight into these activities, a contemporary snapshot to add to more than a century of representing Queensland local government to successive state and federal governments.

Our rich history as an Association is steeped in a commitment to connecting councils to the places, faces and ideas that matter.

Local government as a sector faced significant challenges this year. A tough Federal budget and question marks over vital local infrastructure funding programs and natural disaster funds have made for an interesting ball game, as we raised our voices for you whenever it was necessary.

We’ve also hit more than our share of homeruns, as we looked to the future with the launch of the Queensland Plan at our Regional Economic Development Conference in Hervey Bay, delivered groundbreaking new services and kept you updated every step of the way using the latest technology.

This year, we’ve striven to make our Annual Report more readable than ever. It’s important that you, our stakeholders, have this window into the nuts and bolts of our operation.

Our motto is Connect, Innovate, Achieve. The following pages represent the practical manifestation of these ideals. Our three operating streams – Advocate, Assist and Advance – each represent a strand of our motto.

In short, what the hundreds of thousands of calls, emails, meetings, submissions, tweets and services the LGAQ delivers during the course of a year all equate to is a three word commitment to delivering nothing but the best for our members. Connect, Innovate, Achieve.

On behalf of our Board, Policy Executive and staff, I hope you enjoy reading this year’s summary of our activities, conducted for you.

Greg Hallam CEO
Local Government Association of Queensland
OUR HIGHLIGHTS in 2013-2014

CONNECT | Supporting you

4555 Calls received from QLD councils by our Member Services Centre in one month.

745 Days spent with members.

Over 30 ROC meetings attended.

We built you your very own VIP Members Lounge, in Brisbane....

A NEW LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE SERVICE

ACHIEVE | Policy wins

Successfully requested amendment to Local Government Act provisions on differential rating, saving councils billions of dollars.

INNOVATE | Savings

Created a mobile App Store just for Queensland councils.

946,944 users reached via a new live Twitter discussion on issues impacting QLD councils.

Assumed full ownership of client advisory firm Local Government Infrastructure Services.

Legal liability self- insurance scheme LGM Queensland provided councils with a total membership dividend of $676,000 following strong financial performance - offering a discount to council scheme contribution.

The voice of Queensland local government

The Premier launched the QLD PLAN at the LGAQ Regional Economic Development Conference.

And...
Delegates attending the Australian Local Government Association General Assembly in Canberra protest the freeze on indexation of Financial Assistance Grants.

You set our policy direction. Here is what we achieved.
The past 12 months have been the busiest and most challenging in living memory in terms of advocacy for local government. A combination of the large, complex policy challenges of managing today’s local communities, a new Coalition Government in Canberra and the Newman State Government’s drive to implement its wide ranging reform agenda impacting on local government meant that the LGAQ’s job of representing councils grew more urgent and varied as the year wore on. As the most effective policy representation starts with building and maintaining relationships, LGAQ advocacy staff were kept busy meeting key figures at both the state and federal government level as well as ensuring we kept in close contact with you, our member councils.

One means of ensuring this contact is through our regular attendance at Regional Organisation of Council meetings throughout Queensland. We attended some 30 ROC meetings this year and hosted the annual ROC assembly in Hervey Bay in July. These face-to-face gatherings, combined with the ongoing daily contact between LGAQ staff, elected members and senior council managers, allowed us to lodge 120 submissions to government, confident that the views and policy reform ideas we were putting forward were a true reflection of the views of local government in Queensland.

All up, the system of ROCs, alliances, reference groups and other member forums regularly engages and captures the policy aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Queensland councils.

Greg Hoffman
GENERAL MANAGER
Advocate
The Strategic Policy and Intergovernmental Relations team seeks to proactively position the LGAQ to influence federal and state policy development. The team also has responsibility for governance, social, waste and environmental health policy.

The team supports the organisation and particularly the executive by building relationships with key Queensland and Australian Government ministers, ministerial advisors and public servants.

- Attendance by ministers at LGAQ events, including organising for the Premier and Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection to attend the LGAQ Regional and Economic Development Conference in Hervey Bay where they launched the Queensland Plan were secured.

  The team helped ensure Deputy Prime Minister and Infrastructure and Regional Development Minister Warren Truss addressed the traditional LGAQ breakfast at ALGA’s National General Assembly in Canberra in June. As part of the LGAQ’s efforts to increase engagement with the Federal Government on indigenous issues, we also facilitated the attendance of the Minister for Indigenous Affairs at the October 2013 Indigenous Leaders Forum in Cairns was also facilitated.

- Meetings between the LGAQ President and the Deputy Prime Minister in August 2014 as well as the Prime Minister’s Policy Director in June 2014, both of which contributed to greater Federal Government appreciation of the LGAQ position on NDRRA (day labour) and confirmed local government’s stake in the upcoming White Papers on both reform of the federation and taxation reform were arranged.

- Efforts to negotiate solutions with government agencies and ministerial offices were supported. As an example, the Australian Attorney-General agreed to reinstate the Native Title Respondent Funding Scheme, which provides $2.2 million in funding over two years for local government and other respondents, and increase its allocation by $250,000 when the re-instated scheme was found to be oversubscribed.

- Advocacy issues across the LGAQ, for example helping the Assist stream work with the State Government on the implementation of the Housing 2020 Strategy and assisting in the preparation of a submission to the Federal Government on social housing were supported.

- The Advance stream on disaster resilience strategies, disaster management boundaries and issues arising from the Police and Community Safety Review were also supported. This has involved close collaboration and representation on a working group to progress the review of disaster management boundaries to align these with local government boundaries wherever possible.
Other areas of activity include supporting councils’ interaction with state and federal government; developing strategic relationships with key stakeholders and peak bodies; and providing in-confidence advice or general advice to government on a diverse range of issues, from the recent CMC reforms as they applied to local government, smoking reforms, waste to energy policy, prostitution regulation review, open data and open government, general indemnity issues (particularly asbestos and natural hazards), and outdoor advertising, just to nominate some.

Analysis of the Government’s various 6 month action plans and prepares accurate annual updates on the Partners in Government Agreement was also provided.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Advice was provided on relevant local government legislation and Local Government Act reforms, the Government agreed to:

- Amend legislation to change audit committee requirements to better suit the circumstances of small councils.
- Amend legislation to clarify that councils could differentially rate properties not occupied by the owners.
- Amend the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 to retain the current requirement for an elector to vote for the number of candidates to be elected in undivided local governments using the first-past-the-post system.

Liasing with member councils was ongoing and contributed to an ongoing, in-confidence review of the State Penalties Enforcement Register, pushing for local government concerns like the low resolution rate to be addressed through datawashing exercises and better engagement and data sharing with councils.

Councils were engaged and advice was provided advice to the Government on the setting of fines under State legislation, lobbying for greater flexibility in the quantum of fines local government can issue for breaches of its local law. The Government recently legislated these changes.
The development of Government policy on beach access was ameliorated after information was provided on potential unintended conflicts with council planning policies and access equity concerns.

**SOCIAL POLICY**

- Lobbying for a local government representative to sit on the State Library Board and argued for greater flexibility in the recent Public Library Grant Methodology Review was undertaken. That review provided more funding to support Rural Libraries Queensland and increased councils’ flexibility to reallocate up to 50% of the grant funding to priority local council library projects.

- Member councils to ensure the Queensland Disability Plan supported the work of the local government sector. Councils were also engaged in providing a whole of sector update on disability action plans for Commonwealth government reporting purposes.

- We led the LGAQ response to the Queensland Plan during its development and will provide support during the plan’s implementation.

- The LGAQ represented local government as a member of the Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary and has ensured council access to grant funding for local memorial events.

- Effective lobbying has helped convince the Government to provide local government with a legislated right of veto on applications for adult entertainment permits and improved information sharing processes for liquor licence applications.

- On childcare lobbying has ensured recent Senate inquiries and the Productivity Commission’s report on its childcare review have now formally recognised the particular challenges faced in these situations.

**WASTE AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

- A Waste and Environmental Health reference group was established to gain consensus across local government on relevant issues. The inaugural meeting in May provided the basis for the LGAQ’s response to draft legislation on the increased regulation of smoking in Queensland.

- Councils dealt with the implementation of the Government’s green tape reduction reforms, particularly in relation to new Codes of Practice (subsequently gazetted) on Motor Vehicle Workshops and Concrete batching.

- The Government provided appropriate tools for local government regarding the administration and enforcement of domestic asbestos matters. This included developing a statutory indemnity (covering both civil liability and claims arising), competency based training and cost recovery options.

- Negotiation with the Government a pro forma information sharing agreement on tattoo parlour enforcement which allows effective two way exchange of information between local governments and government agencies was negotiated. The agreement will assist councils with the administration of their responsibilities under the Public Health Act.
PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. PLANNING REFORMS

• The State Government’s draft Planning and Development Bill and the Planning and Environment Court Bill marked a significant milestone in the development of the new planning and development legislation. The LGAQ has provided feedback on both of these Bills, thanks to input from the Association’s Planning Reform Reference Group of senior local government officers. The group has been active in informing the reform agenda as it has emerged.

• Both Bills are expected to be formally introduced into parliament late in 2014.

2. CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION – DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT INNOVATION PROJECT

• Announced in May 2013, the Concept to Construction – Development Assessment Innovation (DAI) Project was a partnership between the Queensland Government, the LGAQ and the Council of Mayors (SEQ) to enable local governments to adopt innovative, best practice development assessment systems.

• Building on the work already undertaken in SEQ councils, nine of Queensland’s regional high growth These councils now lead the nation in development assessment reform
councils participated in the project. These councils now lead the nation in development assessment reform by fostering partnerships with the private sector to bring lasting improvement to the development industry.

- The DAI Project ended in July 2014 having fully achieved each of its deliverables, including:
  - Assessing each participating council’s development assessment business against the Council of Mayors (SEQ)’s Framework of Leading Development Assessment Practice.
  - Developing two year action plans for each participating council.
  - Working with participating councils to implement solutions of their choice.
  - Implementation and support of pilot projects.

- As part of the project, the Council of Mayors (SEQ) developed the Queensland Development and Planning Portal. The portal provides a useful online collaboration space for local and State Government and other stakeholders to share ideas and initiatives on development assessment and other matters.

3. DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT MONITORING PROJECT

The LGAQ and the Council of Mayors (SEQ) began the Development Assessment (DA) Monitoring Project in early 2014 to develop an electronic reporting tool for development assessment processes of the participating local governments. The Department of State Development and Planning helped fund the project, which will continue into 2015.

- The reporting tool connects into existing council software to extract relevant development assessment data to generate performance reports, useful for mayors, chief executive officers and relevant council executives. The portal will also include a dashboard with links to real-time data feeds.

- Importantly, this project will replace the need for the time consuming and expensive State Government Development Assessment Monitoring and Performance Program (DAMPP).
4. INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND CHARGING FRAMEWORK REFORMS

- The LGAQ strongly resists any move to subsidise developers at the expense of the community, a position we adopted following the 2013 Annual Conference, where 96 per cent of councils voted against offering any further concessions to developers.

- This is the position the LGAQ took into State Government workshops with key stakeholders between February 2013 and April 2014 aimed at testing options for reform.

- A more detailed stance was decided by the LGAQ Policy Executive and presented to the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, the Hon. Jeff Seeney MP:
  
  **Position 1 – The current maximum capped charge levels remain unchanged.**
  
  - If the current infrastructure charges are retained at existing levels for say, another two years, they will have dropped by at least 15-20% in real terms over five years, which is a significant cost reduction for developers.
  
  - Councils do not have the ability to absorb further higher costs, particularly cost-shifts from developers to ratepayers. Over the past four years they have already needed to increase general rates and water / sewerage charges by 27%.
  
  **Position 2 – An annual automatic indexation of the current maximum capped charges is implemented using the Queensland road and bridge construction index to reflect increasing building and construction costs of providing infrastructure.**
  
  - Maximum capped charges have accompanied increases in infrastructure construction costs. Charges have dropped in value by approximately 8% in real terms since 2011.
  
  - Conversely, the State Government currently applies a 3.5% annual indexation to its own fees and charges.

  **Position 3 – The State Government introduce a new subsidy or catalytic infrastructure development program that targets infrastructure projects on a cost / benefit basis focusing on economic development priorities.**
  
  - From 2002/03 to 2009/10, State Government funding was effectively halved from approximately $480 million to approximately $225 million.
  
  - The combined effect of abolishing the capital subsidy program, capping development infrastructure charges and limiting income from the water businesses of SEQ local governments has cost the sector approximately $800 million a year.

- The Government announced the outline for the new infrastructure planning and charging framework in April and The Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 became law in July.

- Regrettably, despite detailed submissions by the LGAQ and an appearance before the relevant parliamentary committee, only a select number of issues we raised were addressed in amendments to the Bill.
In summary:

- The current maximum capped charge level remains unchanged.
- The State Government has developed a set of ‘fair value charges’ that a local government may choose to adopt that range generally between 10% to 15% lower than the current maximum capped charges. Uses such as large shopping centres were significantly better off, with a reduction greater than 25%.
- Although the maximum capped charges have remained unchanged, there is also no increase. The Planning Minister retains the authority to determine any indexing of charges in the future as currently provided for in legislation.
- The ‘fair value charges’ will be automatically indexed by the producer price index (Queensland road and bridge construction index).
- The State Government has announced a co-investment program for catalyst infrastructure through Economic Development Queensland (EDQ). Based on State Government budget documents and more specifically, reference to the $500 million Local Government Co-Investment Fund, no further definite details have emerged regarding period of expenditure or eligibility / application criteria.
- Only local governments who adopt the ‘fair value charges’ are eligible to apply for funding for selective infrastructure projects that will generate or facilitate major economic development.
- Only local governments that adopt the ‘fair value charges’ would be eligible for the existing Royalties for the Regions funding.
- The funding program is also available to major developers and other State agencies, provided the local government has adopted the ‘fair value charges’.
- Specific details of the program, including available budget, are still to be determined. The State has stressed this is not a grant or a loan, and any funds may be recouped over time by EDQ.
5. QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS PLANNING COMMISSION

- The review of the Guidelines on Arrangements for Infrastructure External to State Government Sites and Non-State Schools to achieve more equitable assessment and funding provisions for local government is a key priority in the LGAQ’s Advocacy Action Plan.

- The LGAQ is a member of the Queensland Schools Planning Commission, and the commission’s final report on the review awaits consideration by the Minister for Education, Training and Employment Honourable, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek MP.

6. INVASIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS

CO-INVASIVE MODEL PROJECT

The LGAQ estimates that local governments invest around $20 million a year as well as other in-kind contributions to the management of invasive plants and animals. This is in addition to the $5.5 million annual contribution into the Land Protection Fund, demonstrating a high level of commitment to reducing the impacts of invasive plants and animals.

- The Co-investment Model is a joint initiative of the LGAQ and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) to provide more local government input into the way the existing $5.5 million annual council payment to the Land Protection Fund is spent.

- A board, comprising four mayors, one LGAQ representative and two DAFF representatives oversee the co-investment project. A think tank of 11 local government and two DAFF members provides technical input in developing the model.

- The model has four components:
  - On Ground and Research Services
  - Wild Dog Barrier Fence (WDBF)
  - Darling Downs-Moreton Rabbit Protected Area (DDMRPA)
  - Plague Pest Contingency Fund (PPCF).

- There is general overall support for the model among local government. The LGAQ Policy Executive has endorsed the final model, which is now subject to approval by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon. John McVeigh MP.

7. COASTAL COUNCILS ADAPTATION TASKFORCE (C-CAT)

- The C-CAT, an alliance of Queensland coastal local governments, was established in February 2014 to improve the capacity of local councils to adapt to coastal climate change challenges.

- Key objectives include:
  - Sharing information and experiences
  - Identification of training and professional development needs
  - Initiating collaborative research and other projects
  - Engaging State and Federal Government agencies
  - Providing advice to LGAQ

- Initially six councils have joined: Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Whitsunday, Mackay, Gladstone and Moreton Bay.

- Key activities currently being delivered for the Taskforce include:
Understanding legal liability. Legal advice and guidance being developed by the LGAQ and King and Company Solicitors. Presentations to councils will also discuss impacts of not adapting on insurability and risks to accessing financial investment.

Undertaking council-wide adaptation governance assessments for all member councils.

8. COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES – COASTAL HAZARD ADAPTATION

- The LGAQ has prepared a Communication Guidelines for Coastal Hazard Adaptation to provide a practical resource to assist councils to develop fit-for-purpose communication strategies about coastal hazards and council’s decision-making processes to respond and adapt to such hazards.

- The Communication Guideline was developed in response to a needs analysis of coastal councils and confirmed by the Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce Committee (C-CAT).

- The Guideline was sent to all coastal local governments in May.

9. QUEENSLAND STATE LAND TENURE REFORMS

- Queensland State Land – strengthening our economic future discussion paper outlined the most significant review of the state land system in more than 100 years. The State Government says it is committed to creating a modern state land system as part of its overall vision of building Queensland’s economic resilience.

- The LGAQ submission to the paper outlined local governments’ broad support for its objectives, particularly its aims of providing greater investment certainty for leaseholders and empowering local governments as managers of state land.

- The LGAQ also advised the Government it should give close regard to the financial and administrative capacity of local governments. It stated that for the full potential of the reforms to be realised, the State Government must invest necessary resources to develop the implementation strategies, products, tools, training and means for on-going support.

- The LGAQ will continue to work closely with the Government as the next stages of the reform process emerge.
10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT LIABILITY TO COASTAL HAZARDS

- The State Government changed State Planning Policy to remove the mandated climate change factors of 0.8 metre sea level rise and 10% increased wind intensity. King and Company Solicitors subsequently advised local governments regarding their risk of liability in planning and development decisions.

- In summary, the advice states:
  - Councils are obliged to properly consider coastal hazards, such as erosion, storm tide inundation and flooding, when preparing planning schemes and assessing development applications. Such considerations include the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise and increased wind intensity in worsening existing coastal hazards.
  - To limit potential liability, councils should adopt a sea level rise factor that conforms with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and obtain suitably qualified expert opinion as to the effect of applying that factor to their region, having regard to local conditions, and to identify properties at risk from natural hazards worsened by climate change, for identification in the planning scheme.
  - In the event there is no suitably qualified, cogent expert evidence supporting adoption of a sea level rise factor lower than 0.8 metres by 2100 (with 10% increase in wind intensity), it would not be prudent for councils to adopt a lower level as this would significantly increase their exposure to liability.

- The LGAQ and Local Government Mutual Liability (LGM) sent the final legal advice to mayors and CEOs in April and to the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery & Resilience, the Hon. David Crisafulli MP in May.

- The LGAQ and King and Company Solicitors have provided a formal submission to the Government detailing the necessary legislative amendments to relieve local governments from liability for reasonably based decision making and actions regarding natural hazards similar to those provided for in section 733 of the New South Wales Local Government Act 1993.

11. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT 2012

- The LGAQ has worked closely with councils, particularly Logan City Council, to push for amendments to the Economic Development Act 2012 to provide transparency, certainty and equity in the infrastructure expenses recoupment framework.

- The State Government’s State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (Red Tape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 addressed some, but not all, of these concerns.

- We were disappointed that, after an initial response to a submission in June 2013, the Government offered no meaningful discussion or analysis prior to introducing this legislation.

- The LGAQ will continue to work with councils to address outstanding matters of concern.
12. Drought Assistance for Priority Pest Animals

- The Australian Government is contributing $10 million to state governments to help reduce the impact of pest and feral animals on drought-affected farmers as part of the drought assistance package announced in February.

- Funding is available over two financial years to 30 June 2015.

- The LGAQ is part of a state-wide program oversight committee with DNRM, QPWS, and AgForce. The committee will help develop projects for on-ground operations for feral dogs, feral pigs and rabbits.

13. US and Canada Tour – ‘Poster Child’ Planning Cities Tour

- The LGAQ, assisted by Green Shoe Travel, undertook a “Poster Child Planning Cities” tour to the west coast of North America in November 2013. The tour visited the cities of San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver.

- The tour aimed to assist elected members and senior officers to learn from best practice examples in these cities, which are noted leading examples in the world for various aspects of dealing with growth.

- A particular focus of the tour was how these cities manage density, transport, new urbanism, transit orientated development and urban renewal.

- The group visited local government representatives, the development industry and others involved in planning in those communities.
Advocacy by numbers

The LGAQ Advocacy team have produced approx. 120 submissions on everything from drought assistance to the development of northern Australia.

Roads, indigenous leaders, environmental health, water and sewerage…

We’ve convened 17 Reference and formal Group meetings in the past year. A total of 51 councils are represented across these groups.

More than 15 informal email circulation groups exist on topic specific policy issues.

The LGAQ has attended approx. 30 ROC meetings in the last year.
INFRASTRUCTURE, ECONOMICS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ROADS AND TRANSPORT POLICY

Roads and Transport Alliance

The efforts of Regional Roads and Transport Groups (RRTGs) to once again ensure full expenditure under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (it has now exceeded 100 per cent for the second year running) will greatly assist the LGAQ lobby for the TIDS program to be increased to $80 million a year as part of the Association’s 2015 State Election 10 Point Policy Plan.

RRTGs have also effectively used the State-wide Capability Development Fund (SCDF) for initiatives in training, asset management and procurement. Through the fund, the LGAQ leads key strategic initiatives in the following areas:

- Workforce Sustainability Pilot – a project with the North West Queensland RRTG and Etheridge Shire Council (a Far North Queensland RRTG member) to identify sustainable road maintenance and renewal arrangements consistent with State Government policy and fiscal responsibility objectives.

- 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 RRTG network priorities and TMR strategic freight routes as identified in the Heavy Vehicle Action Plan (Stage Two – Route Identification).

The Roads and Transport Alliance Board this year welcomed new members to the Alliance. Douglas and Mareeba Shire Councils joined the Far North Queensland RRTG; Livingstone Shire Council joined the Rockhampton RRTG; and Noosa Shire Council joined the Northern SEQ RRTG.

The board invited indigenous councils outside of Cape York to join their local RRTG. We expect transition arrangements, including those for the transfer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TIDS funding to the control of respective RRTGs, will be finalised before the end of 2014.

The Alliance has begun a major review of its operational framework. The Alliance’s objectives have remained relatively unchanged since 2002. The 2013-18 Alliance Memorandum of Agreement identified ‘planning objectives’ as an area for greater collaboration between Transport and Main Roads and local government, so it is timely to review the objectives of the Alliance and how it can best support RRTGs achieving these objectives.

Road Asset Valuation Toolbox Training

The Road Asset Valuation Project enjoyed a successful year and was named by the Transport, Housing and Local Government Parliamentary Committee as a leading example of the collaborative effort being made to improve asset management.

Managed by LGAQ on behalf of the Roads and Transport Alliance, the project...
delivered a road valuation methodology for councils.
The project is a collaborative partnership with TMR’s Road Asset Management team, an expert panel of local government officers, RRTGs and councils. The Queensland Audit Office, Office of the Valuer-General and the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience also contributed to the project.
The Road Asset Valuation Toolbox provides councils with resources including a set of definitions, specifications and user manuals for local roads. It can be found on the Roads and Transport Alliance webpage on LG Online.
The SCDF supported a training program which delivered seven training sessions to RRTGs representing the Far North, North West, South West, Outback, Wide Bay Burnett, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Western Downs.
Several Queensland councils expect to adopt the methodology to value their road assets.

**Advanced Fatigue Management**
National reforms to reduce heavy vehicle driver fatigue were introduced in 2008.
To assist councils affected by the reforms, the LGAQ engaged a consultant to design the Heavy Vehicle Fatigue Management Accreditation Toolbox, available via LGOnline. This provides an overview of council obligations under the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Regulation.
For example, councils wanting to operate more flexible rosters to schedule works around seasonal weather patterns can apply for Basic or Advanced Fatigue Management (BFM/AFM) accreditation which requires them to demonstrate that heavy vehicle operators are managing fatigue risks.
In addition, the LGAQ has also succeeded in its application for a record keeping exemption that allows councils to maintain one set of records on driver hours and rosters. This is also published on the LGAQ Heavy Vehicle Fatigue Management Accreditation Toolbox page.
The LGAQ is working closely with the Department of Energy and Water Supply on the implementation of WaterQ, a 30 Year Strategy for Queensland’s Water Sector. The LGAQ is on WaterQ’s Strategic Advisory Committee which has a key role in overseeing the strategy’s program of works. Key among the strategy’s priorities is the ongoing implementation of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP).

**Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP)**

QWRAP involves four key regions: the Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD), and the Regional Organisations of Councils representing the far North, Wide Bay Burnett and the Whitsunday regions.

QWRAP therefore covers 43% of the State’s area and 46% of the State’s population outside of southeast Queensland. The program covers a mix of large and small regional water and sewerage service providers with varying capacities as well as high and low population regions and development pressures.

QWRAP activities have included joint training of operational staff; reviewing and aligning Drinking Water Quality Management Plans across councils; price benchmarking; regional asset management frameworks; tendering arrangements and sharing laboratory services where possible.

In June RAPAD officially launched its Outback Water Alliance with the support of Minister McArdle MP, the first step to formalising the group’s regional collaboration. RAPAD aims to have a fully supported and self sustaining alliance model by the end of 2014.
ELECTRICITY REFORMS

Regulatory Issues

The LGAQ, together with Local Buy, continues to put local government’s case 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 sessions are part of the leadup to the two energy providers submitting proposals for the 2015-2020 Regulatory Control period to the AER by 31 October 2014.

Transfer of Alternate Controls Service Charges

A State Government decision to begin recovering non-energy street lighting charges, known as Alternate Control Service (ACS) charges, in the Ergon Energy distribution area sparked a shakeup in the way councils pay for street lighting.

From 1 July 10 per cent of ACS charges were 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.

Armed with data from Ergon Energy under a letter of authority supplied by all affected councils, the LGAQ enlisted the Local Government and Statutory Bodies Group of Queensland Treasury Corporation to model the impacts of the transfer using a straight-line price path.

The LGAQ’s first preference is for these charges to be covered by the existing CSO payment. However, should these representations be unsuccessful, in line with its Advocacy Action Plan, the Association will use the QTC analysis to try to ensure a sensible price path that limits the impacts on councils. We expect to begin formal representations to the Department of Energy and Water Supply during September/October 2014 and expect an outcome by the end of 2014.

FUNDING AND FINANCE

Financial Assistance Grants

Since the 2014 Budget’s freeze on indexation of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and the LGAQ have sought an urgent reversal of the decision - which is estimated to cost Queensland councils $180 million over the next three years.

Over their history, Commonwealth FAGs have always been indexed by a factor to take into account growth and inflation, and an indexation factor has been embodied in legislation. All councils will feel the impact of the freeze, but especially indigenous and rural and remote councils which are relatively more dependent on FAGs.

Councils will continue to lose grant revenue due to the resulting lower base that will be used for the expected restoration of indexation in 2017-18. Further lost grant funding is possible if the Federal Government does not apply the full indexation factor from the year indicated in the forward budget estimates which, under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995, is at the Treasurer’s discretion.

The LGAQ continues to push for:

1. An urgent reversal of the decision to freeze indexation and the use of an indexation factor that truly reflects changes in councils’ costs, such as the LGAQ Council Cost Index;

2. An increase in the national funding pool, and for the amount allocated by
the Federal Government to be based on a fixed share of Commonwealth taxation; and

3. The method of interstate distribution of general purpose grants to be changed from a per capita basis to a fiscal equalisation basis.

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Infrastructure Funding

In submissions to the inquiry, the LGAQ has highlighted the need for appropriate funding from other levels of government to better achieve fiscal equalisation, as well as flexibility to allow local government to generate other revenues if it is to continue to deliver services and infrastructure for all communities.

Productivity Commission Inquiry into Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements

The LGAQ has urged this all-important inquiry to consider the following:

- From a local government financial sustainability perspective, there is no capacity for cost shifting of natural disaster responsibilities to councils in Queensland.
- It is essential that the Commonwealth maintain the level of support it provides as a proportion of the costs of natural disaster once relevant trigger points are reached.
- The betterment concept deserves
strong support but current funding does not provide an appropriate incentive.

- The Australian Government should permanently adopt the ‘value for money’ approach of the trial as the basis for the use of council day labour staff in performing works under the NDRRA. The use of council day labour has been shown to be cost effective.

- Insurance coverage of local government roads is not a viable cost effective option given the market availability of cover, necessary premium levels and the financial capacity of the councils most affected.

- There is no issue with the way in which the Commonwealth Grants Commission treats natural disaster payments in terms of greater incentive for more effective risk management.

The LGAQ also assisted with a Productivity Commission tour of Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funded projects in Ipswich and the Lockyer Valley, and hosted a discussion forum on disaster funding issues attended by a number of councils in Brisbane on 30 June 2014. The final report is to be presented to the Treasurer in December 2014.

RESOURCE REGIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Local Government's Role in the Assessment Process for Resource Projects

The LGAQ has been arguing over a number of years for an elevated role for local government in the assessment process for resource projects. In March, we engaged KPMG to prepare an options paper on the issue with the aim of the LGAQ making representations to the Resources Cabinet Committee. The draft Options Paper suggested how local government’s role can be improved in the project impact assessment phase; conditioning arrangements; community and industry engagement as well as governance structures. The Final Report is expected to be delivered by the end of 2014.

Royalties for the Regions Program Changes

In announcing Round 4 of Royalties for the Regions in August, Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeff Seeney MP revealed significant changes to the program’s focus. The changes include opening the eligibility criteria to all local governments across Queensland as well as re-directing a significant portion of the program funds into state assets known as “Projects of Regional Significance”.

The LGAQ has publicly expressed its dissatisfaction with this approach and has asked the Government to reinstate the program in line with its original Terms of Reference. This matter is also included in the Association’s 2015 State Election Local Government Policy Plan.

The LGAQ has continued to engage with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP) throughout the delivery of the Royalties for the Regions Program.

Out of a total of 52 projects ($192.63m) in Round 2, funding was provided to 43 local government assets ($157.54m) and seven state government assets ($35m) as well as 2 telecommunication provider assets.

Out of a total of 22 projects ($21.88m) in Round 3, funding was provided for 21 local government assets ($21.88m) and one state government asset.

The LGAQ continues to advocate for untied funding and governance arrangements that do not create unnecessary cost burdens on councils.

There is no capacity for cost shifting of natural disaster responsibilities to councils in Queensland.
Launch of Queensland Plan at LGAQ Regional and Economic Development Conference

From 30 July to 1 August, the LGAQ convened its Regional and Economic Development Conference in Hervey Bay. Approximately 200 industry and council delegates attended the event which also included the launch of the Queensland Plan by the Premier, the Hon Campbell Newman MP.

The Premier introduced the Queensland Plan as a 30-year vision for the state’s future and the culmination of the largest community engagement activity of its kind in Australian history. He also stated that “local government, as the frontline level of government so close to the people, will have an absolutely critical role in implementing the Plan”.

The LGAQ provided a submission on the Draft Queensland Plan as well as its enabling legislation. LGAQ President Cr Margaret de Wit accepted an invitation to be a Queensland Plan ambassador along with Cr Tony McGrady, Mayor of Mount Isa City Council and Leon Yeatman, Chief Executive Officer of Mapoon Aboriginal Council.

Delegates at the Conference also had the opportunity to workshop the implementation and implications of the Queensland Plan alongside the Minister responsible for its carriage, the Hon Andrew Powell, MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection.

In addition to the above, the conference delegates saw 55 speakers in total delivering presentations on key economic development initiatives across various regions of Queensland; interstate case studies; key policy programs from the Federal Government, such as the Northern Australia Policy; and various panel debates involving academics and industry leaders.

Regional Organisation of Councils (ROC) Assembly

The LGAQ hosted its annual ROC Assembly in Hervey Bay prior to the Association’s Regional and Economic Development Conference. The Assembly brought together ten ROCs to discuss key issues such as natural disaster funding arrangements, infrastructure and road funding, asset sales, red tape reduction and mutual messaging on Federal and State agendas.
Along with presentations on best practice case studies – achieving outback roads funding and joint procurement cost savings in the Far North, delegates workshopped how LGAQ and ROCs can strengthen ROC unity, better share advocacy efforts and resources and elevate the profile of ROCs in the minds of Federal and State Governments.

Approximately 200 industry and council delegates attended the event which also included the launch of the Queensland Plan by the Premier, the Hon Campbell Newman MP. “local government, as the frontline level of government so close to the people, will have an absolutely critical role in implementing the Plan”
**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

The LGAQ continued to represent councils on changes to the Queensland industrial relations landscape. The Association welcomed the subsequent Fair Work harmonisation legislation that aligned state industrial relations regulatory regime to elements of the federal industrial relations system.

Whilst the reforms went much further than what the LGAQ wanted on behalf of councils, the key changes we sought were accommodated, including the requirement for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) to modernise all Queensland awards.

In early 2014, the Association launched its case for a single modern Local Government Award, an unprecedented proposal that was subsequently supported by the QIRC’s award modernisation team. Despite the full complement of local government unions challenging our case, the QIRC Full Bench ultimately determined there would be one award for local government in Queensland.

At the time of publication, the LGAQ and various working parties made up of council representatives remain heavily engaged in the complicated and onerous task of determining the contents of the new award. As expected, unions are resisting any change and we expect that much of the content will be the subject of arbitration by the QIRC Full Bench.

The LGAQ held regional seminars around the state to discuss the reforms and the implications for councils. More than 20 working party meetings have provided input into the Association’s representations on behalf of councils during the award modernisation process.

**Did You Know:** Back in 2003, the primary objective of the LGAQ’s 10 Year Industrial Relations Reform Strategy was to have all local government employees covered by one jurisdiction (preferably state) under a single award. When it was launched, unions as well as state and federal government sources said the objective was fanciful and would never happen. In 2008, all staff were effectively in the state jurisdiction and today we are determining the details a single award for all local government employees.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND SHARING**

The LGAQ’s Workforce Knowledge Group continued to enhance the quality of our output on workforce matters. These included the expanded offerings through HR Advance, the HR Metrics and Strategic Workforce Planning initiative.

The Association hosted a successful National Local Government Human Resources Conference on the Gold Coast. Australian Local Government Association President Felicity-ann Lewis opened the conference, attended by council representatives from all states and territories. We also convened two HR Manager Forums (Brisbane and Kingaroy) to assist councils share their collective experiences and expertise and identify areas for industry improvement.

**Did You Know:** On any single day, there are at least two HR Chat (LGAQ administered electronic Chat service for Local Government HR operatives) electronic requests for assistance from a Council HR professional with each request receiving a minimum of five offers of assistance from other Queensland councils.
In recent years, Queensland councils have had access to more than $15.75 million of Government funding under a fully contestable industry driven brokerage model.

This model funds up to 85% of the cost of training 12% of the workforce within the 57 non-indigenous Queensland councils. A $1.6M program targeting the skill development needs of the 16 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils is likely to result in 20-25% of employees in these councils gaining a formal qualification or accredited skill set.

These projects show the benefits of an industry-led and managed approach to skills development through genuine collaboration between the LGAQ and State Government agencies.

The LGAQ accessed funding in 2012 from Skills Queensland to develop a local government Workforce Planning Model. In 2013/14, workforce planning began to roll out across councils with in house briefings provided by the LGAQ. We shared the data we gathered as part of that exercise at the 2013 LGAQ Finance Summit and collection of the 2014 data set is underway. We also have the ability to recut data sets on new areas of interest, such as overtime as a percentage of total labour costs.

The LGAQ’s annual collection of workforce Census data provides the only set of consistent time series data for 2001 to 2014. The data featured in the Association’s annual Industry Skills Workforce and Development Plan which has been used by state and federal government departments as well as the Productivity Commission.

The data allowed us to make key representations to the State and Federal Government on legislative and policy change, funds allocation and other government and industry interventions.
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COUNCILS REPRESENTATION AND SUPPORT

As part of the LGAQ’s strategy of building collaborative relationships between spheres of government for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, we have sought the following results:

Collaborative partnerships between the Federal and State Governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments to improve the economic and social wellbeing of the communities.

State and Federal Government bureaucracies that are responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils’ considerations and views prior to development of policy options.

Through the LGAQ’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders Forum (ILF), develop an overarching vision for their communities to underpin submissions to government.

Government departments with processes that achieve desired consultation and engagement outcomes.

INDIGENOUS LEADERS

The Indigenous Leaders Forum (ILF) continued to grow in status with the Association receiving regular requests from state, federal and other government bodies to attend the ILF meetings, two of which were convened during 2013/24.
ILFs were convened in October 2013 and June 2014. The latter conference held on Thursday Island was the first to be convened outside of Cairns or Brisbane. We plan to convene future ILFs in other communities to help the local economy and provide an opportunity to showcase the local community.

Requests from key government agencies for additional access to the ILF and its membership prompted the convening of “Conversations” to complement the ILF’s work. A first-ever Policing Conversation was attended by executive members of the Queensland Police Service as well as all relevant regional officers.

Economic participation, at the June 2014 ILF hosted by Torres Shire Council on Thursday Island, land reform, and the review of Alcohol Management Plans continued to be key issues for discussion.

Other key outcomes from the ILF include:

- ongoing consultation on implementation of the Government Home Ownership program
- agreement on the new Police/Local Government Operational review methodology
- ongoing discussions around the review of the Retail Store Model
- input into government training policy
- improved systems for raising issues with the LGAQ and government
- workforce capacity strategy.

Acknowledgement: The LGAQ wishes to acknowledge the efforts and activities of Mayors Fred Gela and Alf Lacey for their leadership in convening the ILF forum and for their lobbying on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Both have now gained a significant media presence as leaders amongst their people and are actively sought after by a range of media for their views and comments on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
This year, we’ve shared and connected with you like never before.
Can you help me?
It’s our most frequently asked question, and the short answer is yes.
What immediately follows this statement provides an insight into the LGAQ’s diversity, because the topic of enquiry is inevitably as broad as local government itself. From bats & cats to roads & rating.

Over the last few years the Association has been focused on improving our front-line support services, and the increasing number of councillors and council staff making contact with us benefit.

In short, we aspire to be the ‘first call’ for all matters of concern or difficulty.

Since launching in November 2011, the work of our Members Services Centre and members’ hotline has grown exponentially.

Our Member Services Team has more than doubled in size, handling a record number of enquiries and spending more time on the phone than ever before.

Their job is to connect questions with answers, so that those working in and leading local councils can get on with their job.

Improvements to our own back-of-house systems and investments in new technologies as well as progress towards a contemporary customer service model means that the person who takes the inquiry can successfully respond to it more than half the time.

For callers, that means more timely and consistent advice.

Of course, not everything in local government is simple. And things change – sometimes rapidly.

In addition to our frontline services we have bolstered our team of subject matter experts.

Our governance, compliance, industrial relations, communications and media teams are a gateway to the broader expertise and experience spread throughout the Association and its subsidiaries.

We have also delivered a raft of new resources, tools, support materials and member engagement activities in response to member needs and external factors.

The largest initiative was the establishment of a new legislative compliance service supported by the commitment of 31 councils.

The LG Online resource library also continued to expand with dedicated mini-sites for the Emergency Management Fire & Rescue Levy, flying-fox management and to support councils with the significant Industrial Relations reforms currently underway.

We published new elected member handbooks on asset management and flying-fox management complemented with three new QTC guides to depreciation, governance and full-cost pricing. All of these are on LG Online and our Councillor Webdesk.

The LGAQ delivered its annual Elected Member Update (EMU) program in more than 30 regional centres and townships in 2014. The program gave more than 500 councillors, CEOs and senior staff a valuable professional development experience as well as a briefing on the major legislative reforms underway.

We continue to assist individual councils with authoritative media relations and issues management advice and ran several highly successful workshops throughout the year introducing councils to the community engagement potential of social media.

Glen Beckett GENERAL MANAGER Assist
The LGAQ’s Member Services Centre continued to grow, as we answered your inquiries faster, and touched base with you more than ever. Our total volume of calls received by MSC peaked at a record 4555 during the month of July. We launched our Members Lounge at LG House in Brisbane, a place for elected members and CEOs to recharge and relax while in transit.

Our elected member update program was the biggest yet, spanning 25 regional and remote centers. We listened to you when you identified gaps in knowledge and understanding of local government legislative compliance obligations, and launched a new Legislation Compliance Service which provides a platform for councils to share and grow their knowledge of this important and complex field.

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MEMBER SERVICES
Informing, educating and sharing

MEMBERS LOUNGE LAUNCHED
It’s free, handy to the airport, and all yours.
- Free internet
- Desktop computers
- Meeting rooms
- Showers and amenities
- Newspapers

EM KIT: ASSET MANAGEMENT
Councils universally identified asset management as one of the top three most pressing areas for their council.

LGAQ responded with the creation of a new Elected Members Guide to Asset Management and Understanding Asset Depreciation booklet, written in plain English.
ELECTED MEMBERS UPDATES

In our biggest ever undertaking, more than 15 senior LGAQ staff took to the road to conduct a rolling tour of elected member updates spanning more than 25 regional and remote centres.

2014 saw the introduction of an elective component for the first time, allowing councils to choose their own workshop content based on regional relevance.

Financial sustainability, planning and industrial relations reform and regional issues like flying-fox management were among key topics canvassed across workshop locations.

Pictured right: LGAQ Assist General Manager shares a close encounter with a crocodile when visiting Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Council for EMU.
New Legislation Compliance Service

From concept design to implementation, the Legislation Compliance Service is a joint effort between the LGAQ, King and Co., JLT and 30 member councils from local government across Queensland.

Where previously compliance knowledge was highly specialised and resting with individuals, our Legislation Compliance Service provides a platform for councils to share and grow their knowledge of this important and complex field. The Legislation Compliance Service identifies in plain English what councils must do and should do as prescribed by legislation in a central online resource.

AT TIME OF LAUNCH
1060 COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS

CURRENTLY
4420 COMPLIANCE OBLIGATIONS
Media and Communications

Living in a digital world

This year, we embraced more emerging digital communication platforms than ever before, in order to make sure your news and updates from the LGAQ were timely, personal and easy to access.

1,965 tweets sent this year.

2,724 followers
To an audience of...

1,656
How many times did these people engage?

1,612,023 potential account reach of...

1,333,143,021 potential impressions

Twitter Engagement Megaphone

This graphic shows the impact and reach of the LGAQ’s Twitter account, during a single year.

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

The Story of a Tweet....

“LGAQ NEWS: #qld councils share pain of #2014budget. #localgov likely to forgo more than $182 million extra funding.”

Retweeted by
LGAQ Media Executive Craig Johnstone @johnstonec
Redlands Mayor Cr Karen Williams @CrKarenWilliams
ABC Southern Queensland presenter Belinda Sanders @BelindaRadio
Executive Director of SEQ Council of Mayors Peter Olah @PO2110

Reaching a combined account total of 6,722 users

Resulting in increased exposure - a total of 1,364 views of the media release
INSTAGRAM

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

Increasingly, organisations and governments are using visual platforms to engage with target audiences. Using popular hashtags like #thisisqueensland #brisbaneanyday #qldpol and #captureitqld has allowed the LGAQ to rapidly grow its follower base since 2013, interacting with councils, fellow stakeholders and social media big guns like QPS Media and Queensland Tourism.

The LGAQ has implemented a monthly ‘LGAQ Takeover’ series, where a different Queensland council takes control of the LGAQ Instagram account each month, sharing visuals from throughout their day.

NETWORK CONTRIBUTION

Platform contribution to overall LGAQ social media reach

FACEBOOK 15%
TWITTER 54%
INSTAGRAM 31%

Most liked image

20 ❤️
Local councils in Queensland will need to battle the notion that the Commonwealth’s contribution to the formal Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements has become too expensive.

The first iteration of monthly segment specific newsletters began in June, as part of a new communications strategy focused on individualised and segment level messaging.
Greg Hallam
CEO

“I will always remember watching the sun set across the desert from the Bedourie Road House.”

Margaret de Wit
President

“The memorial to the Duyfken and the Dutch on the coast at Mappoon was very impressive. Being taken there on a tour by Mayor Peter Guivarra was a wonderful experience.”

Glen Beckett
General Manager

“After an EMU session at Pompurrw Aboriginal Shire Council we were given a tour of the towns crocodile farm by the owner. His land cruiser was not welcomed by a nesting female which lashed out at the cars tyre as we were driving through.”
ADVANCE | INNOVATE

Helping Queensland councils innovate and save.
The 2013/14 year has seen some very exciting developments and announcements for the commercial section of LGAQ. One of the most significant for our members was the launch of the Out-of-Hours and Disaster Management Contact Centre. Through our subsidiary Propel Partnerships, the LGAQ, along with our partner at Services Qld, Ipswich City Council, began offering standard out of hours call centre support and guaranteed disaster management support to councils. The foundation councils of the service, Ipswich, Rockhampton and Mackay have since been joined by another 10 councils along with some other non-local government clients.

By utilising the current facilities and expertise of the established Services Qld operation and LGAQ’s very own Member Services Centre councils for the first time have a home grown and owned service that now also delivers normal business hours over-flow support as well specialised services such as debt collection and management, documents digitisation and general council help desk services.

This year also saw the transition of Local Government Infrastructure Services to become wholly owned by the LGAQ. This is an exciting chapter in the already successful business and a comprehensive review of the services LGIS provides and how they provide them has seen the business becoming more local government orientated and focussed on partnering with councils to help them deliver on both small and large scale infrastructure projects as well as manage assets in general.

A major development for Local Buy was the development of a Civil Works and Road Resurfacing panel that will provide significant savings for councils as well as encourage the use of local contractors.

Internally at the LGAQ our consulting and training unit Total Solutions has spent the last year developing an accredited Local Government Elected Member training package that will be launched at the Annual Conference in October. This is a first for councils in Queensland and will allow councillors to undertake continued professional development that will be formally recognised.

It’s not just new services that have been a feature of the year. Local Government Mutual this year made a distribution to the members of the scheme of over $500,000. This was able to be done by some prudent investment of premiums and the good management of claims costs.

Brent Reeman General Manager
Advance
This year, the LGAQ assumed full ownership of specialised client advisory firm Local Government Infrastructure Services from joint stakeholder Queensland Treasury Corporation. Total Solutions launched a brand new website, offering close to 500 courses and new flexible delivery options.

TOTAL SOLUTIONS

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

During the year, Total Solutions has refreshed its approach to the delivery of training and consulting services in order to respond better to the needs of our members.

• We launched a new website providing enhanced and easy access to information on our courses and services without the need to logon to LG Online.
• We made significant improvements to other member communications channels, providing regular Noticeboard alerts for upcoming courses, publishing regular Training Calendars, offering a larger number of public courses and engaging with our members with on-site visits.

Total Solutions’ continuous improvement processes and focus on flexibility and customisation of our services, sees us reviewing and updating our course selection based on current market trends and feedback received from our clients.

New offerings

• The delivery of individual accredited units from our courses, desktop applications and computer training.
• A wide range of soft-skills courses and specialist products to our already wide scope of training product’s with a focus on customisation of products to suit individual council requirements.
• Offering a wide selection of these at many more regional and rural centres in order to reach all of our clients.
• New online learning services allowing the purchase of course bundles or individual units, providing our clients with a cost-effective and flexible product.

We continue to work on developing new options for delivery of training, particularly to rural and remote areas, in a cost effective manner.

We continue to work on developing new options for delivery of training, particularly to rural and remote areas, in a cost effective manner and are currently investigating our options for further online and remote training modes.
Recruitment services have this year included placement of a number of CEOs, undertaking Salary Surveys and provision of interim CEOs and other senior staff. We have provided financial, regulatory and internal audit services to a range of councils and hope to expand our provision of these services into the future.

Over the last year we have trained around 1500 council staff and offered courses at 10 different locations around the State. Total Solutions worked with 67 councils during the year.

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Our Total Solutions team has continued to offer a range of consulting services to our members. Our Workforce team has undertaken a wide range of IR/HR support and investigation projects, and is readying itself to provide support as we enter Enterprise Bargaining processes from October.

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The LGAQ has maintained a commitment to the field of Disaster Management following the withdrawal of state funding.

The Principle Advisor Disaster Management continues to build relationships with key stakeholders across the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and provides broad based representation at key state forums and committees.

The key responsibilities of this area are:

- engaging with councils to ensure DM issues and concerns are identified, understood and incorporated into a coherent local perspective of disaster management
- ensuring representation of this local government perspective to state agencies and other stakeholders in the development of DM policies and strategies
- facilitating an open process for the appropriate engagement and consultation with councils in DM areas of responsibilities
- providing direct services, advice and support to councils before, during and after disaster events.

Representation

The LGAQ provides representation at a range of key forums, committees and groups, including the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG), State Disaster Coordination Group (SDCG), Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee (QTCCC), and State Bushfire Inter-Departmental Committee, Flood Warning Consultative Committee (FWCC).

Operational Support

During disaster events, the LGAQ maintains a commitment to be amongst “the first in and last out” of the agencies at the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). We strongly believe that whenever councils are activated - they should have an LGAQ point of contact, direct operational representation and an ability to facilitate support of each other. The LGAQ will continue to provide this support service in the new Joint Intelligence Group at the SDCC.

The LGAQ maintains a commitment to be amongst “the first in and last out” of the agencies at the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC).
PROPEL PARTNERSHIPS

Propel Partnerships has continued to grow and expand its service offerings to councils in Queensland. This year was all about delivering great, cost effective services that councils tell us that they need.

Did you know…
- Propel built a 24-7 Out of Hours Contact Centre service from scratch - 10 clients already on board with a new one joining every 6 weeks.
- They handled 500,000 phone calls for Queensland councils.
- Issued over 340,000 rates notices.
- Registered 40,000 animals.
- Remains on standby 24-7 to provide emergency and disaster management support to a wide variety of councils in Queensland – large and small.

RESOLUTE I.T

Resolute continued to grow strongly with turnover increasing in the financial year. Whilst trading conditions remained challenging, the business is repositioning itself to ensure that it is well placed to capitalise on the move towards cloud based computing and virtual networks. Resolute is a business that continues to service a broad customer base across the entire state – providing essential professional services to many of the most remote councils in Australia.

Did you know…
- Over 80% of Resolute's customer are based more than 200km from Brisbane.
- Over 2000 users in 14 Queensland councils depend on Resolute’s day-to-day support of their computers and networks.
• Resolute’s web hosting service handled more than half a million web page hits per month for Queensland council sites alone.
• Resolute began helping councils, led by Murweh Shire, with all new hybrid cloud solutions, combining the best of local IT systems with the unlimited power of cloud based technologies.

LOCAL BUY
Local Buy had a very successful 2013/2014 financial year ending with a strong return back to shareholders. Key projects included:
• A number of key contracts were finalised with the Telecommunications contract providing savings for local governments across Queensland, with some genuine reductions in pricing particularly in the data and mobile space.
• A Civil Works and Roads Resurfacing contract with a high degree of emphasis on cost and time savings that councils will be able to achieve being built into the contract.
• A positive working relationship with the Queensland Governments Central Procurement office now known as PTD (Procurement Transformation Division) - this has led to an increase in Local Buy staff numbers with an officer engaged to manage the interaction with the various Stage Government departments and statutory authorities.

LGIS
This year has been one of significant progress for LGIS. On 1 July 2014, LGIS came under the sole ownership of the LGAQ, providing the opportunity for LGIS to further expand its services and offer councils improved infrastructure solutions.

Significant achievements for the year, include:
• Implementing LGIS’s IPWEA award-winning Asset Management tool which is assisting councils to sustainably manage asset maintenance and capital upgrade programs
• Supporting councils in the procurement of multi-million dollar infrastructure assets, including waste and water treatment plans across Queensland
• Procurement expertise delivering cost savings of more than $800k for a South East Queensland Council in its Alliance Contract negotiations.
• The development of ground-breaking tools including its Energy Efficiency Guidance Model, Capex Prioritisation Model and Project Management Framework system.
• Program management of flood restoration works following the 2012 and 2013 natural disasters, which has helped councils successfully deliver more than $200 million in projects
• Development of a revolutionary geothermal energy program which has the capacity to deliver millions in energy cost savings for local councils.

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. It provides 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.
During 2013/14 LGM:
- provided members with a membership dividend following strong financial performance and the resulting positive impact on the scheme’s financial position
- provided members with a continued contribution rebates based on implementation of risk management procedures
- developed a quarterly electronic claim update informing members of the circumstances and lessons to be learned from actual claims made against councils.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKCARE
Local Government Workcare (LGW) is a joint undertaking by Queensland councils, council controlled entities and the LGAQ to hold a workers compensation self-insurance licence.

During 2013/14 LGW:
- further strengthened the scheme’s overall financial position
- was granted a further 4 year self-insurance licence term
- continued to achieve performance outcomes that exceeded State averages in all key areas of claims management
- further streamlined ongoing SAFE PLAN safety management system audit program to facilitate more councils conducting internal audits.

HEALTHY WORKERS INITIATIVE
46 councils have registered with the Queensland Workplaces for Wellness website.

The number of councils with a:
- Healthy catering policy has increased by 12%

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

QLD WORK SAFE AWARDS
Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative Finalists
- Townsville City Council (Highly commended)
- LGAQ (Winner)

AHRI – Best Health and Wellbeing Initiative Finalist
- LGAQ

FUNDING FOR WORKPLACE WELLNESS:
- South Burnett: $33,000 in funding
- Western Downs: $20,000
- Noosa: $12,000
- Blackall-Tambo: $12,000
- Cassowary Coast: $12,000

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS:
CEO BMI Challenge:
- 16 registrations/councils
- 12 weeks
- 3 winning councils

QUIT Smoking Program
- 25 councils
- 788 employees
- 62 spouses
Wellness policy has increased by 20%
Breastfeeding-friendly workplace policy has increased by 11%

Additionally:
• 35% of councils have end of trip facilities
• 4% of councils provide fruit boxes
• 9% of councils have gym facilities
• 12% of councils have adjustable (sit/stand) desks
• 17% of councils have integrated their health and wellbeing program with their workplace health and safety management system

Most popular health and wellbeing initiatives:
• Employee assistance programs
• Physical activity sessions
• Toolbox talks
• Corporate events
• Flu vaccinations
• Pedometer challenges

25 councils are already participating in the Plan and during 2013/14 over $13,000 in excess reimbursements were paid to council employees

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 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. 25 councils are already participating in the Plan and during 2013/14 over $13,000 in excess reimbursements were paid to council employees.

INTERNAL UPDATE

Refurbishment of the new Local Government House was completed during the 2013-2014 financial year.

LGAQ staff officially moved into the top floor of the refurbished offices in May 2014. New LG House tenants LGIS and Resolute followed soon after, moving into the revamped premises during June and May respectively.

A new Members Lounge on Level 1 opened during 2014, offering travelling elected members, CEOs and senior council staff a home away from home en route to the Brisbane airport, complete with free internet, showers and amenities and desktop computers.