

# POLICY EXECUTIVE REPORT



# 2011 POLICY EXECUTIVE REPORT TO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# POLICY EXECUTIVE REPORT



## Delegates and Observers

### Introduction



In accordance with tradition, the Policy Executive of the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Ltd reports to its members at the Annual Conference on its strategic direction, major policies, achievements and financial position.

This is the first year post the incorporation of the LGAQ as a public company. As such, in discharge of their obligations under the Corporations Act 2001, the Directors of LGAQ Ltd have produced a separate report which is included in the Association's financial statements of the year ended 30 June 2011.

Tumultuous, unprecedented and disjointed are the three words that spring to mind to describe the environment in which Queensland Councils had to operate over the past year. Queensland communities suffered natural disasters of historic proportions, leaving a state-wide public and private sector reconstruction bill approaching \$11 billion. The State Government has zigzagged between a disparate range of policy positions trying to gain political traction. Also this year, parliamentary tradition and the political landscape were turned on their heads when Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman resigned his office and became the first leader of an Opposition party appointed from outside the parliament.

The entire Australian body politic is in a period of flux and there is general malaise among the voting public. Both the Federal and Queensland governments are burdened with record low approval ratings. There is criticism that oppositions have become alarmingly populist, spurred on by the 24/7 media cycle, and that we are witnessing the rebirth of the age of complaint and a race to the bottom in terms of political debate.

The governments of Victoria and New South Wales changed over the past 12 months. Local government is not immune from the disenchantment, with the 2011 edition of the biennial Fred Rogers Community Attitude Survey resulting in the lowest overall rating for Queensland Councils in the survey's 14 year history. To complete the cycle of upheaval, several entrenched Middle Eastern tyrants were thrown from office, but in secular uprisings rather than the spread of Islamic fundamentalism that some had predicted.

The world was rocked by multiple catastrophic natural disasters, most particularly in Japan and Christchurch,

New Zealand. A significant financial crisis also arose in the European and US economies which continues to significantly affect confidence in Australian financial and equity markets.

The mining boom in Australia surpassed any previous resource boom, but confirmed the nation has an entrenched "two speed" economy. One of the consequences of that boom has been a vigorous and, at times, divisive, national debate on mining taxation, preserving prime agricultural land and fly-in fly-out mining operations. It is fair to say that significant sections of the Australian community are disaffected by the mining boom.

For the first time in a generation household formation rates in Australia changed - rising - reflecting different migration patterns and the extensive use of Section 457 visas to meet growing labour market shortages in sections of the economy. This has major implications on all land use planning and forecasting, especially land supply requirements and new housing starts. House prices also fell in real and nominal terms across Australia.

The Australian dollar smashed through parity with the US dollar and rose against the trade weighted index basket of currencies. This development impacts significantly on Australia's tourism and manufacturing sectors, particularly communities such as Cairns and the Gold Coast

Real wages growth has been slow or non-existent for much of the past four years. Spiralling cost of living increases, driven by government charges, have left the community struggling and largely contributed to the sourness and discontent among the voting public.

Australia and Queensland are changing, there is no doubt. A genuine structural break is occurring. Some might even opine the world has gone crazy! The political consequences of these changes will be felt for some time. Where and when the bouncing ball settles is in the lap of the Gods. Meanwhile, the discontent in the community rolls on.

## Federal Government

Following the inconclusive 2010 national elections, the Federal government has limped on, suffering further erosion of political support and struggling for legitimacy. Paradoxically, its relationship with local government has been good. In fact, we have made great progress in advancing the cause of Constitutional recognition of local government. The end game is upon us.



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The Federal Government has established an 18-person Expert Panel chaired by Justice James Spigelman AC QC to assist in drafting the referendum question to be put to the Australian people by 2013. LGAQ President Paul Bell, AM, is a member of the panel. Other Queenslanders on the panel are former Brisbane lord mayor Jim Soorley, federal parliamentarian and former Brisbane City councillor Jane Prentice, and Griffith University academic Professor A J Brown.

Throughout the past year, LGAQ has led other State associations in prepositioning our level of government prior to the putting of a referendum question to the Australian people. We achieved this through the development of a Local Government Image Campaign, the first stage of which began in early August 2011 and runs to October. The second stage will be repeated in mid 2012.

Paid for through a \$1 million fund in two \$500,000 tranches from members via a special levy, the campaign involved conducting detailed polling research and focus groups, developing television ads and promotional materials and co-ordinating council efforts across the state. To date the campaign is tracking very well in relation to its primary goal of prepositioning local government in the mind of the community.

Another major Federal Government policy agenda item impacting on member councils is the Carbon Tax. While it is yet to be legislated or implemented, it does have the potential to significantly affect the operation of larger councils, particularly in relation to waste management. Both ALGA and LGAQ have adopted a policy position to support a market based mechanism as a means of reducing carbon emissions. However, there is a frustrating paucity of information available to enable councils to undertake a detailed assessment of the impact of a Carbon Tax on their operations.

It is worth noting the continued rise to prominence of Regional Development Australia (RDA) in local government affairs. It is in some ways reminiscent of the Whitlam era via RED and AIP initiatives.

It would be completely remiss in not acknowledging the enormous financial support Canberra made available to Queensland communities throughout the recent disasters, in particular the outstanding work of the Australian Defence Force and the \$5.1 billion in NDRRA payments to Queensland.

Under the direction of the Policy Executive, the Association has substantially upgraded its contact with the Federal Government through the creation of a full time Inter-governmental Relations Advisor position, held by former diplomat Stephan Bohnen. Our President has also made regular visits to Canberra to strengthen ties.

## State Government

As noted in the 2010 Executive report to Annual Conference, relationships with the Queensland Government continue to be amicable, notwithstanding major policy disagreements on water and infrastructure charges. Both the Premier herself and her Deputy Premier, Paul Lucas, should take credit for some of that improvement. Extraordinary good will and co-operation was developed between LGAQ and the highest levels of Government during the December 2010 and the January 2011 floods and cyclones, putting the kybosh on any suggestion the relationship was fatally flawed. Indeed, the relationship worked extremely well when it counted the most.

That said, South East Queensland councils would not subscribe to the view that relations are on an even keel. The cumulative impact of the capping of infrastructure charges, slashing water retailer dividends to councils and the abolition of State Government Water and Sewerage Capital Works subsidies from 1 July 2011 will cut \$750 million from their revenues in 2011-12 – an enormous blow.

Queensland politics over the past year has been an extreme roller coaster ride. In political terms, the Bligh Government was out on its feet prior to the December/January disasters, only to rally immediately following the disasters for what turned out to be a very short period. It was then pole axed following the very unorthodox entry of Campbell Newman into state politics.

Added to that is a stubbornly persistent gloom hanging over some parts of the state's economy. The Government has forecasts a \$4 billion deficit this financial year, with the books expected to remain in the red until 2014/15. The prospect of Queensland regaining its AAA credit rating still seems some years off.

To say that the policy agenda has gyrated would be an understatement in the extreme. In 2010, LGAQ had set the agenda on population policy growth management and resources communities through the development and release of two excellent reports. That agenda was overtaken by a national funk over the cost of living, a development that was damaging to councils given the above average rate rises (for good and proper reasons) over the first three years of the current term. That was especially the case for water charge increases levied by the three council-owned retailers in South East Queensland. These councils were unjustly criticised by the State Government for doing exactly what state legislation required them to do.

Then, natural disasters of biblical proportions beset Queensland and the agenda turned sharply again to recovery and reconstruction. To add to community unease, the high Australian dollar and economic upheavals in Europe and the US have caused the State Government to perform major turns

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in policy focus from cost of living issues to employment and the two tier economy - all in one year. The Machiavellian and Black Irish streak in the Author would say, tongue-in-cheek, that's one way to take the focus off asset sales.

There has been a geographic bent to much of the State Government's agenda. In South East Queensland, water has been far and away the dominant issue as the State Government, councils and ratepayers wrestle with the enormity of paying back \$7.1 billion it cost to drought proofing the region. The media dubbed the saga "water wars". But in the regions, the agenda has been influenced by the impact of the high dollar and of the mining boom.

A series of independent expert reports commissioned by the LGAQ which gained widespread media coverage forced the State Government into unimaginable contortions to try to shift blame on to councils for rising water prices in southeast Queensland. The complete about turn by George Street on the institutional arrangements governing water supply and delivery and the eventual capping of water prices turned a farce into an unsustainable fiasco.

What is certain is that LGAQ's report proposing major water reform, including a significant reduction in state bulk water prices, will be front and centre at the next state election.

The Association participated in the Premier's Infrastructure Charges Task Force and Building Revival Summit and undertook ground breaking research that in part helped protect local governments in the State Government's final decision regarding infrastructure charges. However, it was disappointing that the infrastructure charge for two bedroom and below residential properties was capped at \$20,000. That will lead to a major rise in council debt over the next decade. However, the final outcome did fall substantially short of what the development industry had sought. LGAQ will continue to prosecute its case for raising the \$20,000 capped charge, backed by detailed research.

The LGAQ was also actively involved in serious negotiations with the State Government on the introduction of a refuse tip-side commercial, industrial, construction and development waste management levy. At the time of writing, the Association had secured more beneficial assistance for councils than was first offered, as well as a delayed start.

The LGAQ's dogged pursuit of more reasonable and practical Conflict of Interest laws applying to elected members has succeeded, with amendments passed through State parliament in late August. LGAQ was like a dog with a bone on this matter, refusing to accept the former bad and useless law.

A year-long negotiation with the State Government on the shape of new local government electoral laws also proved

successful, with a largely unchanged electoral system for Queensland councils.

Finally, eight years of slog by the Association on reform of the operation of Queensland stock routes came to fruition in 2011. This will provide a fairer and better outcome for council, graziers and ratepayers alike.

## The 2011 Natural Disasters

The natural disasters that afflicted every single Queensland council were a defining event in the state's history. No statistic or set of words properly give true meaning to the magnitude of what transpired.

However, history will record that all 73 Queensland councils were disaster declared. Tragically, 35 people died as a consequence of the disasters. One of those was a council worker who lost his life serving the community of Western Downs. At the time of writing, the estimated bill for Queensland council reconstruction and repair is \$2.77 billion and likely to settle at around \$3 billion. That is some six times larger than the next biggest disasters to beset Queensland councils.

The LGAQ has been front and centre throughout the disasters,

- managing the disaster itself
- representing councils at the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
- rebuilding the built infrastructure and social fabric of communities across the state in partnership with federal and state government.

The President's personal negotiating efforts saw Queensland councils secure an additional \$400 million in category C and D Natural Disaster and Reconstruction and Relief Arrangements. That required many one-to-one meetings with state and federal ministers throughout February and March and into April.

The Association's CEO and General Manager of Advocacy attended every one of around 40 meetings of the State Disaster Management Group over the nine-week period it was activated to co-ordinate the state's preparedness and response. The Premier singled out LGAQ for special praise on a number of occasions for its contribution to managing the disaster crisis.

LGAQ has been front and centre in the efforts to rebuild the state. Association staff have met with Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) officials on a weekly basis to ensure most efficacious treatment of councils. LGAQ's half-owned subsidiary, Local Government Infrastructure Services (LGIS), did an outstanding job in arranging immediate support for a dozen councils, with specialist recovery engineering staff deployed to the worst hit parts of the state within a remarkable

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48 hours. Just as importantly, LGIS is managing around \$1 billion worth of reconstruction contracts for and on behalf of those same councils.

LGAQ also took the unique step of creating a further subsidiary company, Local Government Disaster Reconstruction Services - jokingly referred to as "Disasters R Us" - to help councils not utilising LGIS services to manage logistic and procurement processes. At this point in time, that service has not commenced but stands ready if councils take up that offering.

The Association has also been at the forefront of both representing councils in the Commission of Inquiry and responding to its Interim Report. Under the direction of the General Manager of Advocacy, the Association secured the services of senior counsel, other legal advisors as well as expert planners and hydrologists to appear before the Commission. This measure, very generously supported by LGAQ subsidiary Local Government Mutual (LGM), will save member councils at least \$1 million dollars in costs for external professional advice.

The LGAQ's 10-day turnaround response to the 1 August Interim report of the Commission of Inquiry gave member councils' important breathing space and enabled them to continue on with their reconstruction efforts uninterrupted.

In response to the Commission's recommendations and on behalf of councils, LGAQ committed to rewrite the existing Local Government Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) Protocol and develop inaugural individual protocols between our level of government and the Bureau of Meteorology, Red Cross and the RSPCA. It also took on the task of rewriting and expanding the Local Government Disaster Management (DM) resource kit, producing a Local Government Community Education resource kit on preparing for and coping with natural disasters, and producing a Local Government Disaster Communication guideline. All of the protocols and the three new resource materials will be completed and sent to councils before the beginning of the 2011 wet season.

## The Policy Executive (and the Board)

The past year saw the formal separation of the Policy Executive and the Board of LGAQ Ltd, the previous Executive having undertaken both roles. The Policy Executive of course receives the written formal minutes of the monthly Board at each of its own meetings, as well as a verbal report from President Paul Bell, who chairs both meetings.

During the year, Palm Island Mayor Cr Alf Lacey was elected unopposed as the Indigenous representative on the Policy Executive, filling a casual vacancy for the position.

The change of legal governance arrangements has freed up the Policy Executive to delve further into policy and advocacy matters. To that end, it has played a strong guiding role in developing the first LGAQ Advocacy Plan, the Ten Point State Election Plan, the Local Government Image Campaign and the very intensive Policy Representation and Engagement Processes (PREP) project.

The Policy Executive has been delighted that all but two of the 13 major elements of the new member engagement strategy have been implemented over the last year. The two outstanding elements, PREP and Total Solutions, are set to be completed before the end of the calendar year.

Under the Policy Executive's direction, a thorough risk review of the LGAQ's operations and procedures was undertaken by BDO Kendalls. The Association's risk management policy and procedures were found to be well managed, but a number of areas were identified for further improvement. The External Audit Committee is currently overseeing these process improvements.

Following a detailed review of every LGAQ budget line item, according to its relevance to the new operating model and organisational direction, \$1.4 million in existing expenditure has been redirected to new front line services such as the appointment of Joan Sheldon as **Ethics Advisor** and Hayden Wright as an **Elected Member Advisor**. New services and tools such as **The Member Services Help Desk, Media Executive, Grants Connect**, which provides access to a consolidated list of available grants, best practice guides and support, as well as the **Delegations Register**, which provides a practical tool for ensuring council compliance, are further examples of the Association's changing service solutions. It is important to emphasise that all of these services are available free to councils as a benefit of membership.

These new services are significant, but they are also only the start of what will be a continual renewal of the Association's suite of services. The LGAQ's new Operating Model, driven by member engagement, is designed to keep identifying emerging council needs with a view to producing further solutions and initiatives.

LGAQ is committed to a continual process of improvement. As a key component of this strategy, we have initiated a Member Loyalty Survey to help regularly assess our performance. Employees of every member council are being surveyed to enable us to align our services to council expectations. These surveys will be conducted every six months with each council surveyed once per year.

With councils being confronted by increasing costs, reduced grants and subsidies and an expanding workforce-hungry resources sector, the LGAQ continued to aggressively advance the argument for improved and contemporary

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workforce planning and management practices across local government. The Association regularly called upon councils for advanced operational efficiencies in their workforce management. Councils pushed for a planned and strategic approach at local, regional and state level to building and maintaining a capable workforce and more discipline in ensuring a return on their increased investment in the workforce through their enterprise bargaining endeavours. LGAQ supported these calls with practical assistance through its investment in its HR Advance system for helping councils manage their workforce efficiently and effectively. This was augmented through its piloted HR Metrics exercise and comprehensive Workforce Planning methodology and its panel of trained negotiators to assist councils generate an acceptable level of return from the very important second round of enterprise bargaining post amalgamation.

The Association recognised early the challenges and risks that the booming resources sector posed for the local government workforce. We urged local government to be proactive in matching the resources sector with an industry wide, well-planned and well-constructed workforce management and planning strategy. With the resources sector investing unparalleled amounts of money to attract and develop workers for its sector, the Association acted on the view that local governments could no longer rely simply on their traditional methods to populate their workforce. Like the resources sector, councils need to work at both the local and industry level to build and maintain a workforce capable of meeting their chartered responsibilities. LGAQ stands ready to assist councils and even lead the charge in many ways. But ultimately, we need the support of those councils with the necessary insight and breadth of vision to work and plan differently to ensure they have the right staff in the right place at the right time - and at the right price - to serve their community.

Underpinning this approach to workforce planning and management, the LGAQ as the Registered Employer Association for local government in Queensland, continued its efforts to reform the current Industrial Relations award system through a systemic revision of local government awards. We also implemented a strategy to deliver an award system that was contemporary in its content, responsive to local circumstances, simple in its administration and able to value-add in the attraction and retention of staff.

As it has done for decades, the Policy Executive fought the good fight on behalf of member councils. A prime example was the funding and support of Whitsunday Council's December 2010 High Court challenge on differential rating for mining operations.

LGAQ continues to strengthen its position as the most dominant peak body in the Queensland media. Through the efforts of its media executive, President and CEO, LGAQ

secured seven front pages in the Courier-Mail, nine (largely favourable) editorials and five feature articles in the same newspaper. Relative to the two previous years we also enjoyed our highest level of television coverage.

The Policy Executive emphasised the need to live up to the LGAQ's new promise to its members - Connect. Innovate. Achieve. That can be seen in initiatives such as the launch of Gov Cloud; supporting Ford Health's My Community Online health initiative, integrating the operations of Resolute and QPG into a seamless online IT, communications and customer service delivery offering; and the brand new format for this year's Annual Conference including pioneering the use of iPads to achieve a paperless AGM. That is a year's worth of solid, member-intensive work.

Finally, at its July and August meetings the Policy Executive and Board of LGAQ Ltd signed off and launched the new LGAQ logo and branding strategy. It was purposefully done in a low key manner and at the completion of two years worth of solid work in the Member Engagement Project. Put simply, it was decided the sausage was more important than the sizzle.

## Directorate

Just as the preceding year was about reshaping organisational strategy and structure to achieve the highest possible member focus, the last year has been about implementing new systems, adopting a new style and recruiting new staff to deliver all of the high value initiatives identified by members in the early phase of the member connect project. Of course, on top of that, LGAQ staff had to continue to meet councils daily needs, prosecute the Policy Executive advocacy agenda and respond to the agendas of the State and Federal Governments.

The role of LGAQ advocacy staff has fundamentally changed in the last year. Ask them what they do and they will tell you they belong to one of five council segment teams - SEQ, Coastal, Rural and Remote, Indigenous and Resource Communities. Alternatively, if they are in the Assist stream they could answer mayors, councillors, CEOs and senior staff. Scratch them again and they will tell you the primary layer in which they participate in the LGAQ operating model - Understand, Design, Build, Deliver and Track. Some will rattle off the cross organisational teams of which they are members. What they won't say is that they are part of the roads, environment or industrial relations teams, even if they have some responsibilities in those areas. Yes, we have changed, dared to be different and are travelling the road less traversed - a truly member-focused organisation.

To top it off - and like 72 of our members - we also had to battle Mother Nature in January as Local Government House at Newstead went under water. LGAQ operated out of Resolute IT's office at Milton for 4 days during the height of

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the Brisbane floods.

With these activities and events as a backdrop, we have continued to focus on the needs of you - our members. If there is a key message, it is that the LGAQ has actively adapted to the new local government environment.

At the heart of our organisation is our hard working and dedicated staff. For them, our recent internal changes have allowed their professional roles to both grow and fundamentally change over the last year.

For member councils, many of these internal changes will not be immediately visible, but it is important to highlight that they were critical and necessary for the Association to evolve. What you will see is a real change to the way in which we work for, and with, you.

In simple terms we are changing our approach, and indeed the very way we do business. Our goal is to become even more member-focused.

One demonstration of this are the 15 new work teams we have established that are tasked with the responsibility of working with individual councils and regions to better identify the common needs that exist within.

This dedicated focus promises to deliver not only greater insights into local issues and challenges, but also heralds a new era of council relations. This approach ensures that all councils are being actively supported on a regular basis.

Another critical and tangible impact of this strategic change is a conscious move away from the Association's traditional success measures – being membership renewals and customer satisfaction - to a higher order measure of member loyalty.

The new LGAQ business strategy is now built on three core principles:

1. Member Loyalty is our top-line performance metric and goal
2. Achieving this goal requires us to adopt a member-centric approach
3. A new operating model will ensure that our members will be at the heart of our decision making

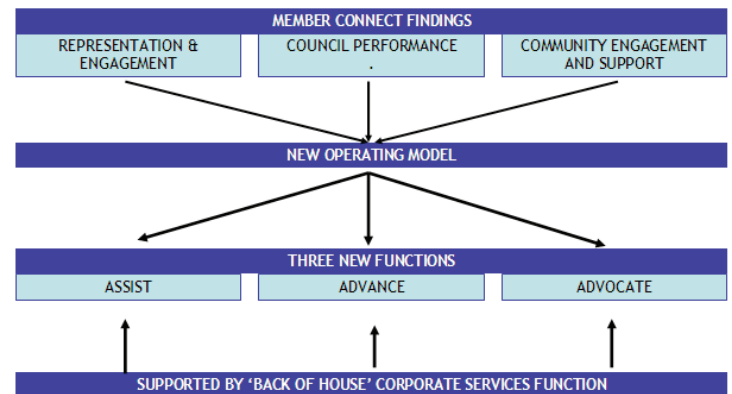
Without being intrusive, we are keen to grow both our contacts and relationships with those who work in and lead local government. Doing so will further improve our understanding of council needs, what is important to you and how we may be best able to help.

Following Executive approval, the Association's new corporate structure was endorsed in June 2010 and implemented on

the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010. Four activity streams were established with the internal working titles and core focus of:

- Assist -- Help Councils
- Advance -- Work with Councils
- Advocate -- Represent Councils
- IPC -- Internal Performance Centre

Each of these streams is designed to be customer and member facing and each, under the responsibility of a GM or the CEO as in the case of IPC, has been given the responsibility to progress a range of new initiatives.



To further support the adoption and implementation of the Association's new Operating Model, and to provide structure and direction to staff, a new Performance Framework was created in early 2011 and adopted by the Board.

The Performance Framework was an important addition to the Association's corporate story and laid out a new range of key organisational performance principles as well as a new set of corporate objectives:

- **Leadership Reputation for:**
  - Advocacy & Representation
  - Customer Service & Support
  - Innovation (Opportunity Realisation)
  - Integrity (Trusted & Authoritative)
- **Grow the Scope and Depth of Relationship with Members**
- **LGAQ Financial Sustainability**

For members this objective set acts as further evidence of the Association's changing focus and aspirations for the future.

In purely physical terms the LGAQ has grown its FTE's to 58 with all of the recent appointments being directly linked to new initiatives and service offerings for members. This investment in additional skills and capabilities is a practical response to the changing

needs of members.

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As in previous years the Association's outputs have been prodigious

- ✓ 411 Circulars
- ✓ 73 News Releases
- ✓ 30 Legal Opinions
- ✓ 63 Industrial Relations Commission Hearings
- ✓ 19 Submissions to state and federal governments
- ✓ 2,150 attended an LGAQ training course
- ✓ 8151 Letters sent
- ✓ 1443 letters received
- ✓ 42,500 inbound emails from councils
- ✓ 82,500 outbound emails to councils

All of this on top of the over 70,000 telephone calls and requests from members for support, assistance and advice.

## Advocate Stream

### LGAQ Advocacy Action Plan 2011/12

Advocacy and representation on behalf of Local Government is integral to the daily activities of LGAQ. The Association's advocacy efforts are currently focused on supporting councils re-build their communities after the floods and cyclones earlier this year, prepare for the council elections in 2012. In addition, LGAQ is representing the interests of Local Government in the lead up to the State elections due by June 2012, as well as promoting, and where necessary, protecting Local Government's role in issues such as population growth and sustainable planning, regional and economic development and community well-being, climate change, natural resource management, water and road infrastructure reform, workforce planning and constitutional recognition.

Importantly, LGAQ seeks to build and maintain a close working relationship with the State and Federal governments based on mutual respect, open and honest dialogue and recognition of our shared jurisdictions in serving the people of Queensland.

In August 2011, the LGAQ released its first Advocacy Action Plan for 2011/12 identifying the priority representation issues for the Association on behalf of Local Government for the next 12 months.



## Member Connect – Advocacy Initiatives

In December 2010, the Policy Executive approved the following initiatives for the Advocate Stream arising out of the Association's Member Connect program.

### 1) Policy, Representation & Engagement Processes (PREP) Project

A significant redesign of LGAQ's policy, representation and engagement processes in order to provide:

- a) An effective internal governance and policy development process;
- b) Improved representation and advocacy strategies; and
- c) Improved stakeholder and council engagement strategies.

The overall objectives of PREP are strengthening relationships with member councils; building effective partnerships with governments and stakeholders; and achieving better advocacy outcomes for Local Government in Queensland.

Extensive engagement via face to face and telephone interviews, and online surveys has been conducted with mayors, councillors, CEOs, professional association and state government stakeholder representatives. A comprehensive project update will be presented at the Annual Conference with LGAQ Board and Policy Executive decision making scheduled for December 2011. Implementation of changes arising from the project are planned from March 2012 following the council quadrennial elections.

### 2) Financial Sustainability Research Project

A program of research that will identify and examine the factors impacting on local government financial



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sustainability. The research will highlight any relationships or cumulative impacts:

- a) By council segments;
- b) Index any changes to councils' vulnerability to financial sustainability risk factors post structural reform (amalgamations 2008); and
- c) Propose broad and segment focused strategies.

The project will provide a wealth of information, data and analysis to support LGAQ's advocacy on behalf of all Queensland councils and within the council segments -South East Queensland; Coastal; Resources; Indigenous; and Rural and Remote.

Project consultants have been appointed with a final report planned for May 2012.

## 3) Financial Sustainability Road Pricing Study Tour

A study tour to south-east Asian and European cities to investigate road pricing principles and practices to assess their effectiveness in managing congestion costs in Queensland as well as a range of road user demand management, infrastructure and institutional arrangements.

The study tour will investigate the technical, political, cultural and community perspectives relevant to the development of road user pricing and charging regimes.

Originally scheduled for 2011, the tour has been rescheduled to August-September 2012. Pre-planning for the tour was delayed because of the floods and cyclones at the start of the year necessitating the changed dates.

## 4) Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Taskforce

Establishment of a new subscription based partnership with coastal segment councils on the key issue of climate change adaptation particularly sea level rise under the title of Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT).

C-CAT is a local government led and managed alliance to collectively prepare, plan and adapt to sea level rise and other coastal impacts of climate change in a cost effective and efficient way that would not be possible on a council by council basis.

C-CAT also provides the State and Commonwealth with an attractive one-stop point to engage and work with Queensland local governments enabling

stronger linkages and information flows with government coupled with a real opportunity to make their collective voices heard and influence the broader policy agenda.

Priority issues include implementation of the State government's recently released Coastal Plan, the identification of other critical areas of focus for a range of activities from addressing liability and litigation issues, quantifying and prioritising risks, to finding solutions and funding avenues.

Project initiation is well underway with 15 coastal councils participating in the establishment phase and pre-commitments already made by two of the coastal councils segment. The C-CAT Establishment Committee and working group are overseeing a current capabilities survey, an individual needs survey for elected representatives, executives and staff and international and national projects scan to inform the development of a proactive agenda.

## 5) Indigenous Councils Capacity Building & Engagement Framework

Formation of a new Indigenous Councils Engagement Framework designed to increase the capacity and capability of indigenous councils.

Workforce and skills formation have been identified as a core and major systemic need by indigenous councils and an initial priority for the new strategy. Achieving outcomes on this front will contribute to strengthening their governance and operational capacity and create opportunities to expand the areas of support and assistance LGAQ can offer to the indigenous councils segment.

Representation have been made to the State government for financial support for the skills formation strategy and visits made to a number of councils to scope out further details of the project. An Indigenous Councils Workshop will be held at the Annual Conference to more fully engage with the councils.

## 6) Local Government Image Campaign

Creation of a community promotion and education campaign targeted at improving the community's perception of Local Government.

The first stage of the campaign is all but complete reminding communities of the job local councils do and prepositioning the Local Government sector ahead of the expected national referendum in constitutional recognition in 2013.

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The centrepiece of the campaign, a 30 second television commercial, was screened in a seven-week block from August 14 in all markets across Queensland. In addition, the campaign has a strong social media presence, with a website and highly active Facebook and Twitter pages promoting the themes of the campaign.

The campaign was informed by comprehensive market research undertaken earlier in 2011 to gauge attitudes toward Local Government and provide feedback for the creation of concepts to drive the campaign. Production of the commercial, featuring a cast of genuine council employees, took place in July across seven locations.

Feedback on the campaign has been overwhelmingly positive, with the online features gaining a strong following. Market research has begun on measuring the impact of the television commercial in terms of shifting peoples' attitudes towards local government.

The campaign was run on commercial television through September 2011 and remains active on social media.

## Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

On 17 January 2011, the State Government announced a state-wide independent Commission of Inquiry to examine Queensland's unprecedented flooding which had commenced in December 2011 and subsequently continued throughout January and into February 2011. The Commission's Terms of Reference required an interim report by August 2011 on matters associated with the operation of the disaster management system including flood preparedness in advance of next summer's wet season and a final report in January 2012 addressing other matters including floodplain management, town planning, development assessment and building approvals.



LGAQ established a Taskforce in January 2011 to represent local government and assist councils in the preparation of submissions, witness statements and appearances before the Commission. Membership of the Taskforce consists of lawyers, lead by King and Company, barristers, planners and hydrologists together with Local Government Mutual (Queensland). Seventeen councils have taken advantage of the convenient and co-ordinated professional service provided by the Taskforce to date on matters relating to the part 1 of the Inquiry i.e. disaster management operations and flood preparedness.

The Commission handed down its Interim Report on 1 August 2011 with 175 recommendations, of which 95 impact in some way on Local Government. Whilst the report expands upon a number of existing council disaster management responsibilities it is pleasing to see that there were no adverse findings against any council, elected members or council officers. Importantly, the prospects of any legal action arising out of the Interim Report would appear negligible. In this respect, the Taskforce has successfully protected council's interests.

Supporting LGAQ in this work, LGM (Queensland) has made a very generous contribution of \$325,000, representing almost half of the total cost involved which has been apportioned across its member councils which took advantage of the Taskforce services.

LGAQ and the participating councils express their sincere thanks to Noel Playford OAM, Chair, and members of the LGM (Queensland) Board for its contribution which is greatly appreciated.

Following release of the Interim Report, LGAQ made a submission to the State Government seeking financial support for councils to implement the report's recommendations. It is disappointing the State has refused to provide additional operational funding assistance, choosing instead to divert

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\$5 million from the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Scheme for on infrastructure needs.

The Commission is now focussing its attention on the other aspects of its Terms of Reference and the Taskforce has continued its efforts providing input to the Queensland Reconstruction of Authority's work on floodplain mapping and offering assistance to councils respond to information requests from the Commission, preparation of witness statements and briefings on appearances before the Commission.



## Digital Television Switchover

The LGAQ and the Remote Area Planning & Development Board (RAPAD) has been advocating to the Federal Government for almost two years regarding the provision of relevant and timely information about digital television switchover, potential "pooling" of the Satellite Subsidy Scheme to instead upgrade self-help retransmission sites where councils choose to do so, and the general implications the digital television upgrade has on self-help retransmission sites and services in rural and remote Queensland areas.

There are 151 self-help retransmission sites in Queensland, with 56 out of a total of 73 Queensland councils managing these sites. Out of these 151 self-help retransmission sites, there are approximately 100 sites that will not neither be upgraded nor potentially be covered by a wider digital footprint or "filler". There are also a number of locations with over 500 people where broadcasters are not upgrading the facilities. These include towns such as Tully Heads, Quilpie, Richmond, Surat, Bamaga, Hope Vale, Normanton and Meandarra, amongst other locations.

The LGAQ and RAPAD have made repeated representations to Senator Conroy and the Digital Switchover Taskforce for relevant information and more time for Queensland local governments to make appropriate and informed decisions for their communities regarding whether to upgrade their self-help

retransmission sites or to opt into the Direct-To-Home VAST system (for which the Satellite Subsidy Scheme is provided to qualifying residents in rural or remote communities). The original intent was for Queensland councils to provide the Digital Switchover Taskforce with their decision regarding self-help retransmission sites at the beginning of 2011, which coincided with the extraordinary flooding disaster and Cyclone Yasi, with a mere few weeks notice.

Despite active and persistent lobbying by both LGAQ and RAPAD, the Senator has recently confirmed that the Federal Government will not provide councils with "pooled" funding to upgrade self-help retransmission sites in place of the funds that would have been provided anyway to residents under the Satellite Subsidy Scheme in the area covered by the particular self-help retransmission site. This decision was made by the Federal Government despite LGAQ and RAPAD providing information proving that, in many Queensland locations, upgrading a self-help retransmission site has a substantially greater cost-benefit to both Government and community.

However, LGAQ and RAPAD managed to secure an additional 6 months for councils to make their decision (until June 2011) and have organised for a trial by N-Com (a major Queensland supplier of digital equipment) to demonstrate that upgrading of the self-help sites is possible. LGAQ and RAPAD have also made repeated representations to the Federal Government and publicity through the media to articulate the belief that the digital switchover policy regarding self-help retransmission sites has been made by the Federal Government without adequate consultation with relevant parties (i.e. councils and the Australian indigenous, rural and remote communities), relevant information has not been provided in a timely manner to Queensland councils and their communities, very little communication has been forthcoming between broadcasters and Queensland councils, and very little assistance provided to Queensland councils in order for them to make decisions regarding whether to upgrade their self-help retransmission sites.

## Infrastructure, Economics and Regional Development

### Water Policy and Reform

Throughout 2011 LGAQ has continued to work closely with the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and qldwater, through the Urban Water Services Project, which was initiated in June 2010 in recognition that a combined effort on behalf of the State Government, Local Government and industry would be required to meet the many challenges confronting Councils in the provision of urban water services.

Through this project, both LGAQ and qldwater have worked

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collaboratively with DERM to influence the Department's development of a new policy regime for the regulation of the urban water sector. Providing formal responses to the Department in late 2010 and again in mid 2011, LGAQ has recommended changes to the current regulatory approach contained within the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008, to move away from the use of management plans as the primary regulatory tool, to an outcomes based approach that relies on setting performance targets and public reporting to achieve outcomes.



In addition to this work, LGAQ's advocacy efforts in the water portfolio have focussed on responding to national level reports authored by Infrastructure Australia, the National Water Commission and the Productivity Commission, with all three reports recommending the need for significant reform of Queensland's water industry (including local government) outside of South East Queensland (SEQ).

In response, LGAQ provided submissions to both the Productivity Commission's initial Public Consultation Report and Preliminary Draft Findings Report and appeared before the Commission on two separate occasions to discuss the issues and challenges confronting Queensland local government.

Given the inherent sense of national resolve and the wide ranging critique of Queensland's situation in all three reports, especially the report by the Productivity Commission, in June LGAQ made formal representations to the former Minister for Natural Resources, the Honourable Kate Jones MP, and then the current Minister, the Honourable Rachel Nolan MP, for the Department to support a Local Government Urban Water Services Institutional Review Program (Review Program) aimed at assisting councils (initially through the formation of three pilot groups) examine collaborative approaches and new governance models for the provision of urban water services outside of SEQ.

The Review Program is aimed solely at supporting councils investigate a range of possible institutional models depending

on local issues and key risks in the provision of urban water services, including, but not limited to:

- Strategic regional alliances;
- Contracted service delivery; and
- Corporate entities.

The Minister formally endorsed the proposal on the 18 July 2011 and issued a joint media release with the Association's President, Cr Paul Bell AM, soon afterwards.

At the time of writing, the Association is currently in the process of finalising the Program's Terms of Reference with DERM, with the project to begin in early September for completion in mid to late 2013.



## Heavy Vehicle Management and Freight

With an increasing freight task and continuing growth in the resource industry, LGAQ has continued to represent the concerns of local government relating to heavy vehicle management and freight issues such as productivity and pricing, heavy vehicle permit processes, asset management, funding arrangements and safety.

In addition to the Association's participation in meetings of the Queensland Transport Logistics Council and the Road Freight Industry Council, LGAQ also made submissions to key inquiries emanating out of reforms being driven at the national level.

Most notably, LGAQ responded to the Council of Australian Government's (COAG's) Road Reform Plan (CRRP) Feasibility Study and Local Government Consultation Paper, which describes the options being considered by the CRRP project in relation to heavy vehicle pricing and funding and initial thinking on how the road reform options would impact on local government.

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The three key areas for road reform have been identified as:

- Pricing: current charges provide negligible signals to heavy vehicle road users about the costs of using a particular road or to infrastructure providers about the demand for different roads. Charges do not provide incentives for heavy vehicle road users to use road infrastructure services efficiently. A new heavy vehicle pricing system is envisaged to bring incentives to users to more efficiently use the road network;
- Funding: the 'disconnect' between heavy vehicle road charges and future road spending can lead to inefficient decisions; and
- Incentives: the current arrangements for provision of road infrastructure are unlikely to provide an incentive framework for providing road infrastructure services efficiently.

LGAQ conducted a workshop with the CRRP team and local government representatives in March to discuss the issues and help formulate the Association's response to the Consultation Paper.

Following this, in August LGAQ also made a submission to the CRRP team on their Paper "Evaluation of Options on Heavy Vehicle Pricing, Funding and Expenditure Arrangements", which formed part two of the CRRP team's consideration of local government's role in the national reform agenda.

In parallel to the above, the National Transport Commission (NTC) released its Heavy Vehicle National Law Draft Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for consultation.

This particular reform was instigated by COAG, which agreed to establish a single national system of laws for vehicles over 4.5 tonnes with the laws being administered by an independent national regulator – the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR).

The Draft Heavy Vehicle National law is a consolidation of several pieces of model legislation developed by the NTC working with jurisdictions and approved by the Australian Transport Council (ATC). The purpose of the RIS is to explore the impact of the proposed draft national law.

Making use of a workshop forum at the Association's Infrastructure and Planning Symposium, in March, the LGAQ was able to identify a number of potential impacts to local government relating to the proposed framework for administering permits and managing "fatigue". This feedback was consolidated into a comprehensive submission to the NTC on the matters of importance to Queensland local government.

Looking beyond proposed reforms at the national level to what road funding and pricing models exist at the international level,

in June, the LGAQ hosted a Forum with visiting international expert Mr Jack Opiola.

Attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including industry bodies, professional associations, academics and Councils, the Forum discussed various models of road user charging, their rationale, underpinning principles, financing structures and possible application to Queensland.

## The Roads Alliance

The big issue this year for the Roads Alliance has been Queensland's response to an unprecedented summer of disasters. Queensland's road network was devastated, with up to a quarter of the network affected. The big positive to emerge from this has been the strong and growing sense of collaboration between the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR), the LGAQ and Local Governments across the State.



As an interim measure in recognition of the focus on reconstruction works, in February, the Roads Alliance Board temporarily relaxed Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) expenditure requirements for 2010-11, which have been identified at 85 per cent over a two year period. Not surprisingly, Regional Road Groups (RRGs) did fall short of the 85 per cent expenditure target with 64 percent of TIDS funding being expended by the end of the 2010/11 financial year.

Despite challenging weather conditions, great progress has been made on the NetRisk project during 2010-11. A total of 50 councils committed more than 20,000 kilometres of Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS) to the NetRisk initiative. The initiative will result in a road safety assessment, database of road conditions and critical inputs to program development processes. It is anticipated that all RRGs will have their NetRisk reports and data in time to input into their 2012 five-year works program. Measures to support the use and ongoing implementation of NetRisk reports and data are

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currently in development.

Joint Purchasing and Resource Sharing (JP&RS) continues to remain a strong focus of the Roads Alliance, with RRGs being encouraged and supported to promote new and innovative methods of purchasing, sharing of resources, project scheduling and improving contractual arrangements. A new interactive JP&RS Tool Kit was launched in late August to assist RRGs. The Tool Kit has been developed to provide easy to follow and clearly defined processes to enable RRGs to navigate around the barriers to JP&RS.

Likewise, the Roads Alliance panel for asset management consultancy and system offerings, which is administered by Local Buy, continues to be used by RRGs, especially the consultancy service panel, which will continue to exist until mid December 2011.

The Roads Alliance Project Team (RAPT) have also been busy behind the scenes recasting the Roads Alliance Operational Guidelines, and continue to work on enhancements to Program Development tools and population of the Roads Alliance Hub database.

A revised TIDS policy was announced in August 2011. The revised policy progresses more funding authority to RRGs, amalgamates several categories of TIDS funds, sets new minimum targets for TIDS expenditure and incorporates a broader range of transport related activities.

Finally, since the implementation of Capability Development Agreements in 2010, many RRGs have demonstrated progress towards meeting capability milestones. A number of RRGs have employed the assistance of technical coordinators to oversee prioritisation of works programs, manage TIDS claims and strengthen RRG effectiveness generally.

Over the last year, the Roads Alliance Board supported a number of capability improvement projects that had state-wide implications or benefits and where the learnings could be shared with other RRGs including:

- A subsidy of \$40,000 to the Rockhampton RRG to develop a road safety strategy and action plan;
- A subsidy of \$12,500 to the Far North RRG to undertake a strategic regional assessment of its LRRS network;
- Subsidies of \$25,000 and \$50,000 to the Eastern Downs RRG to complete its Road Safety Partnership Project and for a Road Safety Officer;
- A subsidy of \$15,000 to the Wide Bay Burnett RRG for their review of program development practices and JP&RS opportunities;
- \$100,000 funding to capture GipsiTrac road geometry data for all RRGs as part of the NetRisk initiative;
- An additional \$275,000 funding for the whole of RRGs

NetRisk initiative;

- A subsidy of \$63,000 to the Far North RRG for a Regional Procurement Officer;
- A subsidy of \$20,000 to the Banana RRG to support RRG operations; and
- Subsidies of \$26,000 and \$70,000 to the Outback RRG for professional workshops and procurement of road asset management computer applications.

Heading into 2012, the Roads Alliance Board will continue its focus on building RRGs' road stewardship capability, with a particular emphasis on continual improvement and performance.



## Policy for Infrastructure External to State Government Sites and Non State Schools

Given ongoing debates about issues contained in the Policy for dealing with infrastructure external to State Government sites - namely, lack of forward engagement with councils and appropriateness of subsidy levels - the LGAQ continued to press the Government over the need to review the Policy.

Recognising its importance to councils and the long drawn out nature of gaining the Government's formal commitment to revisit the Policy, the LGAQ has tabled this matter as a key priority in its LGAQ's 2011/12 Advocacy Action Plan.

After several representations to the now Department of Local Government and Planning, LGAQ has received "senior officer" level support to review the Policy, which is a small but positive step forward.

## Road Safety Initiatives

As managers of over 140,000 kilometres of roads, local governments have a significant role in reducing road trauma on their network. Unfortunately the road toll on local government controlled roads continues to increase, pointing to a need for more focused and strategic road safety effort on local government roads.

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In response to the above and also in response to an increasing interest from Regional Road Groups (RRGs) to progress road safety projects, the Queensland Road Safety Partnership Steering Committee was established in 2010. Consisting of representatives from Government, the LGAQ, councils and professional associations, the aim of the group is to coordinate the development and ongoing improvement of collaborative working arrangements between Queensland's State and local government road owners, and other key road safety partners, to contribute to a reduction in road trauma on the state's roads and, in particular, reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road crashes on local roads.

To support the charter of the Committee, in late 2010, the Department of Transport and Main Roads formed a Road Safety Partnership Team (RSPT) to help improve the development of road safety related resources to local governments.

Throughout 2011, the LGAQ has continued to work with the RSPT and participate in the work of the Steering Committee, most specifically through an involvement with the Eastern Downs RRG Road Safety Partnership, which, in August, finalised their Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

Still within the road safety arena, the LGAQ has also worked closely with Queensland Rail (QR) over the development and implementation of Interface Agreements for level crossing safety. As road managers, councils in Queensland are required by the Transport (Rail Safety) Act 2010 to enter into Interface Agreements with rail infrastructure managers (Queensland Rail and QR National) to effectively manage risks to safety that may arise because of the existence or use of any rail or road crossing on local government controlled roads.

## Australian and State Government Infrastructure Funding

Aside from funding for natural disaster relief, the most notably funding program for local government was the release of the \$6 billion Regional Infrastructure Program, which was predicated on the former successful Community Infrastructure Program, but with a particular focus on promoting development and job creation in mining communities, and in communities which support the mining sector.

Consisting of three streams, a proportion (\$1 billion) of the Program's funding was allocated to the Regional Development Australia Fund (of which \$573 million is subject to the passage of the Minerals Rent Resource Tax).

The Regional Development Australia Fund's focus is to support infrastructure projects which will enhance the economic and community development of Australia's regions by maximising outcomes through effective partnerships across all levels of

government, business and the not for profit sectors.

Most significantly, Regional Development Australia committees will play a key role in identifying projects to be supported, and confirming that proposed projects align with their Regional Plans.

At the time of writing, applications for round one of the Regional Development Australia Fund had closed, with applications still being assessed.

Continuing at the national level, the Federal Budget delivered the usual tranche of infrastructure funding programs to councils, consisting of:

- \$510.9 million for Financial Assistance Grants identified for roads;
- \$350 million for Roads to Recovery (which remains stable to 2013 - 14);
- \$74.6 million for Black Spots;
- \$28 million for improving Aviation Safety in Remote Communities over two years;
- \$7.0 billion for the National Transport Network; and
- \$28 million for heavy vehicle parking facilities.

At the State level, the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) is now approaching \$100 million annually with the introduction last year of the Regional Safety and Development Program (RSDP) and earlier this year, the Flood Resilience and Safety (FRS) Fund, which is available to western Queensland Regional Road Groups (RRGs).

The RSDP fund was developed to help deliver key regional road works to target safety issues and support economic growth, particularly in western Queensland. The fund will provide some \$143 million to such projects from 2010-11 and between 2013 and 14. Expenditure to the financial year ending June 2011 was almost \$8 million, or 59 per cent of 13.6 million budgeted for the period.

The FRS fund was announced in April 2011 to provide an additional \$2 million to assist flood and safety works in western RRGs. The North West, Outback and South West RRGs all successfully applied for FRS funding. Taking into account the matching local government contributions, FRS projects are expected to deliver over \$3.7 million in additional investment.

As the major source of grant funding to local government in Queensland, it was pleasing to see the quantum of TIDS funding continue in this year's State Budget, which also earmarked \$45 million for the new Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program. In response to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Interim Report, \$5 million of this Program will be allocated to works recommended in the Interim Report.

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In August, the State Government finally released the \$45 million Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program (LGGSP). Following LGAQ representations to the Government, a broad range of community infrastructure (including water) is eligible for funding which offers councils up to a 40 percent subsidy towards projects that are important to community life and support their local economy.

It is expected that successful projects will be announced towards the end of the year.



## Supporting Queensland's Resource Regions

Since its release at LGAQ's 2010 Annual Conference, LGAQ has actively pursued with Government the recommendations contained in its "Supporting Queensland's Resource Regions" Position Paper.

Aside from formal quarterly meetings with an inter-governmental working group (chaired by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation) to discuss progress on the Position Paper, LGAQ continues to convene regular meetings with relevant Government Departments to discuss how the outcomes of each recommendation in the Position Paper can best be achieved.

Significantly, LGAQ has been working with the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) to explore areas of alignment on the policy and funding proposals. Agreement has been reached concerning many of the objectives outlined in the Position Paper, with particular emphasis on the need for a funding stream to local government. LGAQ and QRC will both reflect this position in their respective election policy plans and undertake joint media opportunities on the topic.

Mayors of councils within the affected Resource Regions attended the annual meeting with the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional

Economies on 31 May 2011, as determined under the Sustainable Resource Communities Policy (SRC). Progress against the Position Paper was outlined and the Minister gave an undertaking to increase the frequency of the Mayors meeting to six monthly and to provide a quarterly update against the recommendations of the Position Paper.



The SRC Policy and Partnership Agreement are being revisited in line with the recommendations of the recently concluded SRC Policy Review – in which local governments affected by resource development were consulted. LGAQ has worked closely with the Queensland Government and QRC to reach agreement on the contents of these documents. The new SRC Policy and Partnership Agreement will contain a stronger focus on building local governments' capability and capacity to effectively manage resource industry growth with an emphasis on addressing community infrastructure priorities such as roads, water and sewerage, waste management and recreational facilities. It is also proposed that the geographic scope of the Policy be extended to include at a minimum Barcaldine and Toowoomba Regional councils.

At the time of writing, it was proposed that recommendations would be presented to the Premier, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP by Minister Mulherin in September 2011.

## Queensland Regionalisation Strategy and Queensland Infrastructure Plan

In late July, the Queensland Government released the draft Regionalisation Strategy Consultation Paper (QRS), draft Queensland Infrastructure Plan (QIP), Bruce Highway Upgrade Strategy (BUS) and Townsville Futures Plan for comment.

Emanating from the Growth Management Summit in March 2010, the documents aim to discuss how best to effectively manage population and economic development opportunities across the State, stimulate investment and find more effective ways to provide the infrastructure needed to support sustainable growth.



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Disappointingly, there was limited engagement with local government in the drafting of these documents and little reference to the role and responsibilities of local government in working with the State Government to achieve the purported aims stated in each document.

As part of the public consultation process, in September LGAQ made a submission to the Government on the QRS and QIP, highlighting the important role of local government in regional planning and infrastructure provision and indicating that much stronger reference needs to be given to local governments' role as a facilitator of many of the actions desired by Government and as outlined in the QRS and QIP.

## Regional Development Australia

Recognising the important regional planning and economic development work of Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees and their direct link with local government (through committee representation), LGAQ has continued to seek avenues for engaging more effectively with the RDA committee network.

In May, as part of its Economic and Regional Development Conference, LGAQ facilitated a session with RDA representatives to discuss progress and resourcing of RDAs and the role they play in identifying and progressing regional development priorities with a particular emphasis on Queensland's reconstruction and resilience building process. The session involved State and Federal Government representatives alongside a number of local government RDA committee members.

Additionally, in July, LGAQ wrote to the Honourable Simon Crean MP, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government and the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies, requesting representation on the proposed new RDA State Advisory Board. Minister Mulherin confirmed this in an RDA Queensland forum in June attended by LGAQ President Cr Paul Bell AM. LGAQ is awaiting engagement by the Department on this matter, however, in the meantime the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation has approached LGAQ to take on the role of selecting and endorsing local government representatives on the RDA committees as vacancies arise.

## Economic Development Capacity Building

Over the last 12 months, the LGAQ has continued its partnership with the not for profit professional development organisation Economic Development Australia (EDA) at both a national and State level. Through this relationship, Queensland local government officers and elected members

benefit from networking and professional development opportunities, with EDA recently securing a new remote and regional mentoring program through the federally supported employment of a National Program Coordinator.

To gain a better understanding of the economic development issues facing councils, LGAQ provided funding to enable specific tailoring of a national survey by SGS Economics and Planning Consultants, with the results providing key information and statistics on knowledge, resourcing and training gaps in relation to the roles and responsibilities of local government in the economic development arena.

Additionally and most recently, LGAQ has progressed discussions with the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation concerning a suite of forums and / or training to assist councils with investment attraction strategies.

## Conferences and Events

### Infrastructure and Planning Symposium



In March 2011, the LGAQ held its annual Infrastructure and Planning Symposium with the theme "Remaking the Roads, Reshaping the Regions and Raising Revenue – Redefining our Role".

Despite an immediate focus on reconstruction works, the Symposium was well attended and used as a timely forum to discuss the myriad of issues relating to the recent natural disaster events, with the Premier, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP and Graeme Newton, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, addressing delegates.

The Symposium's agenda also built on the significant work initiated in 2010 through the Federal Government's consideration of constitutional recognition of local government, the State Government's Growth Management Summit, and of course LGAQ's public debate on issues such as a state population policy and infrastructure charges.

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Delegates heard from a number of different speakers across panel sessions and workshops, including two keynote addresses from Mr Chris Richardson, Director from Access Economics, and Dr Michael Porter from the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia.



## Economic Development Conference

The 2011 Economic and Regional Development Conference entitled "Resourced Regions – Shaping Up or Shipping Out?" was held in Gladstone from 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May, attracting over 70 attendees. The Program was again developed in association with Economic Development Australia (EDA) and was opened by the Honourable Simon Crean MP, Minister for Regional Development and Local Government.

The program explored Queensland's unique interface between the resources industry, tourism and agriculture and associated skilled migration, workforce development and regionalisation complexities. Opportunities presented by Broadband enablement, green and high tech industries were highlighted with some innovative case studies.

This year the Association hosted EDA Queensland's inaugural Awards for Excellence in Economic Development with winners announced as Mackay Whitsunday Regional Economic Development Corporation; Cairns Regional Council and Logan City Council.

## Environment and Health

### Natural Resource Management

#### Stock Route Network Reform

After 8 years of persistent commitment to achieving positive reform for local government in the management of Queensland's Stock Route Network, the draft Bill was presented to Parliament on Tuesday, 6 September 2011. Once passed, this legislation will allow local government to gather revenue to offset the costs of managing the network - a

key component driving the reform agenda.

LGAQ maintained observer status on the interim Stock Route Advisory Panel (SRAP), continuing to provide advice to Minister Nolan on the process of reform. Two local government representatives sit on the SRAP - Cr Brendan McNamara, Mayor of Flinders Shire Council, and Cr Rob Chandler, Mayor of Barcaldine Regional Council. A Stock Route Implementation Group (SRIG) was formed to provide detailed advice and information to the SRAP with regard to implementation of proposed reforms. LGAQ lobbied for and received five local government seats on this group. The representatives are from: Central Highlands, Charters Towers, Winton, Blackall and Isaac. This group will be integral in the implementation of the new Act which is expected to come into force in mid 2013.

## Biosecurity

### Biosecurity Legislation

The new Biosecurity Bill rolls seven separate stock, pest, chemical and invasive species pieces of legislation into one. The LGAQ has undertaken significant local government engagement in the development of and submission on the new Bill. The Association represents local government on the Reference Panel and formed a Local Government Technical Working Group (TWG) to undertake detailed reviews and comments on the Bill during its drafting. Senior level local government representatives on the group included Cassowary Coast Regional Council, FNQROC, Brisbane City Council, Maranoa Regional Council and Gold Coast City Council.

Key outcomes requested by LGAQ and reflected in the new Bill, include: limiting of local government responsibilities to invasive animals and plants only; increased powers for local government surveys and responses; power to act without a species being declared; and the ability to prepare regional pest management plans in partnership with neighbouring councils.

### State Lands Pest Management Committee

The State Lands Pest Management Committee meets quarterly to share information and coordinate pest management matters across state government department and key stakeholder lands. Membership includes Queensland Parks and Wildlife, Queensland Rail, Department of Main Roads, State Unallocated Lands, Biosecurity Queensland, Energex, Department of Defence and LGAQ. The Association has raised matters concerning appropriate funding of pest management work by the State, especially for National Parks and State Forests, communication and coordination with individual council neighbours and the need for Biosecurity Queensland to continue to support the group through the

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provision of a resource to run meetings and follow up agreed actions.

## Queensland Invasive Plants and Animals Management MOU

In May 2010, LGAQ, Biosecurity Queensland (BQ) and the Regional Natural Resources Management Groups Collective (RGC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the management of invasive weeds and pest animal management in Queensland. The MoU sets out the roles and responsibilities of the state, local government and regional NRM groups in relation to invasive species management. LGAQ has commenced a State-wide consultation process in partnership with BQ and the RGC to review the MoU.

## Pest Animal Barrier Fences Review

The State Government undertook a review of all the pest animal barrier fences in Queensland and determined to combine the wild dog and rabbit fences into a single entity. The Association has represented local governments in progress meetings with BQ to ensure appropriate engagement and consultation is undertaken with affected councils.

## Pest Animal Strategies

After significant pressure for LGAQ and local government to improve policy direction and guidance for wild dogs and the control and management of feral deer, the State prepared the Queensland Wild Dog Management Strategy and revised its original draft Queensland Deer Strategy. In addition to facilitating direct local government input in the development of the strategies, LGAQ made submissions to both.

## Vegetation Consultative Committee

LGAQ is a member of the Vegetation Consultative Committee, formed to maintain communication and stakeholder input into matters associated with the implementation of State government policies and legislation for the reduction of vegetation clearing.

The Association has also taken up the issue of local government being inadvertently captured under the Nature Conservation Act for clearing not of concern vegetation. This year the association advocated for the streamlining of clearing permit application processes for local government and achieved the agreement of the State to trial the introduction of six month permits based on vegetation management plans covering the entire local government area. This will reduce the need for individual permits to be submitted for individual works.

## Natural Resource Management Planning

The Association continues to work toward building local

government capacity to enhance the integration of NRM into local government planning schemes and achieved state recognition for its work when it was awarded a Merit Award, Planning Institute of Australia for its decision support tool "Implementing SEQ Regional NRM Plan Targets through Planning Schemes: A Decision Support Tool for South East Queensland Local Government Planners".

## Caring For Our Country/Q2 Coast and Country Grant Project

"Queensland Local Government Translating State and Australian NRM Priorities into Local Knowledge and Action" has been a successful project that developed a planning tool to positively influence Queensland local government contributions to natural resource management through the Queensland planning framework.

LGAQ worked with regional NRM groups and local government to re-establish partnerships affected by Queensland local government amalgamations, including the development and delivery of two pilot training courses in Far North Queensland and South East Queensland and delivery of a weed awareness workshop. The project collaborated with NRM bodies and local government to increase alignment of natural asset conservation policies, planning mechanisms and operations with national and state level priorities. The project also engaged with indigenous councils to improve knowledge of natural resource management, develop informal partnerships and identify their needs and issues in managing natural resources within their local government areas.

## Queensland Timber Plantation Strategy 2020

The State Government released its draft Queensland Timber Plantation Strategy 2020 in March 2010. The Strategy announced the State's intention to prepare a mandatory code for the assessment of timber plantations by local government. LGAQ did not support this action, as it will reduce local government's capacity to ensure that the impacts of forestry operations, management, and end of lifecycle are adequately addressed in the development assessment phase.

The Association's senior staff met with the State and Timber Queensland to discuss local government concerns. LGAQ President, Cr Paul Bell, also met with the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland. Unfortunately, efforts to remove the action were unsuccessful.

Since this determination, the LGAQ has participated on a technical working group, which includes local government representation from Gympie Regional Council, Mackay Regional Council, and Rockhampton Regional Council, and

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has provided input into the development of the Code.

## Cypress Forest Councils (SWQ)

LGAQ attended a number of meetings of Cypress Forest Councils over the year to assist with their lobbying of the State Government with respect to a new forest agreement. That help and advice extended to media, high level strategy development and political negotiation.

## Strategic Cropping Land

In March 2010, LGAQ made a submission to the State related to the discussion paper on the development of a Strategic Cropping Land (SCL) Policy.

Since that time, the Government has released the selection criteria for determining SCL, a Regulatory Assessment Statement (RAS) identifying the cost to a developer to be assessed under the SCL policy, mapping identifying Strategic Cropping Protection and Management Areas, and a draft State Planning Policy (SPP).

The LGAQ is a representative on the SCL Stakeholder Advisory Committee and continues to participate in discussions with this group. The Association has prepared submissions, advocating on local government's behalf, for each of the documents released by the State and consulted with key councils in the development of the state's soil testing criteria.

## Minor Waterway Barriers

As a result of concerns raised by Bundaberg Regional Council in relation to the practicality of the Minor Waterway Barrier Works Code, the LGAQ has been able to form a working group to specifically consider the issues. The working group will be coordinated by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation with participation by Bundaberg Regional Council, Brisbane City Council, Townsville Regional Council, and the Association. The first meeting is anticipated to be scheduled soon and will look particularly at making the code more practical for the needs of local government and reducing the paperwork, required resources for lodgement and assessment, and the cost associated with Minor Waterway Barrier Works applications.

The LGAQ is also hoping to involve the Department of Transport and Main Roads as the challenges they are facing with Minor Waterway Barrier Works Code are similar to those of local government.

## Natural Asset Management

### Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act Review Roundtable

The Federal Government's review of the EPBC Act has not progressed significantly since LGAQ President Paul Bell attended a high level roundtable with Minister Burke and other high level key stakeholders in Canberra in July 2010. At the time LGAQ advocated for:

- The recognition of the value of ecosystems and their protection, with the need to consult on the detailed development of selection criteria;
- The introduction of an interim greenhouse trigger for both the development and operational phases, provided there is further detail of how this would be applied;
- Greater investment in a better regulatory system such as national environmental accounts, skills development, policy guidance, and acquisition of critical spatial information;
- Mandating the development of foresight reports to help government manage emerging environmental threats;
- Greater integration of Federal legislation with other Commonwealth and State legislation to avoid duplication or conflicting requirements and where State legislation provides for greater protection of a species, habitat or ecosystem than the revised Act, recognition and adoption of the higher standard as opposed to watering down to a national standard.

**The LGAQ continues to advocate for the timely completion of the review of the EPBC Act.**

## Biodiversity Strategy

The Queensland draft Biodiversity Strategy was released for comment mid 2010.

The Strategy establishes important direction, targets and frameworks for the future conservation and enhancement of biodiversity however; terms in Priority Actions are broad and the success or otherwise of the actions will be determined by the 'how'. In discussions with DERM, LGAQ has been assured the State will lead the development of an implementation plan. LGAQ has requested the inclusion of a priority action that confirms an implementation plan will be prepared with full stakeholder engagement (including local government) during this process to ensure maximized and integrated implementation. In its submission to the State, the Association raised the following matters;

- Continuing underfunding and poor delivery of existing natural estate management by the State;

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- Failure to consider and account for lost rates revenue for councils and economic and employment impacts to communities as a result of national park declarations; and
- Poor recognition of local government's current efforts and key role, in particular off reserve conservation including landowner partnerships.

## Environmental Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee

LGAQ provides local government representation on the Environment Disaster Recovery Sub-Committee and was instrumental in the establishment of cross-cutting protocols to facilitate integration of important matters from each of the lines of recovery across all the disaster recovery plans. These protocols are intended to prevent activities occurring in isolation of other considerations and resulting in reduced disaster resilience or unintended negative outcomes.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> National Local Government Environment Conference

The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Local Government Environment Conference was held 8-10 November at the Gold Coast International Hotel. More than 150 delegates attended over three days. Delegate feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction with presentations, topics and the location.

## Coastal Plan

The State released the Queensland Coastal Plan and State Planning Policy (SPP) in May this year.

LGAQ has worked with the Department of Environment and Resource Management to increase local government input into the development of tools to assist councils implement the requirements of the new Plan and SPP. This has involved the establishment of a local government Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy Guideline working group; the facilitation of training needs survey and access to training.

## Climate Change

### National Local Government Climate Change Roundtable

The Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government supported by the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility and CSIRO Climate Change Flagship held a National Local Government Climate Change Roundtable in May. The purpose of the roundtable was to gain an understanding of the current status of local governments nationally regarding the climate change agenda, what their

research and project needs were and identify the key priorities for project work of the short and medium term.

The Association participated at the meeting putting forward the issues of liability and litigation and the increasing need for more applied research to provide examples of effective solutions to specific problems.

A communiqué released by ACELG identified the following immediate priorities as focus for the centre and key stakeholders:

- Develop nationally consistent frameworks and methods for use by local government in contributing to a low carbon future;
- Provide a platform for sharing innovation and new ideas and creating collaboration between researchers, policy makers and practitioners; and
- Review how local government research-focused resources can be used to meet needs identified at the Roundtable

## ALGA National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Annual Action Plan

The Association continues to work with ALGA and the other state associations in the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy. ALGA has recently released the *Local Council Risk of Liability in the Face of Climate Change – Resolving Uncertainties* by Baker and Thomson as a result of the group's work.

LGAQ recently agreed to lead Policy Output 1: Improved Local Data and Information to Assist Council to Address Climate Change of the national strategy. This role will assist Queensland councils through increased access to information and greater advocacy for improved local level data generated by Federal and State agencies.

## Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Decision Pathways Project

Townsville City Council, LGAQ and the Office of Climate Change were granted \$345,000 to plan for reducing the impacts of coastal hazards and sea level rise through the Australian Government's Coastal Adaptation Decision Pathways Program. The joint "Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy Pilot Project" will provide substantial material to assist Queensland coastal councils in the preparation of Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategies required under the new "Queensland Coastal State Planning Policy". The project will deliver:

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- A compendium of adaptation options for high-risk areas;
- A standard cost-benefit analysis method for assessing the economic feasibility of options; and
- A process for determining optimal timing for implementation of different adaptation options over the 100 year time frame.

In consultation with the community, this work will come together to deliver the first local government “Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy” in Queensland.



## Carbon Tax

LGAQ has been working with ALGA and the other state associations on advocacy at the federal level to reduce the impacts of the carbon tax on local government. Legacy waste was successfully excluded from the new tax framework. High level advocacy will continue to negotiate further concessions and support packages for local government. LGAQ is partnering to provide modelling of cost impacts to Queensland councils and investigating the establishment of a number of services to local government to assist them in reducing the overall cost exposure and meeting their future regulatory requirements.

## National Adaptation Research Projects

LGAQ continues to partner with national and state research bodies in climate change adaptation projects of benefit to Queensland Councils. LGAQ is a member of the SEQ Coastal Adaptation Research Initiative which is developing methods that will facilitate council adaptation decision making at planning and management levels while allowing for varying levels of uncertainty.

The Association is also working with the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) and its Settlements and Infrastructure network (ACCARNSI) on a three-pronged research program to evaluate nation-wide experiences and report on how climate change adaptation tools and processes are being used by local government. The project will serve to:

- Demonstrate the range of councils' and ROCs' adaptive responses to climate change impacts and threats;
- Facilitate appropriate adaptation actions by local governments;
- Build organisational and communities capacities;
- Encourage adaptive learning and knowledge sharing; and
- Foster a community of Local Government adaptation practitioners.

## State Waste Management Strategy and Draft State Planning Regulatory Provision (SPRP)

In September 2010, it was brought to the Association's attention that there may be some difficulty for the waste and recycling industry in implementing the required reforms under the Queensland Waste Strategy to reduce waste being sent to landfill and increase resource recovery. Waste management facilities (primarily landfills) would, in many cases, be required to establish new development on site such as weighbridges and collection booths or expand facilities for sorting, recovery, transfer of waste and resources and the like, and this would most likely trigger a material change of use (MCU) development application. Because the development of waste management facilities can be particularly sensitive in nature and potentially result in a lengthy assessment process, it was identified that the required measures would not be able to be approved and implemented prior to the commencement of the waste reform process and waste levy (due to commence 1 December 2011).

The Association, in collaboration with the Waste Contractors and Recyclers Association of Queensland, has negotiated with the State to draft a planning instrument in the form of

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a State Planning Regulatory Provision (SPRP) – Particular to Waste Management Activities on Existing Landfills. This instrument will allow for the necessary development of facilities to allow for waste diversion, transfer, and recycling in line with the Queensland Waste Strategy. In consultation with local government the draft SPRP is supported and is expected to be finalised prior to the end of the year.

## Planning & Development

### Infrastructure Charges Reform and Priority Infrastructure Plans (PIPs)

Infrastructure Charges Reforms have been a substantial and important topic this year. In April 2011, the Queensland Government response to the Infrastructure Charges Taskforce final report was released. The Queensland Government response sets the reform agenda and establishes a three year timeframe for implementing the State Government's reforms.

As part of these reforms, the Association has initiated investigations through the Queensland Partnership Group and the "Administrative Pathfinder Study" on potential improvements to the administration of infrastructure charges. In the short and medium term, the Association is also preparing to work closely with the State government on the implementation of a deferred payment mechanism, investigation into the feasibility of standardised infrastructure conditions and a municipal infrastructure design and service standards guide for local governments.

The LGAQ has maintained a high level of communication with its members and will continue to liaise with local government on all aspects of the infrastructure charges reform process.

### Planning Reform and Regulatory Simplification

The Association is an advocate of planning reform and regulatory simplification in the planning system in Queensland. As such, the LGAQ has been a partner in the development of the Target Five Days (T5) project and the recent extension of that project to include an investigation of operational works and large subdivisions. The Association has also had representation on the State Government's working group investigating the feasibility of private or self-certification of certain operational works development applications, as well as the review of planning application referrals to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Department of Environment and Resource Management, and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

### Green Door

The Association maintains representation on the Green Door Advisory Committee. This is a State Government initiative to promote a streamlined process for development where exemplar sustainability and environmental outcomes are proposed. It is expected that the 'Green Door' will provide local government with an additional planning tool in which to promote sustainable development projects and practices to their community.

### Regional Planning

The Department of Local Government and Planning is expected to further emphasis the importance of regional planning in the short and medium term. The Association has continued to monitor the development and roll-out of regional plans in Queensland, with the draft Mackay Whitsunday Regional Plan released most recently.

### Qplan Reference Panel and Development Assessment Fees

The Qplan Reference Panel was renamed and reformed by the Department of Local Government and Planning in June this year. The panel's primary role is to undertake discussion with local government and industry stakeholders on the issue of development application fees. The Association has agreed to participate and provide membership on the Qplan Reference Panel in good faith and is willing to discuss the appropriateness of the value of development application fees Councils' set. However, LGAQ is also of the firm view that additional requested development assessment steps, beyond those of a standard development application, should be charged an associated fee in order for Councils to recover costs and will continue to advocate this position.

### Development Assessment Monitoring

The Productivity Commission commenced an investigation into the performance and benchmarking of planning, zoning, and development assessment systems. Significant concern arose from this undertaking as the Federal Government has previously not engaged in planning issues and debate. The LGAQ made submissions to both the interim Productivity Commission report and final research reports ensuring that the Federal government had a good understanding of the differences between Queensland and the rest of the country as well as knowledge about the complexities of the planning and development system.

The State Government initiated the Development Assessment Monitoring and Performance Program (DAMPP) in 2009 through the mandatory collection of quarterly development

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assessment and approval data provided by the 19 local governments considered to have the 'highest growth'. The Association undertook significant negotiation with the Department of Local Government and Planning to ensure that each local government would be provided an indication of their own successes and shortcomings, but would not be directly compared to any other local government. The first DAMPP report was released in April this year and has been well received. It is anticipated that DAMPP will be expanded in the near future to all Queensland local governments.

## Building

The Association continues to be represented on the Queensland Building Industry Consultative Group and maintains a satisfactory working relationship with Building Codes Queensland. Recently, the LGAQ has asked a small group of local government officers to participate in a "building matters network" in order to assist in better understanding the challenges local government faces in relation to building and ensure that the LGAQ is advocating for the best possible outcomes. The network is commencing with a review of the State's discussion paper "Improving building certification in Queensland".

## Swimming Pool Safety

In December 2010, new legislation related to increasing swimming pool safety was enacted. The LGAQ has continued to monitor the implementation of the legislation affecting council operations since that time and has participated in a number of local government hosted meetings about the ongoing concerns related to the legislation. The Association will maintain its representation on the Pool Safety Council and will, through this body and Building Codes Queensland, advocate for a review of the swimming pool safety legislation if evidence suggests that it is not increasing pool safety and continuing to be a burden on local government.

## Plumbing

The Association continues to be represented on the Queensland Plumbing Industry Consultative Group and maintains a satisfactory working relationship with Building Codes Queensland. In June this year the State Government proposed changes to the Standard Plumbing and Drainage Regulation 2003 and the Queensland Development Code in order to expand what is considered notifiable minor plumbing works. After discussions with the State, the proposed changes have been amended to better reflect LGAQ's recommendations and local government interests.

## Preparing a Planning Scheme: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils'

In March 2010, ARUP Consultants were engaged by the LGAQ to create a guideline for Indigenous local governments to assist with the implementation of the Planning Schemes being developed in their communities. The LGAQ was pleased to provide each Indigenous local government two copies of the finalised document "Preparing a Planning Scheme: A Guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils" in July this year. Due to the positive feedback received in relation to the guide, in partnership with AURP, the Association has submitted the guide for consideration of a Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Award.

## National Broadband Network

The Association is a key stakeholder in the Broadband Today Alliance (BTA), a group formed by local governments in Queensland taking an active role in the implementation of the National Broadband Network (NBN). Both the State and Federal departments responsible for the digital economy and implementation of the NBN have been engaged as well as NBN Co by the Association and the BTA. It is anticipated that this open dialog between all parties and stakeholders will continue as new legislation and policies are developed, and construction occurs.

## Social

### Member Connect initiative

A Social Wellbeing Knowledge Group established in September 2010 has met bi-monthly to ensure social policy is coordinated across LGAQ's three streams and reflects the new business operating model by focusing on providing value to members in social policy. It incorporates LGAQ's work in the areas of arts and culture, youth development, community relations, social planning, community development and healthy communities and the social impact of mining. The Group has formulated the new community wellbeing indicator agenda, drafted a new "Queensland local government social policy" for consideration in the new year and updated LG Online social policy information.

## Community plans and community wellbeing

The Local Government Act 2009 requires councils to prepare long term community plans and engage with the community in developing a vision for their future. Community plans, representing a broader community vision for the future have given local government a stronger leadership role in the development of these plans. Councillors and staff asking people to help achieve a vision for their community need to



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understand what is important to people and share their local wisdom. They need to understand people's level of optimism, their perception of future prosperity and their connection to the community.

The LGAQ community wellbeing project was established in January 2010 to test member support and capacity for using a wellbeing indicator framework intended to assist council staff and councillors achieve this understanding. As well as assisting councils develop and update their community plans, a wellbeing indicator framework aims to enhance the capacity of councils to measure, plan for and report on the wellbeing of their communities.

The Sunshine Coast, Gladstone, Isaac and Longreach Regional Councils and the Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council volunteered to be part of the LGAQ pilot project and its major exercise - a telephone survey of 1,100 people asking what influences their sense of wellbeing and what is important to them. The survey was conducted by Alan Morton and Market Facts and was completed at the end of September 2011. It is expected that the data from the wellbeing indicator survey can help councils:

- Identify problems in the electorate;
- Promote the communities' strengths;
- Identify future challenges;
- Demonstrate what people fear and worry about; and
- Identify issues to advocate to other governments and potential partnerships.

A report on the pilot findings will be released to members by November 2011.

## Advocacy on Social Policy

The LGAQ has made written submissions and/or attended ministerial and departmental forums advocating member interests in a number of social policies and implementation strategies being formulated by the Queensland Government.

### Disability access and inclusion

LGAQ made a submission to the Department of Community Services, followed by a letter and meetings with senior officers and attendance at a Roundtable conducted by the Honourable Curtis Pitt, Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to determine local governments' role in improving access and inclusion of people with a disability in Queensland communities.

LGAQ has been successful in identifying an appropriate role for LGAQ in the implementation of the State Government's "10-year plan for supporting Queenslanders with a disability" that is the State's commitment to the 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy. This role includes providing leadership to achieve

an increase from the current 10% of councils with a disability action plan and to help members develop plans relevant to their circumstances and resources with assistance from the Federal Disability Discrimination Commissioner. LGAQ has nominated for a seat on Minister Pitt's advisory council to advocate member interests in this challenging area. LGAQ has also requested funding to carry out an audit of council activity in this area and to develop a plan of action to include members in the implementation.

### Public library funding and performance reporting

LGAQ as a member of the Public Libraries Advisory Group (PLAG) made a written submission to the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) Public Libraries Grants Methodology Review. LGAQ expressed disappointment that the review was restricted to the grants methodology and does not include any analysis of the adequacy of the total amount of funding made available by the State Government (12% of total library expenditure). LGAQ maintained that the review paper did not acknowledge the enormous changes and challenges facing councils in achieving such rapid improvement in their service delivery; the financial stress of some councils following amalgamation; or an understanding of the challenges of the resources boom in Queensland and the enormous impact this is having in terms of the movement of people around the state and placing increased demand on council services.

LGAQ expressed support for SLQ's "Expanding Horizons" policy and the greater advocacy by the SLQ of public libraries in demonstrating their social, economic and educational value. It was pointed out however that performance reporting changes could place the onus for this advocacy on library and other council staff and possibly result in operational issues and increased reporting obligations for LGAQ members.

### Social impact in resources communities

LGAQ as a major stakeholder in the Department of Employment Economic Development and Innovation's Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) Working Group advocated member interests with regard to the social impact on housing in resource communities in consultations to develop the Major Resource Projects Housing Policy. LGAQ is also representing members in development of the social impact assessment guidelines that are the currently subject to legislative amendments.

### One Funding System for Better Services Bill

LGAQ made a written submission to the Department of Communities supporting a streamlining approach that would reduce the procedural application and accountability requirements of State Government funding. It would be expected that this would lessen the burden on local

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government staff to plan and deliver services at the local level.

## Social Housing

LGAQ successfully advocated for a seat on the Queensland Housing Assistance Forum (QHAF), the consultative body established by the Honourable Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women in development of the State Government's social housing policy and strategy as Queensland's commitment to the National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing. The strategy aims to build the capacity of not-for-profit housing providers in Queensland, which includes 43 councils.

## Opening Doors: Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011-14

LGAQ is a member of the Queensland Homelessness Intersectoral Forum (QHIF) and attended a number of meetings to represent member interests in formulation of the State's homelessness strategy announced by Minister Struthers on 21 July 2011.

## Review of the Prostitution Act (1999)

LGAQ worked closely with the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) over the latest review of the Prostitution Act informing members and encouraging member submissions and attending meetings with the CMC.

## Workforce

### Productivity Places Program (PPP)

LGAQ continued to provide support to councils during this third year of this three year program designed to improve the capacity of local governments through formal Vocational Educational Training (VET) training of staff.

PPP was a Commonwealth Government initiative structured to provide additional training places targeting higher level qualifications through industry led arrangements that are fully contestable and hence allowing industry/employers to directly influence the selection of training providers.

The LGAQ was contracted by the Department of Education and Training in September 2008 and negotiated an arrangement to distribute \$2.56 million of PPP funding across the sector. Due to the success of the arrangement, this contract was varied in June 2010 and again in March 2011, increasing the total agreement value to \$13.77 million for local government in Queensland. This program funded 85 percent of the cost of training delivery and for the first time in many instances made training in rural/remote areas possible.

Round 3 in 2011 was extended to pick up the training requirements of the Queensland Water Entities, with 6 organisations receiving funding.

This very successful program was underpinned by an especially-designed variable funding model which allowed councils to select the qualification and preferred training provider, thus creating an industry led, demand driven system.

The LGAQ model is the most complex (and most successful) of all brokerage arrangements in play in Queensland under the PPP initiative. The level of complexity was compounded by the scope of qualifications requested by councils (94), the number of training providers (67), and the variable costs associated with delivery across the State.

50 councils participated in Round 3, up from 41 in Round 1, together with 6 water entities. By the conclusion of the project, funding under this initiative would have up-skilled approximately 10 percent (3,953) of the Queensland local government workforce. This particular brokerage arrangement allowed LGAQ to deliver 33 percent above the contracted number of places and leveraged just over \$2 million in additional funding from the sector.

## Workforce Development

### National Level

The Association noted a significant increase in interest at the national level in the issue of workforce development/capacity building, and played a significant role in representing Queensland local government at national workforce development forums and meetings.

LGAQ collaborated with other State Associations on a range of workforce development strategies and contributed significantly as a member of the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) Workforce Development Consultative group.

This group is charged with developing a National Local Government Workforce Development Strategy to be designed around the themes of attraction, retention and skills development and be enabled by information, funding and where appropriate legislation.

Earlier research work previously compiled by the Queensland Local Government Skills Formation Strategy, the secretariat and Project Manager which was supplied by LGAQ provided a useful starting point for how best to approach the development of such a strategy.

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LGAQ together with other Local Government Associations supported the following as prerequisite to a successful national strategy:

- Sharing and coordination of information between jurisdictions;
- Sharing of best practice;
- National workforce data collection;
- Lifting participation rate of under represented groups (egg indigenous people and women – a “Local Government Indigenous Employment Program Green Paper” has been drafted; and
- Better co-ordination of overseas recruitment efforts to relieve persistent skill shortages.

## State Level

The Association has long recognised that a comprehensive approach to planning across the sector would be of enormous benefit, if not essential, to the sector as a whole and to Councils individually.

Council surveys confirmed that workforce planning began across amalgamated councils during 2009 to assist with the population of the new organisational structures. By October 2010, 24 percent of councils had developed a Workforce Plan, spanning on average 1-3 years, albeit each plan utilised different methodologies and comprised differing planning components. Of this group, only 70 percent had conducted any form of an Age Audit, with only 21 percent of councils surveyed having conducted any form of Pre-Retirement Audit.

Having formed the firm opinion that a strategic approach to workforce planning at a local, regional and state level was a vital step in building the capability of the sector to ensure service levels maintain pace with community expectations, LGAQ dedicated its Human Resource Conference held in November 2010 to in part determine the level of interest in effective workforce planning within councils and showcased a demonstratively successful workforce planning methodology to attendant councils. Delegates unanimously supported the program and requested LGAQ to advance the introduction of an initial pre-planning HR Metrics program whilst further exploring options for introducing a common workforce planning methodology across local government.

The 2011 pilot for the HR Metrics program was designed to capture workforce data from participating councils and report it in a manner so that councils might measure the effectiveness of, and return of their investment in, their workforce. A design methodology was identified and 19 councils have begun to record and report data across 12 categories of metrics, with each category containing between two and 8 different indices of measurement. The data will be utilised for both local individual council consumption and benchmarking across councils.

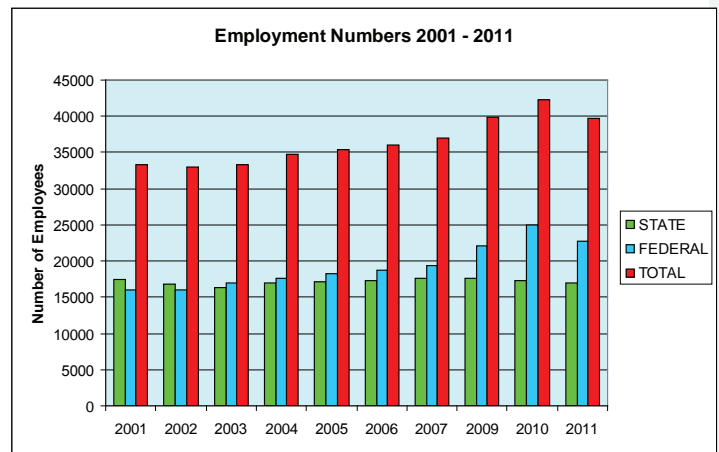
The Association continues to advance the introduction of sector-wide workforce planning as a matter of priority.

## Data Collection

LGAQ conducted its annual Workforce Census as well as its annual Skills Shortage survey. The former is used by the Association for a plethora of representation purposes with the Workforce Skills survey outcome informing the State Government Vocational Education investment into the local government sector.

The 2010 census confirmed that the size of the local government workforce continued to demonstrate an upward trend over the last 10 years of around 2 percent annually. This jumped up to 3.9 percent increase in 2008/2009 and continued to rise by 6 percent, peaking at 42,252 employees in 2010.

Note: 2011 figures showed a slight overall decline in numbers directly attributed to the transfer of staff from South East Queensland councils into the newly established Water Entities.



Note: 80 percent of the workforce are employed in councils with greater than 500 employees, with 12 councils employing in excess of 1,000 staff.

The Skills Shortage survey delivered an annual report on critical skill shortages across the sector. It allowed LGAQ to identify sector wide and regional shortages including establishing time series data across such indices as:

- Current and future skill shortage occupations;
- Time and level of difficulty in filling vacancies;
- Drivers/reasons behind the current shortages;
- Turnover levels;
- Levels of over award payments;
- Level of ATSI, ASSI, NESB, Disabled participation;
- Number of apprentices and trainees;
- Extent of the LLN (foundation skills) problem;

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- Number of workers employed under 457 visas and in what occupations; and
- Detailed list of occupations (professional and skilled workers) in demand now and expected to be in demand in future.

This information was analysed and, together with key trends extracted from the Annual Workforce Census, formed the basis of advice and recommendations supplied to the State Government with the mutual aim being to make the VET system more flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the local government sector.

Information supplied within this Skills Plan for the LG sector confirmed the urgent need for the upskilling of the workforce in the face of the mining/resource boom and enabled the LGAQ to access \$13.77M in Productivity Places Program funding on behalf of the sector over the past 3 years.

The collection of these data sets is unique. No other state collects this sort of information - and consequently no other state has been able to access the levels of funding that the LGAQ has as a result.

## Industrial Relations

The trend of marked industrial relations reform that has been a feature of local government workforce management since the 2006 advent of the “doomed” Workchoices reforms continued during 2010/11. With unions seeking to vary a range of awards in a manner that may have proven costly for councils with little if any return, the Association spent considerable resources engaging with councils to develop and implement its own strategy for facilitating an industrial relations system that conformed with the adopted principles of:

- A contemporary and relevant system;
- A system that valued local government employees;
- A system that allowed local government to compete for talent in its workforce;
- A system that was not overly administrative burdensome; and
- A system that promoted a level of flexibility (with localised enterprise bargaining as its centrepiece) to allow local circumstances to be considered in local arrangements.

The Association has lodged an application for a new local government award and liaised on a number of occasions with the State Government to ensure that any industry-wide activity accords with the agreed-upon general industry preferred direction for Industrial relations reform.

## Workplace Health & Safety

LGAQ made several written submissions and provided regular input at a number of forums relating to the new harmonised Workplace Health & Safety regulations due to take effect in January 2012.

The LGAQ Workplace Health & Safety Conference held in July 2010 was dedicated to examining and explaining the new laws and their implications for councils and addressed in detail the range of options for councils arising out of the changes which are quite significant for local government in Queensland.

While LGAQ did not achieve all the changes in legislation it sought, the majority of the concerns raised by the Association were addressed to an acceptable level.

## Media and Inter-Governmental Relations

### Media and Communications Staff Network

The image campaign highlighted the need for the creation of a formal network of media and communications staff across Queensland councils. Such a network will be crucial in ensuring that the key messages arising from the image campaign and subsequent campaigns have sufficient impact “on the ground” in individual communities. This network is now up and running, with the first network forum held in August with guest speakers including Group News Editor of Australian Provincial Newspapers, Steve Zeppa, and Queensland Police Media Director Kym Charlton. LGAQ plans to run regular forums as a means of encouraging professional development among media and communications officers. We are also providing online tools for better communication and peer support between media and communications officers.

## Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

Specific activities on promoting the campaign on constitutional recognition have, up until recently, focused on encouraging awareness of the issue among media and opinion leaders through opinion articles and online promotion. LGAQ has won the endorsement of both the Premier and LNP leader Campbell Newman for constitutional recognition of local government, and most of the State’s 73 councils have passed resolutions calling for the change. LGAQ is working with other State Associations and ALGA on a comprehensive communications and political strategy to further promote constitutional recognition.

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## Intergovernmental Relations

Strengthening LGAQ's intergovernmental relations capabilities and focus has been another significant priority for the Advocate Stream in response to the Association's Member Connect program. A dedicated Government/Media segment, led by LGAQ Media Executive Craig Johnstone, has been created as part of the Association's internal reorganisation and Stephan Bohnen commenced work in the newly created Intergovernmental Relations Advisor position in March 2011.

In addition to coordinating the Policy, Representation and Engagement Processes (PREP) project, the segment's lead intergovernmental relations initiative is the development of LGAQ's first-ever Intergovernmental Relations Strategy, a draft of which is expected to be presented to the Policy Executive for consideration in December. The Strategy will set out some key guiding principles for LGAQ's advocacy activities and, in conjunction with relevant changes arising from the PREP project, contribute to a more strategic and coordinated approach to intergovernmental relations across the Association.

In support of the Strategy, a stocktake and SWOT analysis of LGAQ's relationships with the Federal and state governments is being undertaken and work on establishing a database of government contacts has commenced. Work is also underway to develop a new reporting mechanism to keep the Policy Executive informed of progress with implementation of LGAQ's Advocacy Action Plan.

## Assist Stream

The focus of the Assist Stream is to support members with information, advice, guidance, and tools to support those working in and leading local governments. In the last 12 months several major new initiatives have been launched, most at no cost to members. The stream has also contributed significantly to several important policy areas that have direct bearing on council operations. Highlights of the streams activities are detailed below.

### Ethics Advisor



The Hon Joan Sheldon AM was appointed as the first independent Local Government Ethics Advisor. This role was created specifically to support elected members and CEO's.

The position of Local Government Ethics Advisor is independent from the operations of the Association; this allows all inquiries to the Advisor to be treated confidentially.

Joan commenced in the role in early June 2011, and LGAQ President, Cr Paul Bell AM wrote to all councillors and CEOs to introduce her to local government.

Joan advises that she has already fielded enquiries from a broad range of councils and has provided advice to a number of individual Councillors already - mainly on Conflict of Interest matters.

### Elected Member Helpdesk

In partnership with the Ethics Advisor role a new Elected Member Advisory service for elected Mayors and Councillors (Councillor Helpdesk) was also agreed to during the year.

Recruitment processes were initiated in June 2011, and the Association was pleased to be able to appoint former CEO and Town Clerk Hayden Wright to the role.

This service seeks to address issues relating to working relationships and responsibilities when dealing with other elected members, council staff, community members and stakeholders.

### Delegations Register

LGAQ sought the assistance of King and Company in a comprehensive review of all State legislation impacting on Local Government to develop a list of all the possible delegations from Council to CEO, and from CEO to employees or contractors.

The result is the development of a reliable and complete Delegations Register for all relevant State legislation.

The Local Government Act 2009 requires CEOs to establish a register of delegations, which must record all delegations by the Council, Mayor or the CEO.

Available through LG Online, or on CD, councils are able to access a simple table for each individual piece of State legislation with associated instructions for completion. The Association is also able to offer consulting support to help with the completion of the register.

# POLICY EXECUTIVE REPORT



## Governance

Public debate about integrity in public office and changes in the new Local Government Act generated wide ranging discussion. In response, and following engagement with councils involving both LGAQ and King and Company staff four topics were consequently addressed in the draft guidelines and procedures.

- (1) Contact with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters
- (2) Councillor Code of Conduct
- (3) Confidentiality of Information, and
- (4) Advice Guidelines/Access to Information

Responses to the above have been prepared by King and Company, endorsed by the LGAQ Policy Executive and are available on LG Online.

## 2012 Election Package

As in previous election years the LGAQ will again be providing significant support to assist councils in the lead up to, and immediately following the local government elections in March. Due to the significant nature of the election, LGAQ preparations for the event started in January.

It is important that the election processes run smoothly and that the unavoidable disruptions to council operations and activities are minimised.

It is equally important that newly elected councillors are especially supported so that they can undertake their new responsibilities with confidence and certainty.

The key areas in which the Association will be looking to assist include:

- Advice, information and guidance regarding the 2012 quadrennial election
- Councillor inductions incorporating elected member training and policy updates
- Support for reviewing a Council's meeting and operational settings
- Advice and training on the roles and responsibilities of elected members and officers
- Helping newly elected councillors understand the personal pitfalls, legislative and ethical risks and how these are best managed
- Resources, tools and support materials

LGAQ is committed to providing the best possible assistance for Councils, CEOs and Elected Members in the crucial days early in the next term.

## Australian Packaging Covenant

The Covenant Mark III has now commenced and the Association continues to be involved with a seat on the Covenant Council. The first round of funding under the new Covenant was released in June 2011 and more than a dozen Queensland local government projects were submitted for funding.

At the time of writing the successful funding applications had not been announced. The new Covenant aims to continue packaging reduction and an increase in packaging recovery.

## National Waste Policy

The National Waste Policy was adopted in 2010 and sees a new focus at a national level on issues such as product stewardship and extended producer responsibility, both welcomed by the Association as valuable tools in waste management. The Association represents ALGA on the Remote and Regional Australia Waste Working Group. The aim of this group is to encourage best practice waste management in rural and remote areas.

## Ewaste Product Stewardship

The product stewardship scheme for televisions is expected to commence later this year (pending legislation being passed by State Parliament) and will be funded by industry. With the switch-over of analogue television to the digital signal there will be many televisions heading for disposal and the burden on local government landfills will be significant.

Whilst it is unlikely that the industry collection scheme will be available prior to the first switch-over date in December, the Association is working with both DERM and industry to provide a collection service in as many regional areas as possible.

## Queensland Waste Management Strategy

The Queensland Waste Strategy was released late in 2010 and now forms the basis of discussions for the waste reform project with DERM.

## Industry Waste Levy

Part of the new Queensland Waste Strategy involved a funding program to achieve the aims of the Strategy (which in simplicity are reduced waste to landfill and increased resource recovery). This funding program is an industry waste levy and sustained lobbying from the Association has seen an excellent outcome in this for local government. The industry waste levy will not apply to municipal solid waste collected kerbside or self haul municipal solid waste. It will however

# POLICY EXECUTIVE REPORT



apply to commercial/industrial and construction/demolition waste. Whilst the administrative burden to collect the industry waste levy will certainly impact on local government the zero dollar levy on municipal solid waste was a major win in negotiations.

DERM has funded a position within the Association to assist councils to get levy ready. DERM has also provided in excess of \$4.2 million so far to assist with infrastructure funding for the levy and there will be another \$11.7 million available from September 2011 to assist councils in preparing sites for levy collection.

## Sustainable Future Fund

Funds collected through the industry waste levy will be diverted to three funds. The Waste and Resource Efficiency Fund (WARE) will be allocated to DERM to provide funding for increased resource recovery activities for both industry and local government.

The Environment Initiatives fund will be handled by DERM and will provide funds for purchase of state parks, etc. The Sustainable Future Fund (SFF) will provide funds for local government to carry out increased resource recovery activities with a view to decreasing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

After months of negotiations with DERM the Minister has agreed that the Association would receive the funding for the SFF on behalf of local government. This amounts to \$100 million over four years. The Association's Policy Executive resolved to establish a separate legal entity to administer these funds and at the time of writing processes were in place to establish this entity.

A Business Plan is currently being prepared for administration of these funds and consultation sessions will be held with local government to ensure that the Business Plan reflects the true needs of local government in waste management and resource recovery.

## Clandestine Laboratories

The Association continues to work with Queensland Health to resolve the issues surrounding remediation of sites that have been used as clandestine laboratories. A letter has been forwarded to the Minister for Health seeking that local government have no involvement in the clean up of these sites but an outcome of this request is yet to be reached.

## Animal Management

The Department of Local Government is proceeding with some requested changes to the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* that will see councils given the power to use vehicle registration details where a dog has been involved in a serious dog attack and has been removed from the scene

in a vehicle. To date this option has not been available and has caused considerable angst in the community where councils have not been able to track details of the vehicle involved. This amendment should be available within the later stage of 2011.

## Carbon Tax

The implications of the proposed carbon tax on local government waste management activities are still being understood. At the time of writing it is anticipated that more than 20 local government landfill sites could be impacted by the thresholds proposed in the carbon tax as issued by the Gillard Government. The Association is working with ALGA to form a response on the policy and more information will be released to councils as it comes to hand.

## Food Business Rating Schemes

The Association has lobbied Queensland Health for more than five years to introduce a model for food business rating schemes (also known as Scores on Doors) but has had no success.

A number of councils have now proceeded with their own systems. Queensland Health has now advised that a system will be developed and that if a council is to introduce a food business rating scheme then it must be done in accordance with the Regulated scheme (which is actually yet to be developed). The Association will work with Queensland Health to ensure that any Regulated scheme does not compromise the scheme implemented by those councils that chose to be early adopters.

## Greentape Reduction

DERM is undertaking a review of the environmental protection regulatory system that is likely to have significant impacts on the local government management of environmentally relevant activities (ERAs) and the revenue stream associated with management of these activities. The Association is working with DERM to ensure that any changes to this system do not result in reduced environmental standards.

## Legislation Services

It has been another busy year for LGAQ's long standing Legislation Services. A complete re-write of the commentary to the new Local Government Act and Regulations was completed by Stephen Fynes-Clinton. This is already being used extensively in Queensland Councils. There have also been a number of significant updates to both the Sustainable Planning Act and Environmental Protection Act.

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The commentary written by Mr Fynes-Clinton continues to be the first point of call for any legislation related questions. This commentary is now available freely to all council staff through LG Online.

## Legal Opinions

There has continued to be a great response from Councils to LGAQ's Legal Opinions service. This service is operated in conjunction with the Association legal partners King and Company.

All opinions accepted through this service are of value to local government in Queensland as a whole. A database of all past legal opinions is accessible for all council staff via LG Online.

## Member Services Centre

In response to our members need for greater access to relevant and up to date advice, information and support, the LGAQ is investing in further improvements to its member enquiry and helpdesk services. Central to these improvements was the decision to establish a new Member Services Centre (MSC). The MSC will act as an interactive link for communications and connections between LGAQ, its members, and stakeholders. The MSC seeks to improve the way the Association provides its daily support and advisory services to our members by enabling more focused responses and helping connect members with each other. As the MSC grows and strives to exceed member expectations we will introduce new tools and more flexible options so members can choose the way they communicate with the LGAQ.

## Faces in Places

LGAQ have committed to enhancing our engagement with councils through a better co-ordinated member engagement process to better align with member expectations.

This approach will see an enhancement of current services through the streamlining of visits to councils. This will ensure LGAQ's attendance at meetings, conferences and facilitation of network groups will have greater effectiveness and efficiency. All of our members are important. This forward planning proposes visitations at regular intervals to all members, which will enable the LGAQ to be informed of all obstacles facing councils, placing them in a better position to respond to member needs.

A visitation schedule for the next 12 months is currently under development.

## LAMP

The Local Area Multicultural Partnership Program (LAMP)

which commenced in 1998 is an initiative and award winning program of the Queensland Government in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland and 14 local governments. LAMP is currently funded from July 2009 – June 2012. The LGAQ coordinates the LAMP program. The aims of LAMP (and LGAQ) are to support local government councils to integrate the principles and practices of multiculturalism throughout the organisation and promote positive intercultural relations in their local region.

The LGAQ have held two LAMP Strategic Planning and Visioning Summits this financial year for the LAMP workers, in the Gladstone and Brisbane Council areas. The Cultural Diversity pages on LG Online have now also become a hub of information for local government. Key information and resources on the website includes cultural diversity, news and stories, funding opportunities, resources and research, networks, as well as policy and plans. The LGAQ have played an active role on the Queensland Multicultural Policy Review Working Group. A new Queensland Multicultural 2011 – A multicultural future for all of us was launched on 19 July 2011.

These key initiatives are some examples of how the LAMP program: strengthens multiculturalism in the local government sector; and promotes positive intercultural relations and social cohesion in participating local council areas.

## Arts and Culture

The Association supports a Senior Advisor in the area of Arts and Culture, a position funded by the Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland. The Arts and Culture Advisor role seeks to build local government arts and cultural expertise, skills and networks, and to advocate for the inclusion of arts and culture in regional community development.

A complete review and update of resources on the Arts and Cultural pages on LG Online has been completed. The pages include current news, policies and plans, research focusing on the case for arts and culture, online networks and discussion, best case examples and shared stories, funding opportunities and other resources.

LGAQ currently co-chair the Local Government Arts and Cultural Reference Group, a body made up of representatives of senior managers and elected members from Councils across Queensland. The group aims to strengthen the relationship between state and local government for the purpose of effectively positioning arts and culture.

Over coming months, LGAQ will be coordinating a response to the Federal Government's *National Cultural Policy* discussion paper, the first national cultural policy in nearly 20 years and will also play a pivotal role in the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) review.



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## Workforce

The ongoing State Government reform of local government continued to pose challenges for Association Officers throughout 2010/2011. Association Officers were involved in discussions with Officers of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in relation to the Electrical Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011 which sought further amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 which had the effect of importing versions of the Queensland Local Government Officers Award 1998 [Transitional] (a federal award) into the state system from 27 March 2011.

The application of the Local Government (Operations) Regulation 2010 in particular the portability of long service leave provisions which provides the ability for the continuation of particular local government employees accrued rights to long service leave and recognition of previous periods of employment has created some mechanical issues in relation to the transfer of entitlements between Brisbane City Council and other member Councils. As a result Association Officers will be involved in discussions with Officers from the Department of Local Government and Planning to seek resolution of the matter.

The Association's application for a new single local government award has been adjourned since due to at the time of the application, the amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1999 referred to above were being introduced. Since this time, the Association has been heavily involved in the Award Review process that is currently being conducted by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) particularly in relation to awards that have application within local government. However there will be a pressing need to have a strong focus on amending and pushing on with this application toward the end of the QIRC's review process - which should be later in 2011.

Late 2010 has seen many members commence bargaining in relation to new certified agreements which has continued

throughout 2011. Assistance at both the local level and at proceedings before the QIRC has been provided by Officers from the Association.

During August LGAQ has also participated in the State Wage Case 2011 in opposition to excessive wages claims by the AWU and QCU.

During the 2010/2011 period the Industrial Advocacy Service continued to service the needs of the membership with representation of members in the QIRC in relation to Unfair Dismissal applications, disputes, wage recovery applications, arbitrations, and agreement certifications.

## HR Advance

A comprehensive support and management tool for HR practitioners was launched in 2009, and has been significantly enhanced and expanded in the last 12 months. The tool provides both practical guidance and time-saving benefits to users, and ensures that all relevant HR documentation is compliant with relevant laws and best practice.

Over 100 licensed users are registered with the service.

## Youth

In 2009 LGAQ was successful in receiving a further three years funding from the Queensland Government, through the Office for Youth, to continue the Youth Development Policy Officer position. The role provides support to Youth Development Officers and other staff employed within councils across Queensland who take a lead role in the engagement, development and support of young people in their local communities by looking at both individual council needs and broader issues and trends relevant to the sector. Furthermore, the role provides support, expertise and assists in the development of networks needed to help promote the rights and interests of young people and their development.

In order to provide service support and development opportunities to council based workers and other relevant personnel within the sector the LGAQ hosts the annual Youthipedia conference to increase professionalism and enhance the knowledge of workers within local government and beyond.

Youthipedia 2010 was held at the Gold Coast and was attended by more than 80 representatives from local government, state government and other key community services engaged in works with young people.

In 2010 through to 2011 the LGAQ has developed eight Regional Youth Networks in partnership with local councils, community agencies and other key stakeholders in response

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to councils needs to better understand the needs of young citizens and develop strategic frameworks around youth engagement. These networks were developed to increase the effectiveness of youth focused workers and advocates to provide regional support, planning and delivery of services for young people through information sharing, professional development and peer support. In recent months these networks have also linked with the Youth Affairs Network Queensland's funded CPLAN project and this has fostered a greater relationship between councils and youth service organisations by encouraging greater networking and collaboration.

From April - June 2011 the LGAQ in partnership with YANQ facilitated eight Regional Youth Network Forums throughout Queensland. More than 120 people attended the forums across the state which included networking, regional planning and professional learning sessions including: Youth Arts & Events, Youth Engagement, AOD and young people, Young people and Disaster Recovery, Working with Complex Clients, Youth Development, youth and public spaces.

Additionally the LGAQ Youth E-News has provided regular and informative bulletins to a network comprising of more than 600 contacts throughout Queensland. Youthipedia Press a publication soon to be released is an inaugural publication which showcases a number of youth development and youth engagement initiatives that have been supported by local governments in Queensland. These stories are also a celebration of the state-wide Youth Network, which continues to grow from strength-to-strength.

## Branding

LGAQ has undergone an extensive re-branding process to show members the extent to which the Association has evolved to better meet the individual needs of local councils in Queensland. It is a representation of the internal changes that have taken place at LGAQ over the past year to improve support, service and representation. The new logo retains the strength and history long associated with the LGAQ, balanced with a stylish and contemporary design that demonstrates LGAQ's preparedness for the future. The eye-catching, iconic shape of Queensland is a key feature of the new logo, designed to symbolise LGAQ as the peak body for local government in this state.

The logo also includes a new tagline - connect. innovate. achieve. - that reinforces LGAQ's commitment to members; to continue to listen to and provide them with the best advice, support and representation by:

- Connecting councils to people and places that count.
- Supporting councils' drive to innovate and improve service delivery through smart services and

sustainable solutions.

- Delivering councils the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence.

## Brand Ambassadors

LGAQ has appointed one ambassador for the 2011/2012 financial year and is in the process of appointing another to help promote the role councils' play in their communities. Former Rugby League great and Channel 7 News Presenter Shane Webcke has re-signed as an LGAQ ambassador after a successful 12-month stint during which he represented LGAQ on 10 occasions, receiving excellent feedback from councils and the community. He will continue in his role this financial year by visiting rural and remote councils and attending key local government functions and events. Shane is passionate about promoting local government services such as health & wellbeing and career opportunities in council.

A female equivalent is currently being appointed. Her role will be focused on coastal councils and those in south-east Queensland. As LGAQ's female ambassador, she will promote roles for women in council and the services councils offer communities, such as libraries, arts and cultural activities and disability services.

## Grants Connect

Additional assistance for councils in accessing grant and funding opportunities has been provided with the launch in June of Grants Connect.

Grants Connect combines an online service inclusive to LG Online, and a fee based consultative service for member councils. The service focuses on those grants that are usually funded through specific projects (targeted funding) that aim to benefit communities, or how councils operate.

Key aspects of the service include a central location (via Super Search) for sourcing information on the expansive number of grants that are currently available, and secondly, multiple online forms via which users are able to request further support and consultation services from the LGAQ to assist with the writing and preparation of applications for those grants.

## LGAQ Digital Services

2010-2011 has been a busy year as we move towards reflecting the changes within the Association through our main communication channel, LG Online, and our many other ancillary communication tools and channels, whilst continually maintaining and seeking to improve existing valued member services.

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## LG Online [www.lgaq.asn.au/lgonline](http://www.lgaq.asn.au/lgonline)

The LG Online portal has received a notable enhancement to the search functionality this year, and has been very active with significant content updates, numerous visual enhancements, innovative task-specific online services and customised content communities:

- Local Yokel Blog with Craig Johnstone, LGAQ Media Executive
- LG News Centre
- 'Member Updates' RSS feed on homepage
- New highly visible homepage priority links
- Increased use of Multi Media e.g. Videos, Vblogs (Video blogs), interactive document presentation
- Increased Social Media presence on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube
- Continual development of Web2.0 collaborative tools for Council/LGAQ networking
- New resource centres i.e. Grants Connect, Delegations Register
- New secure areas for LGAQ Policy Executive, LGAQ Board and LGAQ Audit & Compliance Committee document sharing
- Events FTP area for supplying non-council attendees with restricted access to conference presentations
- Conference web-streaming pilot

LG Online continues to offer trusted services such as Circulars, Qld Council Jobs Board, Media Monitors (now on an opt-in basis), Legislation and Commentary Service, GovNet access, and the highly valuable Legal Opinions service and repository to support council staff and elected members in their endeavors to achieve the best outcomes for their communities.

LGAQ [www.lgaq.asn.au](http://www.lgaq.asn.au)

Transitional rebranding has been applied to the site and there has been a steady progression towards realigning the site to better promote the work of councils. This space is currently undergoing a comprehensive redevelopment.

## Priority SMS Alerts

Disaster management communications, news-breaking political events and fast paced legislative messages have kept the SMS service busy this year. The large majority of Elected Members and CEOs are listed for this priority messaging

LGAQ Council Image Campaign [www.qldcouncils.com.au](http://www.qldcouncils.com.au)

Recently launched to support the associated state-wide TV Campaign, a clean new web-presence was provided to act as a central hub for assisting both the LGAQ and Queensland councils to alter community awareness, knowledge and perception of local government in the lead up to the Constitutional Recognition campaign. A feature of this site is the attractive 'Find My Council' interactive map that has already grabbed the attention of both State Government departments and private enterprise.

## The Roads Alliance [www.roadsalliance.com.au](http://www.roadsalliance.com.au)

The Roads Alliance site (jointly managed by TMR and LGAQ) has been updated with important new resources including revised TIDS Policy, Operational Guidelines and a new JP&RS Toolkit. Work is currently underway to provide an enhanced set of tools to support online collaboration for the RRGs across the state.



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## Advance Stream

### General Overview

The Advance stream of LGAQ has responsibility for the delivery of a range of products, services and projects that are designed to assist councils in areas where they may not have their own capacity or resources. The services provided by Advance are on an optional basis and the majority are delivered on a fee-for-service or as commercial business offerings. The projects delivered by Advance are funded by either State or Federal Government departments.

Over the past 12 months the Advance stream has been working on the closer integration and more efficient delivery of both the services delivered directly by LGAQ and those offered by its subsidiaries. Based on feedback from our member councils a number of new offerings have also been developed or are currently being developed. These new initiatives are outlined below and will be offered to councils when developed.

### Member Connect Initiatives

#### Efficiency and Performance Scan

Commentary from the *Member Connect* project identified that issues regarding council performance were a significant theme. Central to this theme were the elements of:

- Discovery of local efficiencies to drive cost savings
- Assistance with local compliance with standards and legislation
- Identification and local comparison with industry benchmarks
- Community perceptions of councils financial management & performance

Following a comprehensive engagement process it was determined that a broad evaluation and assessment tool was required. In conjunction with Longreach Regional Council, LGAQ developed and piloted the *Efficiency and Performance Scan*. The findings of the pilot and report have been used to refine the process, with the final product now available for all councils.

### Total Solutions

In a direct response to the Member Connect Meta - Theme of 'Council Performance' the Advance stream is developing a broad-based professional services business unit capable of working directly with member councils in helping them to improve their local business operations. Central to *Total Solutions* success is a commitment to the LGAQ Operating

Model. The characteristics of the business unit include:

- Fee-for-service consulting services in areas of high value customer need and/or in areas where LGAQ has demonstrated expertise
- A self-assessment protocol which assists in defining the scope and scale of service offerings and in honing those offerings to ensure market share
- Improved coordination, delivery, project management and quality assurance of services
- Pre-qualified and independently audited panels of experts/suppliers
- Coordinated marketing & promotion
- Uniform and agreed business principles (pricing/invoicing/internal secondment)
- New partnership arrangements with LGAQ commercial subsidiaries and commercial partners

A full Business Case will be put to the LGAQ board in October 2011 seeking approval of the development and roll-out of the Total Solutions service.

### Professional Services

From late January 2010, LGAQ's IR and some HR consultancy services have been undertaken through a more managed approach via the creation of *HR Total Solutions* as a cost centre.

Since then new service offerings have been introduced to member councils. These include:

- a panel of EB negotiators and consulting service;
- a new executive coaching service for council CEOs and Senior Executives sponsored by Rockhampton Regional Council as our partner and Cr Brad Carter as ambassador for this new service;
- organisational re-design, performance management and appraisal and salary review services;
- the ESS (modified balanced scorecard) for strategic management in collaboration with our associate Peter Tragarth, a previous Director of the prestigious Mt Eliza School of Business;
- an executive recruitment service.

These new services are in addition to the current service offerings:

- Investigation services;
- General HR consulting services;

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- General consulting services for financial management and sustainability, asset management, governance, internal auditing and community engagement;
- Collaborative asset management programme aimed at assisting member councils in the pursuit of improved performance and increased financial returns.

These current fee-for-service activities will be managed and delivered through the Total Solutions service, subject to board approval.

## Training Solutions

Ongoing feedback and evaluation of our services from our member councils led to the establishment of some new courses and consultancy services to assist in workforce development and strategies. In addition to this, LGAQ Training Solutions revised its range of services and products to ensure contemporary and quality outcomes remained our key focus.

The new 2011-2012 LGAQ Professional Development and Consultancy Services Reference Guide was launched. Personal copies were posted to all Mayors and Councillors with a personalised letter from our LGAQ President and to all CEOs with a personalised letter from LGAQ's Executive Officer. HR officers and other senior officers received copies through their membership of the Learning and Development Committee (South East Qld) and Organisational Development Committee (North Qld) and continue to be distributed via visiting LGAQ consultants and staff. Additional copies are available at Annual Conference. Alternatively, an electronic copy is available if required.

## New Initiatives

In anticipation of increasing responsibilities of managers, requests from leadership skills and strategies for future workforce recruitment and retention, LGAQ is now a registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the Diploma of Project Management. This is attracting strong demand. Consultancy services continue to increase, reflecting support for revised corporate and workforce strategies. Two new projects provided by LGAQ Training Solutions included provision of consultancy services in the development of (i) an Indigenous Employment Strategy which has now been adopted and (ii) qualified planners undertaking training in ISO quality assurance methodology.

In partnership with Local Buy a new course entitled "Procurement in councils" is now available to all councils, on request. This request reflected increasing concerns and demands for procurement policies and procedures in councils. In addition, LGAQ is now seeking to extend its scope as an

RTO in to Business and Management; a further reflecting of the changing requirements of our member councils. New courses/services will be available from the end of 2011, with an extended network of RTO's to respond to increasing demands from our member councils.

LGAQ Training Solutions was subject to a comprehensive RTO audit in the second half of 2010, with very successful and complimentary comments on current processes and practices.

## Diploma Courses

Introduction of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and requests for training on development applications continues to impact on the Diploma of Local Government (Planning) course, and we are now delivering increased in-house council courses across the State. The course continues to attract the support of the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA).

LGAQ continues to market and promote the Diploma of Local Government (Health and Environment). There has been reduced numbers, a result of unavailability of staff, but in light of concerns of our member councils regarding skills shortages, we will continue to support our member councils in this occupation. We continued to attract the support of the Institute of Environmental Health (IEH Qld)

To date, over 1,200 graduates have received a formal qualification from LGAQ.

## Attendance Figures

Training Solutions has delivered/facilitated courses/workshops to over 1700 participants so far this year. Each attendee is issued with a Statement of Attendance for insertion into their professional development portfolio, and is effective in marketing LGAQ services.

LGAQ delivered over 33 different short courses/workshops on 72 occasions to more than 45 councils. Evaluation data reflect an average of 86% high satisfaction levels of all services.

## Projects

### Disaster Management

As previously mentioned in this report LGAQ played a significant role prior to, throughout and following the natural disaster events of the 2010-2011 season. It has also already been well documented about the size and duration of the natural disaster events that impacted on Queensland throughout the previous wet season and therefore not necessary to be covered again.

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Throughout the past season and subsequent reconstruction and recovery period LGAQ assisted its members by providing a range of support services and representation.

These covered the following:

- Information and advice prior to and throughout the events;
- Management of the Council-to-Council support system;
- Immediate deployment of resources, including staff to assist heavily impacted resources
- The coordination and delivery of a number of critical services by LGAQ's subsidiaries, including web-site management, call centre services, engineering and disaster response services and procurement panels for reconstruction;
- Lobbying on NDRRA funding, particularly the day labour issue resulting in successfully securing an additional \$50million for local government.
- Representation on the State Disaster Management Group
- Representation on the various sub-committees that report Cabinet Working Group
- Representation to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority and associated departments;
- Representation on the Flood Commission of Inquiry
- Ongoing lobbying for funding and resources
- Successfully securing \$20million in funding for post disaster Community Recovery and Engagement activities.
- Ongoing assistance for councils to access Natural Disaster Resilience Program (NDRP) funding.

A range of new services and resources for councils are currently being developed in response to member feedback and the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

## Healthy Communities Initiatives

With supporting funding from Queensland Health LGAQ has a dedicated resource to support councils develop healthy community plans and programs as well as access potential funding sources so they can create healthy communities as

an integral part of council business.

LGAQ has successfully secured funding for an additional advisor to assist councils with developing healthy workplaces. This project will be delivered in 2011 and 2012.

## Subsidiaries



### Local Buy

Queensland Councils have continued to use Local Buy Services during the 2010/2011 Financial Year through its contracted arrangements. Local Buy has in place 40 contracted arrangements including Telecommunications, Engineering Consultancy and Microsoft Software Licensing and now a number of additional contracts including contracts for flood damage relief and Pipes and pumps and concrete products.

### IMPORTANT PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN DURING 2010/2011 INCLUDE:-

- Local Buy continued to review Electricity Tariff Arrangements for several local authorities, generating considerable savings on Councils energy costs.
- Local Buy has tendered a number of arrangements with the other states including trucks, Mobile garbage bins, Corporate wardrobe etc
- Local Buy held its second annual Procurement Conference in March 2011 with a large turnout of procurement professionals from across the state.

Local Buy continued to provide LG Tender Box an electronic tendering solution which provides a simple and effective tender management process.

Local Buy also purchased a new electronic Quotation system called vendor panel which is being rolled out to the councils it will be a much simpler and easier process for engagement of the Local Buy Panels.

In the coming year, Local Buy intends to continue to take on a peak body role for procurement professionals by providing a range of forums looking at legal, strategic purchasing and provision of registered training services.

The Local Buy Team comprises of 13 staff. The Board of Directors met 6 times during the year and comprised of the following members:

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Ian Leckenby (Chairman)  
Brent Reeman  
Bill Simpson  
Phil Spencer  
Daryl Hitzman



QPG enjoyed another successful year and has further expanded its service offerings to councils and utilities in Queensland. QPG provides local government with access to specialist consulting services in the fields of: customer service enhancement; contact centre design; Business Process Re-engineering; business case development; change management; shared services; disaster management support; strategic services partnerships. QPG was formed in 2006 as a joint venture company with Aegis Services Australia, a global business services organization. QPG's Committee Members are:

- Mr Jim Soorley – Chairman (appointed by LGAQ)
- Mr Ian Leckenby – Independent Board Member (appointed by LGAQ)
- Mr Brent Reeman – LGAQ
- Mr Clifton Warren – Aegis Australia
- Mr Rajiv Ahuja – Aegis Australia
- Mr Steve Crowe - CEO

**Staff and offices:** QPG delivers services from Newstead and from its primary operational site in the Ipswich CBD. It currently has 5 core professional staff, including telephony and communication specialists, business analysts and senior operations professionals. QPG also has operational responsibility for the management of a further 70 staff in the City of Ipswich.

## Project delivery and highlights for 2010/11

The highlight of the year was the successful opening of the Integrated Customer Service Centre (INCC) in the City of Ipswich. QPG worked alongside the City of Ipswich throughout much of the FY and played a key role in the successful launch of this major initiative. Opened in November 2010, the INCC brings together over 20 customer service counters and multiple front and back office functions into a single environment

(including customer services; rates; animal licensing; box-office services etc). QPG designed the full suite of business processes for the new environment, designed the contact centre environment and provided the delivery of all customer service training. QPG is now responsible for the operational management of the INCC via its 10 year strategic partnership with the City of Ipswich. This partnership is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, is continuing to grow and goes from strength to strength.

Shortly after the opening of the INCC, the City of Ipswich was confronted with the worst flooding in living memory. QPG worked closely with the council to ensure that the city's residents were able to access a broad range of services on a 24/7 basis. QPG also worked diligently to co-ordinate the huge number of enquiries from volunteers who wished to assist with the clean up effort.

QPG was also able to support the City of Townsville as it prepared for the arrival of Cyclone Yasi. Within 45 minutes of receiving a call for assistance, all of Townsville's customer contact load was transferred to the Ipswich INCC. QPG's senior operational staff liaised with Townsville to ensure that service provision was maintained throughout the cyclone, with full 24/7 support continuing for a further 5 days. Over 3000 calls were handled on behalf of Townsville during this emergency. This was an excellent example of how QPG can act as a conduit between councils in Queensland who wish to share services.

QPG also completed a major project for Lockyer Valley Regional Council during the 2010/11 FY. LVRC engaged QPG to deliver a 'Pathfinder Customer Services Review'. This detailed review enabled QPG to work alongside LVRC's staff to determine how the council could enhance the delivery of its customer service function in the future. QPG considered organizational structures, technology strategies and business process enhancements as part of the review. The strong level of engagement between LVRC's staff and Executive Team and QPG was a highlight of this project.

QPG has sought to expand its service offerings during the 2010/11 FY, particularly in the field of providing advisory services in the field of customer access strategies, telephony and CRM (customer relationship management technology). QPG enjoyed an early success and was engaged by Redland City Council to develop a detailed business case to support the evolution of the council's contact centre. This activity has involved detailed volumetric analysis of council data, comprehensive customer satisfaction surveys and technology reviews to assess potential solutions. This work will continue into the 2011/12 FY.

Furthermore, QPG has sought to provide the LGAQ with access to its specialist services as part of the ongoing structural re-organisation. QPG delivered the roll-out of the new HighRise CRM platform for the LGAQ and commenced

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a scoping exercise to establish the feasibility of developing a multi-channel Member Services Centre (MSC). These projects were both successfully delivered and QPG continues to work closely with the LGAQ on its MSC strategy.

## Changes to QPG's Shareholding

Recognizing the growing contribution that QPG continues to make on behalf of the local government sector in Queensland, the LGAQ decided to take a majority position in the business (the LGAQ originally owned 50%). Following a series of positive discussions with Aegis Services Australia, the LGAQ secured a majority position of 66.67% in QPG. This important decision enables the LGAQ to directly control the strategic direction of QPG from its local base in Queensland. Steve Crowe was formally appointed as CEO of the business and reports directly to the Chairman.

## Financial Performance

QPG has again delivered a strong financial performance for the year. Revenues increased to \$7.74m and the consolidated operations of the business resulted in positive distributions being paid to QPG's shareholders.

## QPG's Future

QPG is already looking forward to a productive 2011/12. The business is currently in the process of a comprehensive re-branding exercise which will better position it for future growth. QPG is also working closely with Resolute Information Technology with a view to assessing how the two businesses can leverage their respective skills, contacts and resource base. This recognises the LGAQ's broader aspiration to ensure that every part of its business interests remains flexible enough to meet the evolving demands and challenges of the local government sector in Queensland.



Operational since 2005, Local Government Infrastructure Services Pty Ltd (LGIS) is a joint initiative of Queensland Treasury Corporation and the Local Government Association of Queensland.

LGIS's primary focus is to support local government with a range of infrastructure consultancy and procurement services to meet their needs. LGIS's areas of expertise centre on the following key areas:

- Water
- Waste
- Roads

- Property
- Environment and Planning
- Demand management
- Disaster management and infrastructure recovery

## BOARD MEMBERS

Mr David Jay, OAM, Chairperson  
Mr Roger Short  
Mr Brian Guthrie  
Mr Greg Hallam, LGAQ  
Mr Philip Noble, QTC

## STAFF

Mr John Curran, Chief Executive  
Mr Anthony Coates, Director, LGIS Operations, and Access to QTC staff on an as needed basis.

## Year Highlights

Throughout the year, LGIS provided advisory and project management services to both the State and local governments. Significant advisory projects included, a number of water, wastewater and regional waste management projects in North Queensland and Central Queensland. The Company's project management activities included, finalisation of the Home WaterWise Service Project (to deliver water efficient devices to residents in South East Queensland), and delivery of the ClimateSmart Home Services Project (to deliver energy efficient devices to residents throughout Queensland).

The following projects highlight the major client engagements that LGIS was involved in during the year.

## Local Government Projects

### Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects

LGIS assisted with business case development, procurement and project management processes for five water and wastewater treatment plants in Northern Queensland.

### Regional Fluoridation

LGIS assisted two councils with fluoridation projects, assisting with costing and tender processes to meet fluoridation requirements. LGIS is continuing to assist these councils through to plant commissioning where required.

### Natural Disaster and Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA)

During the year, LGIS responded to a request from the LGAQ and the Department of Infrastructure and Planning (DIP) to assist local governments impacted by the recent natural



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disasters that occurred throughout Queensland. In response LGIS developed a package of support services to assist local governments meet their requirements under NDRRA. This work commenced in December 2010 and is likely to continue into 2012.

## Other Advisory Assignments

In addition to the above, LGIS has delivered around 20 advisory assignments to councils. This work included business case development, financial analysis and procurement support.

## State Government Projects

### ClimateSmart Home Service

The delivery period for the ClimateSmart Home Service, a State Government funded project to install product and provide advice to Queensland households to improve energy efficiency, was extended until 31 December 2012. Planning for the refreshed service offering was completed in the second half of the year with launch from July 2011. Across local government areas serviced by Ergon and Energex's main electricity grid, approximately 273,000 in-home services had been completed as at 30 June 2011.

### Future initiatives

In response to member requests LGAQ is currently developing two new commercial offerings.

GovCloud is a new service that will allow councils' access to leading cloud based computing solutions. By partnering with world class providers and utilizing the combined purchasing power of local government LGAQ will be able to offer its members access to the highest quality services at prices below what they could achieve on their own.

LG Disaster Recovery Services is an initiative designed to assist council with the reconstruction of roads and other assets following the previous season disasters. LGAQ is currently working with its members to determine if there is a need to further develop LG DRS into a permanent service.



### Resolute Information Technology Pty Ltd

Resolute Information Technology provides IT Services and Solutions, primarily focused on the local government market. The company was formed in 2004 and currently assists 70 percent of Queensland councils in the use of technology to better serve their communities. As at June 30, 2011 Board Members were:

Robert Holloway (Chairman)  
Kathryn McDonald (CEO)  
Jock O'Keeffe  
Brent Reeman

## STAFF AND OFFICES

At the end of June 2011 staff numbers totalled 18 (16 permanent and 2 contract staff). The Resolute head office is located on the CBD fringe in Upper Roma Street Brisbane. Regional offices are located in Bundaberg and Toowoomba.

FY11 saw the continued take-up of the Council Business Centre (CBC). The Resolute team surpassed our goals for sign up, and demand has continued to grow confirming acceptance of our solution vision. As at the end of June 2011, 42 councils have given sign-off for over 80 sites.

Following development and roll out of the base, the Resolute team has delivered 3 additional modules to enhance the Council Business Centre. These are Cemeteries Online, Local Way (regulation online), and document management system Integration Module with further development of new modules underway. In FY12, CBC will release a Delegations modules and a module to assist with meetings and agenda management.

Resolute also began offering consulting services to councils to ensure website compliance with the Act and associated regulations, and to assess/ensure compliance with government accessibility guidelines.

Resolute continued to work out the details of a partnership with the international leader in Government to Citizen (G2C) technology solutions, US based KANA Corporation. KANA acquired the original authors of the technology, Lagan Systems from the UK. The Lagan Citizen Response Management system serves nearly 200 governments at local, regional, state and national level, primarily in the UK and North America, providing a range of solutions, cloud-based and mobile. Resolute will implement the KANA/Lagan solution into Australian local government.

During FY11, Resolute's business performance was negatively affected by the unprecedented scale of disruption to normal business in councils which occurred because of the terrible disaster season experienced across the State. Most Queensland councils were affected and all of the councils' officers and resources were occupied with the consequences of the disasters. Business levels began to return to normal in the later part of the last quarter.

The Resolute customer service team continued its focus on improving levels of service. Two customer surveys were undertaken during the year, providing valuable feedback and

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ideas for improvement. Overall Resolute's customers gave us a big tick.

Prior to the disaster season, Resolute has continued to meet its commitment to pay a quarterly return of \$100,000 to LGAQ. It is the company's intention to return to this practice once business levels have normalised.



## LGM Queensland

LGM Queensland is a legal liability self insurance scheme owned and operated for the sole benefit of Queensland 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.

Scheme operations are overseen by a Board of Management chaired by former LGAQ president, Mr Noel Playford, and including two local government councillors, senior council officers and industry experts. Day to day management is undertaken by Jardine Lloyd Thompson under the supervision of the Board and the LGAQ.

Queensland's population growth and associated development present many liability risks for member councils. LGM has continued to support members manage those risks by maintaining cost stability, providing local government relevant cover and directly facilitating local risk management programs.

During 2010/11 LGM continued to operate on the basis of a \$2 million self insured retention. Cover beyond the retention is provided through a supporting insurance program arranged in conjunction with interstate local government liability schemes. LGM's structure has a demonstrated capacity to provide members with a significantly greater presence in the insurance market and insulation against market price volatility.

In conjunction with the LGAQ, LGM has continued negotiations with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads to establish a joint insurance program covering maintenance of State controlled roads. The intention of the program is to avoid costly arguments over liability and RMPC indemnity entitlements when liability claims are made in relation to maintenance work performed by councils on State roads. Details of the joint program are close to being finalised.

Risk management continues to be a core LGM service offering to members. Four regionally based risk management coordinators are working through a detailed enterprise risk management implementation program with each member. A full upgrade of the RiskMap risk management software has also been completed and the new version released to members. The regional risk coordinator program and the RiskMap system are both jointly funded with Local Government Workcare. Contribution discounts were again offered to members for completion of the annual RiskMap risk management assessment.

At the time of preparing this report the latest audited financial statements of LGM were as at 30 June 2010 and showed net member equity of \$16.2 million.



## Local Government Workcare

Local Government Workcare (LGW) is a joint undertaking by Queensland councils and council controlled entities to hold a workers compensation self insurance licence. Scheme members are provided with full workers compensation cover and pro active claims management, injury management and injury prevention services. The scheme is overseen by a Management Committee chaired by former LGAQ president, Mr Noel Playford and managed under the supervision of the Management Committee and the LGAQ by Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

LGW shares with LGM a core objective of maintaining cost stability for members. This was again achieved during 2010/11 with no increase occurring in the average scheme contribution rate. At the same time, employers in other sectors covered by the State workers compensation scheme were experiencing premium increases driven by significant claim cost pressures being faced by that scheme. LGW also continued to apply and refine cost stability factors built into annual contribution calculation arrangements. This is an important feature of scheme membership as premiums charged through traditional workers compensation insurance can move significantly from year to year based on claim costs and so create budgeting difficulties.

From its inception LGW recognised the importance of closely linking workers compensation management with workplace health and safety management. Most members draw

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significantly on LGW's SAFE PLAN program in developing and/or evaluating their WH&S management systems. LGW continued to provide recognised WH&S auditor training for members' staff to support effective local safety management.

LGW has also continued to work closely with LGM Queensland to further develop the unique member service opportunities available through jointly funded projects such as Regional Risk Coordinators and the online RiskMap risk management software system.

At the time of preparing this report the latest audited financial statements of LGW were as at 30 June 2010 and showed net member equity of \$18.3 million.

## Natural Disaster Insurance

Following the Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi the Commonwealth made two announcements related to natural disaster insurance.

The first was the announcement by Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Financial Services and Superannuation, Hon Bill Shorten, of the Natural Disaster Insurance Review. The primary objective of the review was to examine the availability and affordability of flood and other natural disaster insurance for individuals and business. An issues paper released by the Review raised for discussion matters of potential concern to members including calls from the insurance industry for further flood mapping data to be provided by Councils, funding of insurance cost minimization measures and collection of cost minimisation funding through Council rating processes. The LGAQ forwarded a submission to the Review stressing the responsibility of the Federal and state governments, as insurance regulators and revenue collectors, for initiating and funding insurance reforms.

The second announcement followed on from an understanding reached between the Federal Government and Senator Nick Xenophon relating to support for the flood levy legislation. As part of that understanding, additional requirements were included in the 2011 Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) Determination requiring the States to provide details of their natural disaster insurance arrangements or the other measures in place to make reasonable provision for losses arising from natural disasters.

Further information provided by the Federal Government confirmed that the information required to be provided by each State Government also needed to deal with the insurance position related to local government assets. The NDRRA Determination provides that failure to properly respond to these requirements could have implications for future levels of NDRRA funding.

The LGAQ has been working closely with Queensland Treasury to develop a response to the NDRRA Determination requirements. This has included both the LGAQ and the Queensland Government writing to the Federal Attorney-General to point out the poor public policy outcomes that would flow from any new requirement for local government to take out natural disaster insurance for assets such as roads and underground pipes. Strong opposition was voiced by the LGAQ to any suggestion of cost shifting onto local government by the Federal Government attempting to walk away from its long standing level of commitment to natural disaster relief and recovery funding. The LGAQ supported its position with information gathered during a preliminary natural disaster insurance market scan conducted in London in conjunction with reinsurance renewal meetings for the Queensland Local Government Mutual Liability Pool (LGM Queensland).

Cooperative work between the LGAQ and Queensland Treasury to negotiate with the Commonwealth an acceptable but realistic form of response to the NDRRA Determination requirements are ongoing.

## Queensland Local Government Health Plan

In mid 2010 the LGAQ, in conjunction with Health Link Consultants and the national health insurance fund HCF, launched the Queensland Local Government Health Plan. 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 councils 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.