2022-2023

Local Government Association of Queensland

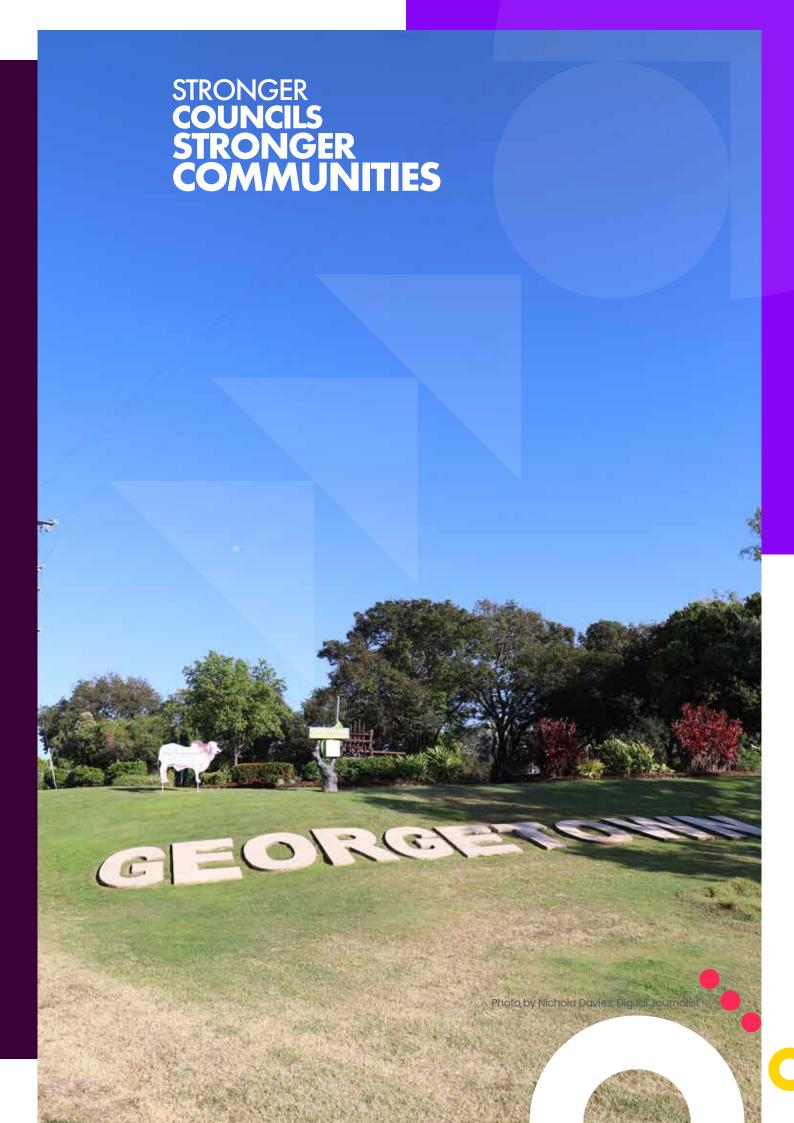


STRONGER
COUNCILS
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES



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# Me Acknowle

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the traditional custodians of all lands throughout Australia. We recognise and respect the connection to their land, cultural heritage and community and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

# Aborigina Torres Sta Islanders



# The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland.

It is proudly member-owned and member-led, and is fiercely member-focused.

The LGAQ has been advising, supporting and representing local councils since 1896, and seeks to advocate for councils in funding and policy outcomes to ensure that every Queensland community is a liveable one.

Council members can rely on the LGAQ to foster strong working relationships with State and Federal governments, to fight hard for fairer outcomes, to work hard to achieve

members' annual resolutions and to connect members to improved service delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions.

While the LGAQ prioritises issues of statewide concern for local government, and strives to present a consensus view of members, the Association also works with the Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs) and individual councils to support their needs.

# Local government at a glance

77 councils in Queensland

38,446 council employees\*

**578** Queensland councillors

64,343 \*\*
hectares of parks\*

2,635 bridges\*\*

1.7 million water connections\*

1.6 million sewerage connections\*



3.3 million bin collections\*

1.7 million tonnes of waste\*

150,118km council-managed roads\*\*

**\$358,033** median house sale price^



\$368 median weekly rent#



\*2021-2022 Local Government Comparative Reports.

\*\*2020-2021 Local Government Comparative Reports.

^Queensland Government Statistician's Office (as at 31 December 2022).

#Queensland Government Statistician's Office (as at 31 March 2023)





SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL LGAQ PRESIDENT

Queensland councils have worked hard this year, representing their communities in a time of financial pressure and constraint.

Dealing with rising inflation, workforce shortages and cost-of-living pressure on ratepayers and residents, councils and their communities have faced many challenges.

Crippling housing shortages have been felt in all communities, with each part of the state facing its own unique challenges in this space. Councils have been working tirelessly to keep downward pressure on rates, fees and charges to support our communities – all at a time when the LGAQ's Council Cost Index showed continuing rises in input costs, and while funding from the other levels of government has fallen or flatlined.

It was disappointing to see the Federal
Government – despite its commitment to "fair
funding" for councils – cut the already low
Financial Assistance Grants from 0.52 per cent
to 0.50 per cent of national taxation revenue.



The Federal Government's infrastructure review also caused expensive uncertainty for councils and their communities, with more than 130 already-approved infrastructure projects across Queensland impacted by the review.

Any cuts to local government funding results in cuts to our communities. Councils and communities everywhere need and deserve fair and reliable funding, something the LGAQ has continued to champion as we engage with the other two levels of government.

We, along with our interstate colleagues, continue the fight to restore Financial Assistance Grants to at least 1 per cent of national taxation revenue.

At the State level, we continue to advocate for an increase in support for the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS), the Works for Queensland program and infrastructure funding more generally.

But if there have been plenty of challenges, there have also been plenty of successes.

After a long campaign by the LGAQ, the State Government has agreed to adopt all 40 recommendations of the inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA). I once again offer my thanks to the members who have spoken up on this matter and the impacts it is taking on our sector. We look forward to the measures being adopted in Parliament later this calendar year.

We have also secured further funding for, among others, critical projects such as QCoast<sub>2100</sub>′ upgrades to Queensland's flood gauges and emergency warning systems and the expansion of regional university study hubs.

On housing, Queensland councils, through the LGAQ, presented almost 40 measures to the State and Federal governments – workable, sensible solutions that make housing accessible and affordable. We welcomed the Queensland Government's dedicated funding support to assist councils in developing Local Housing Action Plans and look forward to further measures being supported.

As we head into another year, our councils will continue building on their successes, as well as helping shepherd our communities through existing and upcoming challenges.





The fight for community liveability continues on so many fronts – including the fight for fair funding from the State and Federal governments for better roads, for more housing, and to address skilled workforce challenges and financial sustainability.

Financial sustainability is not just about councils saying their communities deserve firm and fair funding. In June, the Queensland Auditor-General released a report that showed 46 councils are at moderate to high risk of not being financially sustainable – up from 45 councils the year before – and that costs to councils are rising at twice the rate of revenue.

It is in this environment that the LGAQ will be delivering the results of comprehensive cost-shifting research – a 10-month data collection process via a member-survey conducted in 2022-23.

The research – the first in two decades – will identify the financial impacts to councils and their communities when the private sector and other levels of government pull back or pull out from delivering services that communities rely on. The research will also map the cost to councils and ratepayers when local government is left no option but to step in and replace them, becoming a provider of last resort.

This critical and revealing research will set a new baseline for our advocacy. It will help us to educate communities and other spheres of government about the gaps that have occurred and the additional services and work that councils are now taking on.



We will use this in our evidence-based advocacy to show how councils are much more than roads, rates and rubbish, and how members require fairer funding for Queensland councils, at both State and Federal levels.

While our collective battle for fairer funding continues, the LGAQ has secured some significant success for members and their communities.

We have secured funded projects like QCoast<sub>2100</sub>, Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP), the Cleaner Road Runoff project and Queensland Climate Resilient Councils (QCRC) program.

While the State Budget disappointingly did not increase funds to Works for Queensland, and only allocated a fraction more to the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS), it did include increases in grants under the new Indigenous Council Funding Program.

And we are hopeful we will shortly see sensible reforms to the Office of Independent Assessor (OIA), thanks to the hard work of councillors and members of our team shining a light on critical failings in the current system.

It is when we are united that our voice is strongest, something that events like the LGAQ Annual Conference in Cairns and our Bush Councils Convention in Barcaldine helped to amplify.

That combined voice was again heard in the advocacy by Isaac Regional Council, backed by the LGAQ and member councils, to save the mining town of Glenden. And it was also heard in our member survey about the ways councils consider communities could benefit from the 2032 Brisbane Games. Members' feedback on benefits such as tourism, supply chains and multicultural opportunities, to help realise the 2021 Annual Conference resolution that seeks to ensure all Queenslanders benefit from the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Based on the report's findings, the LGAQ made seven recommendations to help realise members' 2021 Annual Conference motion calling for statewide benefits.

When we get together, it sends a powerful message to the other levels of government, helping us get the best deal for our communities, and provide them the liveability all communities deserve.

# Advocating for stronger councils, stronger communities



The LGAQ's unwavering commitment to building stronger, more resilient local communities through focused and determined advocacy has continued throughout the last 12 months.

For the first time – in response to our members' feedback – we produced a digital Advocacy Action Plan linking directly with our member website Congruent, allowing councils to easily track updates and progress on 2022 Annual Conference resolutions.

The 130 resolutions endorsed by councils demonstrated both the extent of our sector's advocacy challenge – and the vital role local government plays in every aspect of community liveability. They have also guided the Advocacy team's work with the relevant levels of government – through countless meetings, submissions, correspondence, working groups, forums – and at times – public campaigns.

Campaigns, like our ongoing work spotlighting the severe impacts of the housing crisis on Queensland communities generated powerful, tangible results – including a Queensland Housing Summit called by the Premier, and dedicated funding support to assist councils in developing Local Housing Action Plans.





Our strength and ability to drive outcomes when united as a sector was also evident in October, when the LGAQ welcomed the findings from the Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and Councillor Conduct Complaints System after a dogged pursuit of these commonsense reforms on behalf of members.

The LGAQ's dedicated team of advocacy and policy experts traversed the state to meet with members to hear first-hand councils' priorities for building stronger, more resilient local communities. Our Intergovernmental Relations Team continued to build and maintain connections within all three levels of government – leading State and Federal delegations on a number of emerging and critical issues for the sector.

Externally funded projects like QWRAP, the Cleaner Road Runoff project, the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils (QCRC) program, and QCoast<sub>2100</sub> continued to deliver for councils and communities.

Our work this year included an eye to our future advocacy efforts on behalf of the sector: quantifying the impact of State and Federal government cost-shifting onto councils through a comprehensive survey.

Our sincere thanks
to all those councils
who shared valuable
insights and data
to help inform
new sector-wide
insights on the real
costs of cost-shifting
to Queensland
communities.





#### Partners-in-Government Agreement signed

In February, the LGAQ welcomed the renewal of the Partners-In-Government-Agreement, signed by Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk. The Agreement, which has been in place for more than a decade, details the key principles underlying the relationship between the State and local governments and establishes the foundation for effective negotiation and engagement between both levels of governments.

The LGAQ is committed to working with the State Government and will continue to be a committed advocate for councils, to serve our joint jurisdiction for the people of Queensland.

On behalf of our members, we acknowledge and thank the Premier for signing this renewal of the Partners-In-Government-Agreement, one of the foundations of the positive working relationship between different levels of government.



#### Rural and Remote Councils Compact

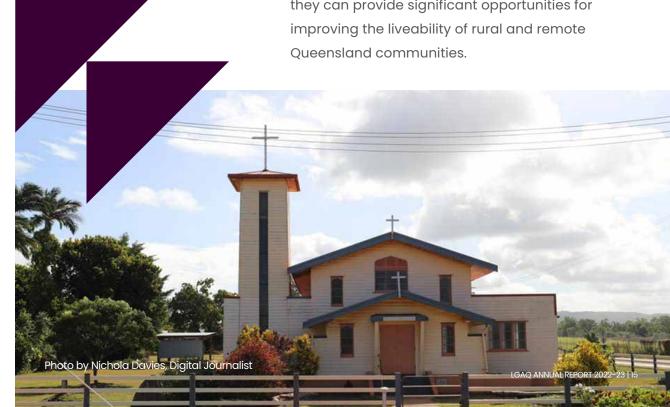
Meeting quarterly with State Government, the LGAQ and the five LGAQ rural and remote Policy Executive members – known as Compact Guardians – raise important issues on behalf of Queensland's 45 rural and remote councils through the Policy and Legislation Committee. This provides a direct avenue to work through strategic priorities and to ensure future policies can be better tailored to meet the needs of rural and remote communities.

# Entering its second year, the Rural and Remote Councils Compact continues to act as an important platform

to amplify the voice of Queensland's rural and remote communities.

This year, roads, housing and financial sustainability have continued as the three priority policy areas for the Compact.

However, there was a need to broaden the sustainability and liveability obstacles that rural and remote communities face, with discussions around economic development and unlocking more water supply. Later in 2023, the increasing concern around access to quarries has also become an issue that the Compact can help address. While these issues provide the most challenges, if addressed, they can provide significant opportunities for improving the liveability of rural and remote Queensland communities.





# **Key outcomes** this year have included:





Identifying opportunities to resolve some roads off alignment challenges with low-cost solutions.



Fast-tracking council applications to establish asbestos dumping applications in rural locations.



Tailored economic development opportunities under the Local Economic Opportunities Network.



Looking at available land and opportunities to unlock more housing supply following the development of local housing action plans. The Compact is overseen by 'Compact Guardians', Flinders Shire Mayor Jane McNamara, Western Downs Regional Mayor Paul McVeigh, Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott, Blackall-Tambo Regional Mayor Andrew Martin and Balonne Shire Deputy Mayor Robyn Fuhrmeister.

The Compact Guardians appreciate and recognise the opportunity to regularly brief the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, Hon. Steven Miles MP, on the key issues facing rural and remote communities. The first Annual Update was released in October 2022 and is available online.



# Advocacy in action

**Better infrastructure** 

#### Urban Water Risk Assessments

On the back of strong advocacy from the LGAQ, the State Government announced a \$2.6 million investment in 2023 in urban water risk assessments across Queensland, in addition to ongoing work programs.

Through participation in various water forums, and input into the Queensland Water Strategy that's currently being drafted, the LGAQ continues to advocate for the scope and scale of this work to reflect the needs of local government. For example, the LGAQ is advocating for a further extension of the QWRAP partnership approach through a Sewerage and Water Infrastructure Development Scheme (SWIDS) – similar to the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) – to fund capital investment in replacing and maintaining ageing assets and upgrading treatment plants.

# Marine infrastructure connections in the Torres Strait

Through combined advocacy efforts with local councils, the LGAQ welcomed the much-needed funding of Stage 1 of the Torres Strait Islands Marine Infrastructure Program, thanks to funding from both the Federal and State governments.

The program will prioritise and deliver marine infrastructure and provide ongoing maintenance in partnership with the councils and communities in the region. Funding of this program was vital due to the heightened need for the continued safety, transport and economic development of Torres Strait communities.



#### Campaign

### Works for Queensland: #BackTo100Mill

Strong advocacy continued for this critical program, with a second burst of the #BackTo100Mill campaign aiming to spotlight its ongoing positive impacts commencing in June 2022.

Since its inception, the campaign targeting Queenslanders has featured more than 20 councils, generated more than 400,000 impressions and driven in excess of 15,000 clicks to the campaign page.

Ahead of the 2023-24 State Budget, all 65 Works for Queensland councils united in support with a joint letter sent to the Deputy Premier from LGAQ CEO Alison Smith, reiterating the call for permanent annual funding of \$100 million on behalf of their rural and remote communities. This was ahead of the budget allocation of \$42.8 million in 2023-24 and an additional \$30 million allocated across the forward estimates in 2026-27.

The LGAQ's cost-shifting research will be critical in doubling down on advocacy for this program in the lead-up to the 2024 State Election.

# Addressing the housing crisis

#### Campaign

### Continuing our campaign to conquer the housing crisis

The LGAQ has continued our campaign spotlighting the suite of practical proposals from councils to address the localised impact of the housing crisis. Our pace hasn't slowed, with councils passing more housing priorities at the 2022 LGAQ Annual Conference, a Queensland Housing Summit called by the Premier – which councils' campaign helped to spark – and a 2023 Local Government Housing Strategy released in March by the LGAQ.

The chronic housing crisis gripping Australia currently has no end in sight. Queensland communities can't afford to wait any longer – and councils have answers. This vital campaign to secure State and Federal support is driven by councils' desire to provide their communities with sustained relief.

To coincide with the March release of the 2023 Local Government Housing Strategy, the LGAQ launched a refreshed social media campaign which **reached more than 61,000 Queenslanders** on Facebook and drove more than 10,000 clicks to the public campaign page.



Throughout our housing campaign, the LGAQ has welcomed the State Government's boost to investment in social and affordable housing and housing and homelessness support services, to total \$5 billion as announced in the 2023-24 State Budget, including \$77 million for First Nations housing. In addition, the Federal Government has provided \$398 million to Queensland under its Social Housing Fund Accelerator payment, with the \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund subject to the passage of enabling legislation introduced in February 2023.



#### **Project**

## Regional and Local Housing Plans project update

At the second Queensland Housing
Roundtable in March, the State Government
announced funding of \$600,000 to work
with the LGAQ and 38 Queensland councils
to develop Local Housing Action Plans
(LHAPs). The LGAQ welcomed this funding,
recognising it delivers on part of a 2022
Annual Conference resolution and extends
on Gympie Regional Council's success in
delivering the first LHAP in 2022, and the
work of the Western Queensland Alliance
of Councils (WQAC), following State
Government funding announced for WQAC in
March 2022.

The LGAQ has appointed a full-time project manager for the LHAP program and is engaging with the State Government and participating councils to scope and progress the preparation of these plans.

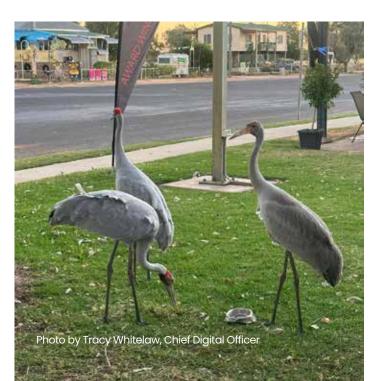
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# Improving sustainability and resilience

## Critical funding for upgrades to the rain gauge network

Thanks to a partnered advocacy approach with the Bureau of Meteorology and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, the LGAQ welcomed the Federal Budget announcement of \$236 million over the next 10 years for rain gauges – with work in Queensland prioritised for the upgraded network to be overseen by the Bureau of Meteorology for operation and maintenance.

As Australia's most natural disaster-prone state, Queensland needs to have the best possible warning system. While this funding of priority upgrades is a welcome step forward to keeping communities safe, the LGAQ will be seeking the Federal Government's commitment to upgrade Queensland's entire network so that all our rain gauges are reliable and well-maintained into the future.



#### Regional Waste Management Plans

2023 brought the completion of Regional Waste Management Plans for all councils in Queensland. These plans provided the basis for data-driven decision making in regional waste infrastructure and local circular economy priorities. The 2023-24 State Budget committed a further \$75.9 million for the implementation of these plans, adding to the \$77.8 million committed previously.

Additionally, the State Government committed to funding a dedicated implementation position for each finalised Regional Waste Management Plan. These will help regions prioritise actions under their plans and bring those forward for funding to the Department of Environment and Science.

What the completion of the plans revealed is a clear indication that there is a need for the regionalisation of State waste diversion goals to avoid the impact of the waste levy hitting communities.

The development of these plans was a recognition of the advocacy of the LGAQ that regional collaboration will provide broader size and scale, enable effective harmonisation of services and empower behaviour change campaigns, such as the 'Let's get it sorted' pilot program. The LGAQ will be working with the individual regions and the State Government to ensure these plans can be realised in the coming decade.



#### **Project**

#### QWRAP project update

Water and sewerage service collaboration at a regional scale was rare prior to commencement in 2011 of the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP). This permanently funded State Government initiative now has coverage through all Queensland council areas outside the Cape York First Nations councils and southeast Queensland.

QWRAP works to drive regional partnerships and initiatives to enhance service providers' ability to deliver sustainable services. The aim is to ensure safe, secure and sustainable water and sewerage services for the more than 300 water schemes outside the state's southeast, which include 25 councils that own and manage some of the smallest water schemes in Australia.



All QWRAP projects to date have yielded financial benefits. Immediate benefits arise from economies of scale and savings from joint procurement and the strategic planning and contract oversight that comes with a regional approach. Many projects are technical or operational in nature and seeking to improve the safety, security and sustainability of services supplied to communities.

Thanks to QWRAP, more than 240 communities are now working on joint regional projects.

By working together in regions, and in partnership with State Government and the Queensland Water Directorate, councils are maturing their water businesses to meet the needs of current and future generations.



# Developing local workforce

#### Living Away from Home Allowance

As part of the 2023 State Budget, the State Government announced a boost to the Remote Area Tuition Allowance (RATuA). Families of students from some of Queensland's most isolated regions will receive an extra \$4,000 from 2024 to assist with the cost of their education.

The boost responds directly to cost-of-living pressures facing geographically isolated Queensland families by helping with the costs arising when children are required to live away from home to attend school.

Approximately 1,400 students access financial support each year under the RATuA program, part of the Living Away from Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS).

#### Boosting rural apprentices

In the State Budget, the LGAQ welcomed the additional funding of \$3.5 million over four years to partner with rural and remote communities to deliver place-based skills and job creation initiatives to increase workforce capacity in these locations. Project delivery will be led by the LGAQ Assist team, and the Advocacy team will push for greater funding next year.



# Best practice integrity and governance frameworks

#### Findings from Office of the Independent Assessor Inquiry released

Together with our members, the LGAQ had been unrelenting in our calls for an overhaul of the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA), and in October 2022 we welcomed the release of the findings from the Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and Councillor Conduct Complaints System.

The report held 40 recommendations with the State supporting all of them.

The key recommendations the LGAQ is firm State Government implementation will provide:



Faster resolution of matters
 Dealing with frivolous or vexatious complainants
 Reducing the cost to councils and individuals
 Common sense Conflict of Interest laws
 Managing social media trolls
 Ensuring freedom of political speech

More oversight and transparency

for the OIA and the system.

The LGAQ will be working with the State Government to ensure the timely implementation of recommendations that are needed to return common sense to the system. This will include finalising the work our members contributed to in 2021, with necessary changes that clarify the existing Conflict of Interest laws. It also includes advocacy to include recognition of traditional family and community obligations of First Nations elected representatives, something that has been supported as an Annual Conference Resolution in 2021 and 2022.

#### Research into cost-shifting

Across 2022–23, the LGAQ undertook a comprehensive six-month data collection process via a member-survey to identify the types and extent of cost shifting Queensland councils are incurring. The research will identify the financial impacts of local governments' community service obligations and cost-shifting necessary to ensure the liveability of Queensland communities. During this process, the LGAQ achieved a 75 per cent response rate from member councils.

The final report is due for completion in the first half of the new financial year and will set a new baseline for our advocacy for fairer funding for Queensland councils, at both State and Federal levels.

Photo by Glen Beckett, Head of Assist

In February 2023, LGAQ CEO Alison Smith appeared before the Senate Select Committee on the Cost of Living and shared initial results of the LGAQ's Cost-Shifting Survey during her opening address.

In March 2023, the LGAQ met with several key Federal Government Ministers at Parliament House for a Canberra delegation where the LGAQ's work on cost-shifting was a key discussion point. Minister for Communications the Hon. Michelle Rowland MP was particularly interested in the types of cost-shifting councils were incurring within her portfolio, such as councils paying for the rebroadcasting of free-to-air TV and radio in their communities.



# **Empowering First Nations People**

# First Nations communities funding (SGFA) – immediate increase of 20 per cent

As part of its 2023-24 Budget, the State
Government combined the State Government
Financial Aid (SGFA), Revenue Replacement
Program and Indigenous Economic
Development Grant into a single Indigenous
Council Funding Program and announced an
extra, one-off \$25.8 million increase for the
2023-24 financial year, taking the total funding
pool to \$69.85 million.

In May 2023, LGAQ CEO Alison Smith joined Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Leeanne Enoch, in Cairns to announce the above funding increase ahead of the LGAQ's Indigenous Leaders Forum in June.

# Sixteen First Nations councils are eligible for the funding and rely on it to deliver critical services to their communities.

The LGAQ welcomed this extra funding for First Nations councils but continues to advocate for the money to be locked in permanently. The challenges First Nations councils and communities face will not be resolved in one year, so this level of funding should not end either.

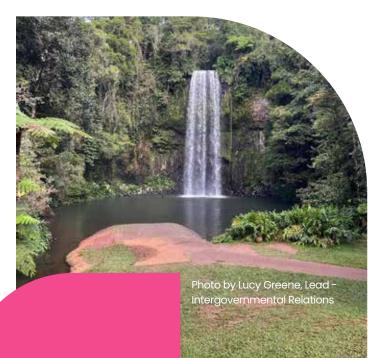
#### **Project**

## First Nations Voice project update

The LGAQ has made a declaration in support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, an Indigenous Voice to Parliament and Makarrata Commission within the 2023 Advocacy Action Plan, following a majority of members endorsing a 2022 Annual Conference motion.

To support members in being informed about the Voice to Parliament and share resources from State and Federal governments, the LGAQ hosted a webinar in May 2023 and created a central portal on Congruent. In March 2023, the Minister for Indigenous Australians, Hon. Linda Burney MP, responded to the LGAQ Annual Conference resolution letter, noting "The work of LGAQ will be crucial to support the realisation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, including through a Voice to Parliament and the work of the Makarrata Commission in Queensland

this year and beyond." The LGAQ will continue to support members through ongoing communications on key updates and resources on the Voice to Parliament.



# Improving safety and wellbeing

#### \$15 million to empower communities to develop local solutions to youth crime issues

Local communities need support for place-based solutions to youth crime, similar to the Night Patrol in Palm Island. This funding announced in the 2022-23 State Budget was welcomed, however the LGAQ continues to advocate for this funding to be used to assist community planning processes currently happening in Cherbourg, Doomadgee and Woorabinda.

#### Project

## Domestic and Family Violence project update

The importance of the work within the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) policy area cannot be overstated. Earlier this year, the LGAQ received formal notification that the LGAQ DFV project officer role's funding from the State Government has been extended for a further 12 months, to April 2024 this year and beyond.

This extension will enable the LGAQ to support member councils to realise the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendations, specifically:



- Focusing on at-risk populations, such as First
  Nations people, people with disability, LGBTIQA+
  people, women from culturally and linguistically
  diverse backgrounds and older women; and
- Featuring coercive control and gender equality issues and strategies, with the development of resources and the promotion of awareness raising campaigns in partnership with industry experts to enable Queensland councils to educate and inform council staff and the local community.

Importantly, the Fourth Action Plan (2022-23 to 2025-26) of the Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2016-2026 highlights local government as a key setting for action, and for local government strategies and actions to prevent and respond to DFV at the local level.

Additionally, through a partnership with Work Haven, the LGAQ received funding to deliver a series of specifically tailored DFV virtual workshops for local government people and culture professionals and work, health and safety teams to develop and implement processes and strategies to support employees working from home. These workshops will be rolled out in the 2034-24 financial year.

# Managing new energy and resource projects

## The Regional Economic Futures Fund (REFF)

In November 2022, the Premier launched the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan (the Plan) which sets revised targets for renewable energy generation and the transition away from fossil fuel dependency. As part of the Plan, the Premier announced a new \$200 million program – the Regional Economic Futures Fund (REFF). The REFF will be coordinated by the Local Economic Opportunities Network and is targeted toward the following regions:



The Premier committed to developing regional strategies for each region to be supported by implementation plans, which the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning wants to develop with local communities.

Planning for the program has commenced, and a workshop was held on 1 February 2023 with a delegation from the LGAQ to capture ideas and suggestions on how the State Government can engage with councils as well as how the REFF will be delivered.

The Department, through its Regional Office Network, will be taking a lead in this process. These teams currently provide project facilitation support and whole-of-government engagement and are well placed to assist in directing increased efforts in local engagement. A State Government transformation working group has been established in relation to these broader policy issues and its first meeting was held in June 2023.



#### The establishment of a Net Zero Authority

Federally, the LGAQ strongly welcomed the announcement of a Net Zero Authority as part of the 2023-24 Federal Budget.

The establishment of the transformation authority was recognition of the need for councils and communities to be properly involved in creating an orderly and positive roadmap to achieving net zero emissions.

The effective management of this change is critical – principally for coal mining regions but also for all local government areas that supply or rely on the economic output of coal mining, as well as heavily coal reliant industrial regions.

The LGAQ will be working with the Federal Government to help ensure this authority delivers the coordinated response local communities need.

# Protecting the environment

### Response to emerging animal diseases

With the increasing risk of emerging animal diseases to Australian borders, the LGAQ and councils have been seeking further information on what local government's roles and responsibilities would be in response to an emerging animal diseases outbreak.

As a result of advocacy work, in early 2023, Biosecurity Queensland funded South Burnett Regional Council and Gladstone Regional Council through the African swine fever preparedness grants program to develop and test an Emergency Animal Disease Disaster Management Sub-Plan. Once developed, the Disaster Management Sub-Plans will be available to Queensland councils' utilisation.



#### Queensland Government management of pests in waterways and riparian corridors

Since the enactment of the *Biosecurity Act* 2014, State Government management of invasive species in waterway and riparian corridors on land under their control has often not aligned with a council's biosecurity plan, resulting in the continued spread of weeds and pest animals.

In response to a 2022 LGAQ Annual Conference resolution, the LGAQ has successfully advocated to Biosecurity Queensland for the development of a working group to develop 'Best Practice Standards' for State Government departments to abide by when managing invasive species on land under their control. To develop these standards, a working group will be developed consisting of State departmental and local government representatives.

#### National Feral Pig Action Plan

A National Feral Pig Action Plan was included as a key ask as part of the LGAQ's 2023-24 Federal Budget Submission.

The LGAQ asked for \$10 million over four years to fund the employment of a National Feral Pig Coordinator and a National Rabbit Coordinator as well as the delivery of on-ground components through a national management strategy.

A further \$3.3 million was announced in June 2023 by Agriculture Minister, Senator Hon. Murray Watt, to continue the engagement of a National Feral Pig Coordinator and continue delivering the National Feral Pig Action Plan. Additionally, \$2.2 million was also provided to the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) to improve understanding of the distribution, abundance and impact of priority established pest animals and weeds. This includes updating the knowledge on the economic impacts of feral pigs.



#### Revised Stock Route Management Act

After sustained advocacy by the LGAQ and councils, the Stock Route Management

Act 2002 was amended to provide greater cost recovery opportunities and improved administrative control by councils. Despite this however, resourcing of stock routes by councils continues to be an issue. The LGAQ and the Department of Resources are in the process of agreeing to an Operational Strategic Working Group to improve greater clarification on what the minimum service delivery expectations on stock routes by local governments is, as well as investigating greater cost recovery opportunities.

#### **Project**

#### QCoast<sub>2100</sub> Program update

In April 2023, the State
Government announced another \$4 million to expand the QCoast<sub>2100</sub> program.

The extra QCoast<sub>2100</sub> funding is to help councils further implement adaptation actions in response to climate-change induced coastal hazards, including rising sea levels, storm tide inundation and coastal erosion.



# Fast-tracked approvals for removing sediment from waterways following a natural disaster

With the passing of the Environmental Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023 (Qld) in 2023, individual councils can now obtain fast-tracked temporary authorities during an emergency situation to remove >1,000 tonnes of sediment from a water course. This change removed the requirement for an environmental authority to be obtained, which could take more than 28 days for approval.

#### **Project**

## Cleaner Road Runoff project update

The Cleaner Road Runoff project, funded by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, continues to collect unsealed road runoff samples from Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Whitsunday Regional Council, Isaac Regional Council, Gladstone Regional Council and Bundaberg Regional Council. The project will continue to collect data to work towards understanding the impact of fine sediment contribution to water quality of the Great Barrier Reef. It is expected that results and recommendations will be released in June 2024 to support Reef Catchment Councils in reducing impact through drainage and road treatments.

#### **Project**

#### Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program update

The Queensland Climate
Resilient Councils (Q CRC)
program is a partnership
between the Department of
Environment and Science and
the LGAQ that commenced
in 2016. It is also a key
deliverable in the Queensland
Climate Adaptation Strategy
under the Local Government
and Regions pathway and a
\$3.44 million investment by
the State Government.

The Q CRC program has been well-received and is a highly regarded program, with a total of 54 councils engaging in program activities. In March 2023, the LGAQ hosted the Q CRC Symposium that was attended by 85 delegates from 27 councils, including three councils not previously engaged with the Q CRC Program.

The LGAQ is continuing to seek further state furnding for the QCRC program. In April 2023, the LGAQ presented the Department with a draft business case outlining the design and delivery of the outputs under a proposed future work program to support Queensland councils to embed considerations of a changing climate into their core business decisions and activities by building on the outcomes of the Q CRC program.

#### Campaign

# On Your Marks: Queensland local government and the road to 2032

This year, the LGAQ surveyed councils across Queensland following a majority of members endorsing a 2021 Annual Conference motion in which councils agreed the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games should benefit all Queenslanders statewide. The 'On Your Marks: Queensland local government and the road to 2032' report found:

- 91 per cent of members surveyed believe hosting the event will bring the potential for new trade and investment opportunities
- 57 per cent believe it can achieve a legacy in their communities
- 26 per cent are hopeful of infrastructure and tourism promotion.

# The LGAQ has presented the report to the state with seven recommendations to help drive statewide benefits:

Remote Queensland Funding
program to ensure that areas
outside southeast Queensland,
particularly rural and remote
communities, also receive equitable
funding for essential infrastructure
and community facilities

Establishing a 2032 Olympics Rural/

- Developing Regional Olympic Plans to support tourism, investment attraction and local business opportunities, that are tailored to local communities right across the state
- Appointing a dedicated senior officer with local government experience to be based within the State Government to act as a liaison point for consultation with local councils and the LGAQ
- Undertaking proactive and
  genuine First Nations engagement
  to acknowledge and celebrate
  Queensland's cultural values
- Providing timely procurement and supply chain opportunities to all Queensland communities
- local governments to harness the potential the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will bring for their communities and the global spotlight that will shine on Queensland

**Encouraging and supporting** 

Establishing a sustainable building fund for new or retrofitted council buildings to help the state meet its commitment to a climate positive Games.



#### **Event**

#### Waste Forum 2022

The LGAQ Waste Forum, held in July 2022, represented the continuation of our commitment to bring councils together to discuss resource recovery and the transition to a circular economy. As the sector's most significant event in Queensland, the forum this year transitioned to a three-day event to reflect the importance and breadth of issues for discussion, with attendees invited from all levels of government and industry.

The theme of the forum was 'Not a moment to waste – 10 years to transition to a circular economy' and it captured both the urgency and importance of the need for partnerships between all tiers of government working alongside our key industry partners.

#### **Event**

#### 2022 Costal Leaders Forum

In August 2022, the LGAQ hosted the inaugural Coastal Leaders Forum in Gladstone, bringing together leaders from Queensland's 41 coastal councils with other tiers of government and industry stakeholders to advance the liveability and resilience of our coastal cities and regions.

With more than half of Queensland's local governments situated along the coastline, this forum presented a timely opportunity for councils to discuss particular and shared challenges which impact their communities.

The theme for the landmark event was 'Our Coast, Our Future' and the two-day forum focused on the changing risk profiles of our coastal communities and the economic transition many of these councils are pursuing. Councils discussed and shared insights into how they are responding to new and emerging issues, including the threat of long-term environmental impacts of a changing climate.





#### **Event**

#### 2023 Local Government Heritage Conference

The LGAQ partnered with the State Government through the Department of Environment and Science and Fraser Coast Regional Council to deliver the 2023 Local Government Heritage Conference in Maryborough in March.

Local governments statewide play a critical and active role in heritage planning, protection and management, and in supporting heritage conservation outcomes for the benefits of the community and future generations. The conference provided an opportunity for local government heritage and planning officers to share knowledge and experiences on heritage management throughout Queensland.

#### **Event**

#### National Resource Management Forums

In 2023, the LGAQ delivered six Natural Resource Management (NRM) Forums at Cook Shire Council, Croydon Shire Council, Livingstone Shire Council, Maranoa Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council and Winton Shire Council. The NRM Forums provided an opportunity for council officers to share NRM learnings, challenges and needs, as well as connecting them to key stakeholders across government, industry, research and the community.

The 2023 NRM Forums saw participation from more than 120 individuals from across 40 organisations, with 31 Queensland councils being collectively represented, with positions ranging from trainee technical officers to CEOs and mayors.





#### **Event**

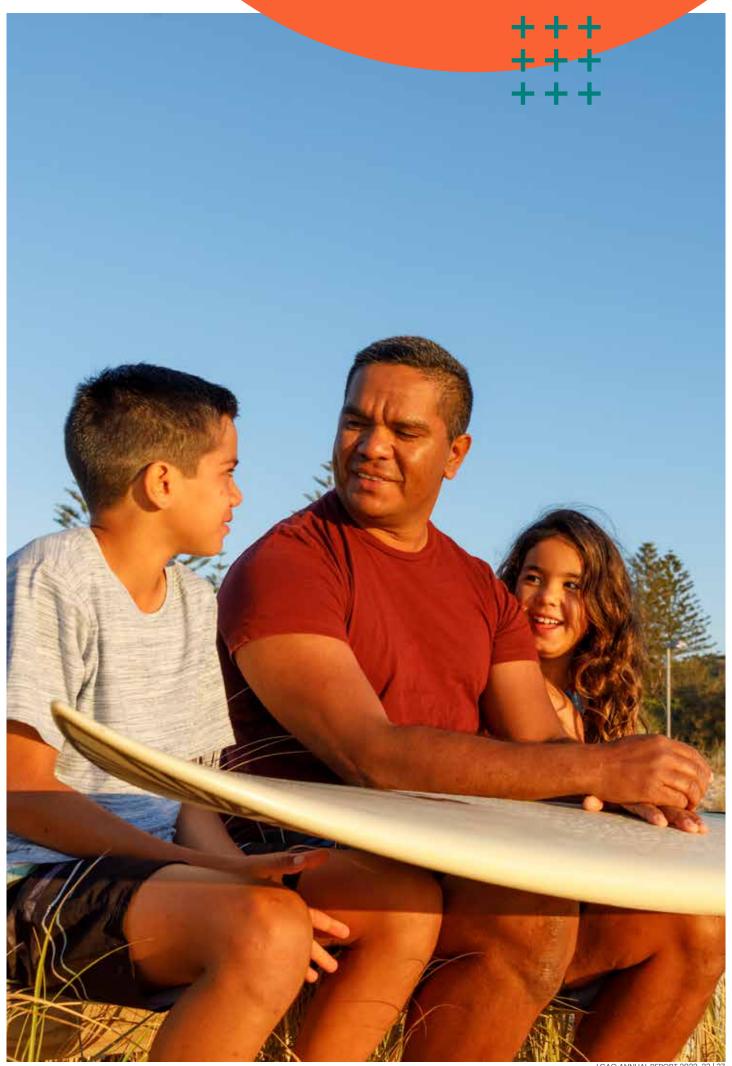
#### Indigenous Leaders Forum

This year, LGAQ hosted both Indigenous Leaders Forum (ILF) events in Cairns. These forums saw leaders from Queensland's 17 First Nations councils gather to discuss common issues impacting their communities.

Held at the start of Annual Conference, the October 2022 ILF discussed the crippling housing shortage, the First Nations Voice to Parliament and the workforce challenges facing First Nations communities.

The June 2023, ILF saw multiple State and Federal ministers meet with mayors, councillors and CEOs to discuss key issues impacting their communities including housing, youth justice, health and the need for more co-design funding opportunities. It was agreed to pursue an Indigenous Cabinet Meeting with the Premier, progress on reviewing and better activating Ministerial Champions as well as re-igniting the Indigenous Reference Group with the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. Notably, councils agreed to sponsor motions to go forward to the LGAQ 2023 Annual Conference.





# Supporting our members

#### **Digital Stream**

In 2022-23, the Association's Digital and Data teams continued to focus on improving the digital literacy and data maturity for Queensland councils and for the Association itself, benefitting both our members and our internal teams. There are several key initiatives the Association has focused on throughout the year, including helping councils with their cybersecurity maturity uplift and assisting them in better understanding their future digital plans through our digital strategy advice. Combining those with a deeper understanding of data, and how to become a data driven business, has led to an increase in digitisation and transformation ultimately benefitting both councils and their communities.

#### **The Digital Team**

The Digital Team continued to support 44 corporate websites for Queensland councils and a further 52 websites, including entertainment, airport, event, tourism, intranet and councillor sites. Throughout the year, the team worked on 11 website refresh projects, assisting councils to enhance the design, layout and functionality of their websites to improve the user journey, making information easier to access. By helping councils implement new website content strategies, the team has improved the online user experience for Queensland communities.



# 13 councils adopted data and analytics as a service

## dashboards for Flinders Shire Council website

The Digital Team also delivered several strategy and discovery workshops to members to assist with the development of customised digital plans, helping councils take their first steps on their digital transformation journeys.

#### The Data and Analytics Team

The past 12 months have seen a big shift in how the Data and Analytics Team assists LGAQ members. The new data and analytics as a service offering was adopted by 13 councils throughout the 2022-23 financial year, and the team has been working with these councils to help present their data in easy to use and impactful ways through dashboards and other visualisations. Along the way, the team has assisted with cleansing council data to improve the quality, as well as identifying process optimisation opportunities that will help drive greater efficiency and productivity.

The team is particularly proud of collaborating with Flinders Shire Council to create a series of 10 dashboards for its website. These dashboards provide transparency to the community on the services Council provides and how they are being utilised by the community. This project has led to several other councils looking for similar solutions for their communities. Additionally, the project was nominated in May 2023 for an award in the LGMA Awards for Excellence.

#### **Innovation**

The LGAQ Lab was launched in November 2022, offering a dedicated space for councils, vendors, startups, not-for-profits, entrepreneurs and LGAQ team members to explore and co-create solutions to councils' biggest digital challenges. The Industry Development Fund provided funding to establish the lab alongside seed funding for projects born within the innovation space.

Since opening, the LGAQ Lab has been visited by a range of councils, sharing their biggest innovation needs by writing their challenges on a large map of Queensland. While this has been immensely helpful to the LGAQ and vendors in understanding the needs of Queensland councils, it has also demonstrated the commonalities for councils and improved the identification of shared challenges.

The LGAQ Lab's work with Carpentaria Shire Council to pilot a new method for automating the detection of flooding over roads using artificial intelligence (AI) has been recognised by several industry bodies and councils in delivering operational efficiencies and safety benefits. This award-winning pilot uses AI to monitor high-risk flooding areas and notifies council officers when flooding is detected. The pilot is continuing to be run with an additional four councils participating to help shape the project before moving to a product phase.

Redlands City Council was one of several councils to undertake an ideation session in the LGAQ Lab, identifying a range of digital solutions to realise process efficiencies and deliver cost savings for the council. These ideation sessions have been extremely valuable to councils and have given operational council officers an opportunity to help shape their councils' digital footprint.





## Streamlining of systems

Throughout 2022-23, the Association made significant efforts to standardise and modernise the organisation's IT systems. This included:



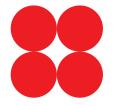
Consolidating internal call management to use Microsoft Teams



Decommissioning a third of all LGAQ business servers



Replacing old IT systems with fit-for-purpose, reliable solutions



These changes resulted in significant reductions in operational costs of cloud hosting services, improved security, greater systems reliability and fewer business disruptions.

The LGAQ IT team is now focused on valueadding work, rather than reactive 'break-fix' support. Our efforts to standardise and streamline our systems will continue into **2023-2024** 

## Year at a glance

### Digital



92

support tickets per month

- An average of 92 support tickets were actioned per month, resulting in around 350 monthly interactions with our members
- One touch resolution 53.8 per cent



44

hours of training provided

**44 hours of training** provided for our members, with **90 per cent** now conducted online via Teams



11

projects working with members

Completed 11 projects working with members to improve their website functionality and user experience



5

digital strategy sessions held with councils

Conducted **5 sessions with councils** to assist with their digital transformation strategies and horizon mapping



460

returning users each month to Congruent (on average)

- 97,718 page views (averaging 8,143 per month)
- 27,226 sessions (averaging 2,272 per month)

#### **Data and Analytics**



13

councils signed up for data and analytics services

13 councils signed up to the LGAQ's data and analytics services for a variety of opportunities, ranging from assisting with data cleansing activities to developing dashboards for greater insights



14 workshops and planning sessions

Held **14 workshops and planning sessions** with council staff to better understand where the LGAQ can assist



**78**sessions with council staff

Held **78 sessions with council staff** to discuss specific solutions,
showcase dashboards and
demonstrate how to use
solutions shared with council



24

bespoke council dashboards

Developed 24 bespoke dashboards utilising council data





## 51 innovation ideas

More than 50 innovation ideas have been identified, with 21 of those being delivered or actively explored



## 45% of LGAQ Lab visits used for meetings

The LGAQ Lab has been extremely popular for councils and remote workers, with 45 per cent of LGAQ Lab visits used primarily to meet with other experts, councils or LGAQ employees



## **3** ideation sessions

Delivered three ideation sessions attended by a range of council officer role types across various councils to identify innovative solutions for process efficiency or cost savings



## 2 award wins

Won two awards for the Al Flood Detection Project including Best Local Government Project in Australia at the 2023 iTnews Awards



The Al Flood Detection Project has been shortlisted as a finalist for 100% of the award events for which it has been considered

#### **Assist Stream**

The Assist Stream continued its work in providing a range of valuable support services to members. The Stream was also successful in securing additional valuable funding for members and delivering some well-attended events.

## Member Support & Engagement Team

The Member Support & Engagement (MS&E) Team, established in 2020, continued its work on delivering its key outreach programs to all corners of the state, including the Elected Member Update (EMU) program and expanding on the Executive Leadership Update (ELU) program, which was successfully piloted in 2021–22. Delivered at no cost to councils, these workshop programs play an important role in helping to engage with members on emerging issues, as well as providing valuable insights into the issues and challenges facing local communities and council operations.

#### **Elected Member Update 2022**

65 councils visited

**56** mayors

293 councillors

**▶ 43** CEOs

> 106 senior officers

119
flights
booked



165 days travelled



169,618 kilometres travelled



#### Executive Leadership Update (ELU) 2023



12 councils visited

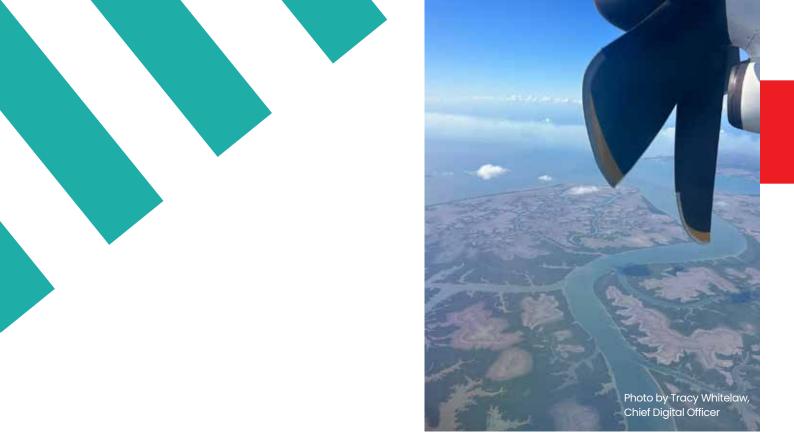
**12** CEOs

**51** senior officers

14 managers

Photo by Jon Guarna, Communications Manager

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The MS&E Team also continued its important work of supporting the Association's operating model and the work of the five segment teams (Rural and Remote, SEQ, Resources, Coastal and First Nations). In 2022-23, the LGAQ's segment teams progressed a number of new initiatives and events, including the Bush Councils Convention, which was held in Barcaldine in August 2022 – following the cancellation of the event the previous year due to COVID-19 restrictions – as well as the inaugural Coastal Leaders Forum, hosted by Gladstone in August 2022 and a new approach to the Associations longstanding Indigenous Leaders Forum, held in Cairns in April 2023.

In addition to this, the MS&E Team conducted several onboarding activities and inductions for newly elected members following a series of by-elections as well as continuing with its commitment to supporting newly appointed chief executives by conducting regular CEO inductions with Peak Services and Local Buy.

The team also continued to work with members across the state on providing insights and better comprehension of the products and services available to elected members and council officers.



## Governance and Industrial Relations/Workforce Teams

In recognition of the upcoming local government elections in 2024, early preparatory work was completed, and will continue in earnest next financial year. Supporting member councils with preparedness for the elections, and councillor inductions post-elections, has been well considered.

Integration of the Industrial Relations (IR) and Workforce Team into the Assist Stream has continued, following the transition initiated in 2021. The critical daily support provided to members by both the Governance and IR/ Workforce Teams was the catalyst for the organisational structural changes and colocation. The focus in this financial year centred on the functional establishment and embedding the newly expanded teams with recruitment and direct engagement with members. In preparation for the 2024 local government elections, early consultation has commenced on a member-informed Workforce Strategy 2024–2028, which is due for release prior to the 2024 State Flection.

#### First Start program

The Workforce/IR Team continued its work on delivering the First Start program, an initiative of the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, that provides members with funding for more than 400 apprenticeships and traineeships, as well as training opportunities. The First Start program's 2023–2024 funding provides wage subsidies to councils and community-based organisations to employ additional trainees. The program offers opportunities for young people and disadvantaged job seekers to gain nationally recognised qualifications and 12 months of employment by undertaking a traineeship.

In 2023–2024, \$6 million will be available for local councils to create 300 new traineeships and support 100 second-year apprenticeships under the First Start program.

## Indigenous Capacity Building project

The Workforce/IR Team has been coordinating the Indigenous Capacity Building project (ICB). Since commencing in September 2022, the ICB project has supported 287 staff members from Queensland's 17 First Nations councils and five eligible surrounding councils. The project funds accredited training opportunities, and to date has contracted \$844,208 of training from registered training organisations.

## Rural and Remote Capacity Building project

The Workforce/IR Team has been coordinating a Rural and Remote Capacity Building project. Following the success of the ICB project, the LGAQ was asked in 2022 to devise a project to support councils in rural and remote locations. Funded for three years, the project has a yearly budget of \$800,000 to spend on training opportunities for staff in the eligible councils. The project also seeks to support small businesses within the communities.

#### Disaster management

Disaster management continued to be an area of activity, which was further elevated in importance by the devastating record flood event in the Gulf of Carpentaria in early 2023.

The LGAQ activated the Council to Council (C2C) program to aid the response in impacted communities, with the program well-supported by several councils from southeast Queensland, as well as offers of in-kind support from near neighbours.

The Association was also pleased to again partner with the Queensland Police Service (QPS), the Queensland Fire & Emergency Service (QFES), Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) to deliver a very successful Disaster Management Conference in Brisbane in May 2023. The event attracted a record attendance and aligned with the announcement of major reforms to the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA) which further highlighted the importance of the event.



#### **Member Communications Team**

The Member Communications Team continued its work supporting the efforts of the Association and promoting the positive outcomes for local government.

## Locals Like You campaign

A highlight of the year was a further large-scale investment by the Association in a public relations campaign, 'Locals like you', which ran statewide in early to mid-2023. The campaign once again sought to communicate the valuable and important work undertaken each day by Queensland councils and the dedicated council officers who contribute to the liveability of their local communities.

The campaign comprised of digital advertising on social media using photos and videos, TV advertising across metro and regional areas and the campaign website.



#### Key outcomes of the campaign:



1 million

**people reached through digital advertising** (number of feeds reached)



**5.2** million

viewers reached through TV advertising



5 million

**impressions through digital advertising** (number of times appeared)



19,122

users visited the localslikeyou.com.au website

#### LGx 2023

The LGAQ's annual LGx conference for local government media and communication professionals was held in May 2023 at the Queensland State Library and continues to grow in strength with another record attendance recorded. This event has grown in both value and importance over the last few years and will continue to be a regular fixture in the Association's event program.

Congratulations to the winners of the revamped and expanded 2023 LGx Awards for Excellence in Local Government Communications.

#### Winners of the 2023 LGx Awards



#### **Best communications** Internal campaign\*

Ipswich City Council
Wireless: Providing Critical Updates to Your Fingertips



### **Best communications**Internal campaign\*

Townsville City Council

A Moment for Safety



#### Best communications External campaign

City of Gold Coast When Men Read, It's A Different Story



#### **Best use of video**

Logan City Council
Now I Can Swim



## Best council communications professional

Kate Hadley, Townsville City Council



## Best council communications

**Noosa Council** 



#### Best graphic design

Sunshine Coast Council
Sunshine Coast Biosphere

\*Joint winners.



#### Governance

#### Financial and member value

The Association sets a balanced (or small surplus) budget on an annual basis.

Membership subscription fees account for less than one third of the total budget expended by the Association each year on member services and initiatives. For a number of years, the equivalent of annual membership subscriptions has been returned to Association members by way of distributions to those councils who are also members of the LGAQ's successful self-insurance schemes.

In demonstrating the Association's commitment to its corporate objective of 'financial sustainability', the Association funds the majority of new member initiatives through the identification of savings and/or the ongoing and sustained revenue growth from non-member subscription fee sources.

The Association remains committed to delivering a responsible and sustainable budgetary outcome, while continuing to invest in the services and initiatives that are deemed to deliver the highest value to our membership.



#### **People and Culture**



The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) continued to focus on enhancing the positive culture of respect, inclusion, collaboration and caring at the Association. Further steps were taken to embed the CARE behaviours of Caring, Accountability, Respect and Engaged, through the introduction of a series of short learning sessions to help build skills and remove barriers to support new behaviours. A recognition program was adopted during the year to promote informal and formal recognition of the CARE behaviours and achievements in priority areas.

In line with the ELT's commitment to develop our people, the Association promoted five employees throughout the year. An Emerging Leaders program was delivered for new and potential leaders during the year. This program contributed to promotion of a number of participants. Opportunities were also provided for team members to gain new skills and experience through short-term assignments in different roles within the Association.

80 full time equivalent staff

(as at 30 June 2023)

Ongoing record levels of job vacancies across the country impacted the Association's recruitment activities through limited numbers of strong candidates, and a 16 per cent increase in the time taken to fill vacancies compared to the previous year. Although the pool of quality candidates has remained tight during the 2022-23 financial year, gender diversity has been maintained with a 60:40 female to male ratio.

Five staff took primary carer's leave and two staff accessed secondary carers leave during the period. Consistent with previous years, the headcount at 30 June 2023 was 84, including employees seconded to Peak Services Legal.



## **LGAQ Culture**











































The Association's focus on employee wellbeing continued with the introduction of a new Travel Safety policy, which defines various categories of high-risk travel and requirements to mitigate risk in these situations. Visits to many member sites requires considerable outback road travel which employees plan for, and mitigate risks, by travelling with a companion and carrying personal locator beacons which operate through satellite coverage.

Photo by Catherine Parker, Analytics Specialist The Wellness Committee broadened the range of initiatives to support employees by adopting a more holistic approach to the annual program to include financial, body, mind, work and relationshipsbased activities.

A number of the changes to employment-related legislation impacted the LGAQ in 2022-23. The new Federal Government passed legislative amendments to bring about a range of changes, including the need to provide paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave, increase access to flexible work arrangements, limit the use of fixed term contracts, strengthen protections against discrimination and to adopt recommendations from the Respect@ Work report.

In April 2023, the Code of Practice for managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work came into effect in Queensland. The Association has reviewed compliance with the legislation and where required, incorporated the changes into policies, contracts, education and practice.

#### Our organisational structure

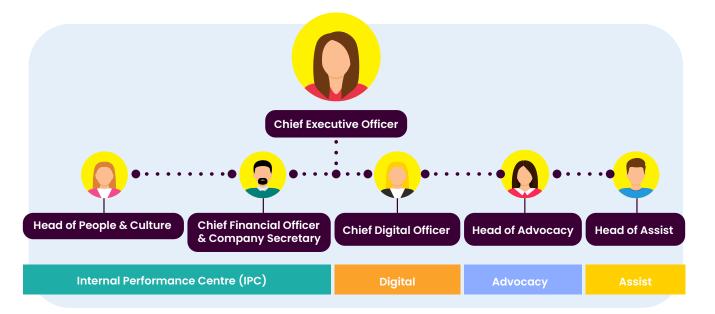
#### The Board

The LGAQ Board consists of the President, elected by member councils at the Annual General Meeting following the quadrennial council elections, and three Directors elected by and from members of the Policy Executive.



#### Our Executive Leadership Team

This year saw Alison Smith move into her second year as Chief Executive Officer. Due to a vacancy in the Head of Advocacy role, Glen Beckett and Sarah Vogler temporarily filled the role until Sarah was formally appointed to the position in June 2023. The Executive Leadership Team has continued to emphasise our core business of engaging with and addressing members' needs, together with a focus on building on a culture of respect, inclusion, collaboration and caring.





Alison began her role as the LGAQ's next Chief Executive Officer on 1 November 2021, following the retirement of CEO Greg Hallam AM, and after Alison spent a year as LGAQ's Head of Advocacy. Between 2007 and 2020, Alison worked with ASX-100 companies, heading their corporate affairs functions. Alison was Group Executive External Affairs at The Star Entertainment Group, and previously held media and corporate affairs roles at Rio Tinto's coal and uranium businesses in Australia, Africa, and Canada. Alison has worked in the public and private sectors in ICT, transport, energy, police and corrective services. She also spent 14 years as a journalist, working in newspapers, radio and television, before being a senior media advisor in the Queensland Government for two terms. Alison was previously the Chair of the Brisbane Festival Board and is currently a director on the Queensland Tourism Industry Council Board.



Sarah accepted the role as Head of Advocacy in June 2023, and oversees the passionate, dedicated policy, intergovernmental relations, media, campaigns, member and funded programs teams that make up the Advocacy Stream within the LGAQ. As a member-focussed team, the Advocacy Stream works to progress member resolutions and to find solutions to emerging issues impacting councils and their local communities across the length and breadth of the state. An award-winning former journalist and State Political Editor who worked across rural, regional and metropolitan newspapers for almost 20 years, Sarah has always had a love for the local government sector. She joined the LGAQ in 2019.



In his role as the LGAQ's Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary, Darren oversees a team of finance and governance professionals. He is primarily responsible for the financial management, governance, compliance and risk management for the LGAQ on behalf of the LGAQ Board and CEO. Darren leads the development and preparation of financial and accounting information for the management and Board of the LGAQ, as well as its subsidiaries, according to relevant financial standards and legislation. In addition, he is responsible for the regular governance reporting to the LGAQ Board and other key stakeholders, as well as helping guide the Local Government Mutual Schemes on behalf of the LGAQ. Darren is a Chartered Accountant with more than 19 years' experience and has held managerial roles with KPMG in numerous areas from general tax to superannuation advisory. He has been with the Association since 2007.



As Head of Assist, Glen leads the member and support services that provide daily guidance and assistance to those working in and leading Queensland's 77 councils. Originally a teacher, Glen's early career was in the education sector where he worked with private, public and international schools, TAFE and within the tertiary sector. While completing his first Masters' degree in experiential learning, he lectured at Griffith University for both the Education and Behavioural Sciences faculties. He has been with the Association since 2001 and leads the Member Communications, Member and Advisory Services, and Member Support and Engagement teams.



In her role as the LGAQ's inaugural Chief Digital Officer, Tracy oversees the Digital, Data and Analytics (Sherlock), Innovation and Business Systems teams. She leads the digital strategy and transformation for the LGAQ and our members, focusing on digital solutions to create enabled councils. Tracy has more than 20 years' experience in creating customer–centric digital roadmaps and building high-performing, award–winning teams. She has led digital transformation and digital marketing for some of the largest events in Australia over the last decade, including the Brisbane floods, G20 and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. She has also led the digital transformation for critical infrastructure providers such as Urban Utilities and is passionate about the value digital will bring to the LGAQ and its members.



In her role as Head of People and Culture, Leanne leads the development of the people and culture strategy which shapes culture, develops talent and promotes wellbeing within the LGAQ's workforce. Leanne has more than 20 years' experience in strategic human resources, organisational development and change management leadership in a range of industries including transportation, aviation, mining, agriculture, and the public sector. She has led contemporary people practices in the overseas relocation of manufacturing facilities, introduced an employee-centric approach to performance development and established an integrity function to promote good governance practices. More recently, Leanne has undertaken studies in behaviour change to improve effectiveness of change in the workplace.

#### **LGMS Mutual Schemes**

The Local Government Mutual Services (LGMS) schemes remain committed to providing members with the comprehensive coverage, claims and risk management solutions they need to give them the confidence to navigate the evolving local government risk landscape to ensure that any insurable risks are well-managed.

•

Councils were asking for less volatility and more certainty in pricing in their cover of people, assets and public liability - which is why LGMS was created by the LGAQ in 1994. Its collective buying power ensures cover of a standard and value that individual councils could not find in the commercial insurance market.

Access to LGMS is a valuable component of LGAQ membership. The mutual schemes are owned by councils, with any profits returned to members or invested in initiatives to benefit local government.



#### LGMS Risk Excellence Awards

Each year at the LGAQ Annual Conference, LGMS recognises the efforts of member councils who have achieved excellent ongoing improvements in risk management. The 2021-22 LGMS Risk Excellence Awards were presented at the LGAQ Annual Conference in Cairns in October 2022, with councils from four regions each receiving \$20,000 to support their continuous risk mitigation journeys. Congratulations to the LGMS Risk Excellence Award winners for 2021-22:



**North Queensland** Douglas Shire Council



**Central Queensland**Diamantina Shire Council



**South West Queensland**Western Downs Regional Council



**South East Queensland** Noosa Council

#### LGMS Licence renewal

In May 2023, LGW was pleased to advise scheme members that the Local Government Workcare (LGW) Self-Insurance Licence was renewed for a 3-year term with special licence conditions.

#### Returns to members

surplus distributions to its scheme members in 2023, which is a significant offset to the \$5.5 million in LGAQ membership fees payable in 2023. Access to LGMS is also a valuable component of LGAQ

I GM returned \$4.5 million in



membership.

In May 2023, LGMS launched a new and practical podcast to help member councils actively manage their risks. Hosted by our LGMS Regional Risk Coordinators, each episode explores how councils can assess, reduce and respond to the various challenges they encounter. 'Risk Aware' is about sharing ideas and initiatives other councils are pursuing and the benefits they've achieved along the way. There are currently three podcasts available online in the LGMS Member Centre.



#### Unrivalled value

LGMS continues to demonstrate unrivalled value and mutual aggregation in local government, including:

- More than \$40 million returned to members in the form of rebates and surplus distributions - supporting members and their communities to achieve their financial objectives.
- Sustainable cost of covers through proactive and targeted risk and claims management and an industry-wide approach to collectively purchasing supporting covers for insurable risks.
- The LGMS website and access to a dedicated LGMS Member Centre portal that offers individual council claims dashboards, policy wording and risk management information.

- Designated LGMS Regional Risk Coordinators, WHS Consultants and Account Managers provide a range of support services online, face-to-face meetings and risk management reviews and/or workshops.
- Dedicated claims management Dedicated claims management LGW's strong focus on WHS professionals across all the mutual schemes to ensure optimal resolution of councils' claims.
- compliance includes a number of initiatives for councils to ensure that safety remains a priority and at a satisfactory level in accordance with the scheme's licence conditions.

#### These initiatives include:

- Skytrust Compliance Program with continued subsidisation for current councils and further extension of the program to include additional councils.
- The LGW WHS Conference, first held in February 2021 a biannual event held exclusively for Queensland councils, with subsidised registration for members and accredited training from industry specialists.
- The LGW Mutual Risk Obligations Program that includes external audits by accredited auditors and the development of a contemporary council specific safety management system.

After almost 30 years in operation, LGMS continues to exist for the sole purpose of providing Queensland local government with a comprehensive suite of tailored covers specific to their needs. It also provides its members with more certainty and stability of costs with an aim to minimise the impacts of councils' exposure to the volatility of the commercial insurance market.

#### **Peak Services**

Created in 2017, Peak Services is wholly owned by the LGAQ and operates as a profit-for-purpose enterprise. Peak Services is uniquely placed as a commercial enterprise that focuses on the needs of Queensland councils and their communities by helping local government achieve more. Peak Services offers strategic, business-related expertise that supports local government in the areas of legal and workforce, consulting, training, recruitment and call centre services. Peak's service delivery is enhanced by the professional skills and experience of its staff within each service-offering discipline.

Each council has different needs when it comes to the use of professional services, and Peak's Consulting team was created to support councils by using trusted advisors experienced in local government. Councils can use the team for support in areas such as energy, procurement, grants management and other bespoke requirements that councils do not always have the resources or expertise to deliver.

What this means for councils is that no matter their size or location, they can rely on Peak to understand their local challenges and leverage Peak's broad knowledge and experience to help achieve outcomes for their communities.

Created by local government for local government, the Peak 24/7 contact centre ensures seamless, all-year, round-the-clock telephone support for residents to their local councils. Whether it's to report a pothole, a tree down, or to get information during a natural disaster, a call to Peak 24/7 puts residents in the know – saving councils time, money and staff resources.

# Peak 24/7 receives more than 100,000 calls a year and is staffed by Queenslanders who live in and understand our local communities.

Peak 24/7 was created by the LGAQ in 2011 when many councils needed this service after Cyclone Yasi. Access to Peak 24/7 is a valuable component of LGAQ membership.



## Supporting local government workforce and operations

Peak has a specialised team focused on workforce-related services to support and build the capability of councils.

#### Grants

- In total, Peak has submitted close to 300
  funding applications worth more than \$230
  million, and successfully secured \$132 million
  in funds for communities
- In 2022-23, Peak Services:
  - successfully obtained funding for 61
     projects worth more than \$43 million
     for 14 organisations across 24 funds.
  - successfully obtained approximately
     \$17 million in grant funding to deliver
     33 projects in First Nations councils or organisations during the year.
  - supported communities by applying for more than \$33.5 million in funding across
     44 funding programs for 14 councils and organisations.

#### Workforce

- Peak Services negotiated 27 Enterprise
   Bargaining Agreements in various
   Queensland councils
- Peak Services managed more than 900 inquiries through the IR help desk, offering critical support to LGAQ members
- Peak Services provided nearly 11,000 hours of legal and workforce advisory services

#### Energy

- During 2022-23, Peak saved councils \$508,306 through renewable energy initiatives (savings ranging between \$16,970 and \$346,372 per project)
- A further \$220,663 was saved in electricity tariff reviews, and power factor corrections were obtained with a total \$14,856,436 in total energy savings since 2014

#### Consulting

- Peak Services provided over 13,500 hours of advisory services, helping councils achieve successful project outcomes for their communities
- Peak Services managed 32 procurement activities to help obtain the best value for money for our customers
- Peak Services provided professional services assistance on 36 projects to ensure successful and sustainable projects



#### Training

- Peak proudly presented 646 training events across various councils in Queensland – teaching and empowering council workers
- Peak delivered more than 528 days of training to more than 6,100 elected members, senior staff and local government officers from approximately 80 councils and other organisations
- Peak conducted in excess of 382 virtual training workshops utilising technology that is accessible to all council workers across Queensland
- Peak delivered 300 Industry Development Fund (IDF) funded cyber security training sessions to 48 councils across Queensland

#### Recruitment

- Peak successfully placed 41 candidates in permanent roles across 11 councils and organisations, including four CEOs under challenging market conditions
- Peak provided short-term relief for 22 interim roles across 13 Queensland councils

#### Peak 24/7

- Peak attended to 130,000 inbound calls with an average answer time of 79 seconds when our customers were closed or otherwise unable to answer calls
- Peak assisted with more than 45,000 enquiries from our utilities customers – Urban Utilities, Horizon and Altogether triaging water, electricity and gas issues
- Peak scanned more than 82,000 papers for council customers across Queensland



#### **Local Buy**

Local Buy helps council procurement meet legislative, reputation and compliance needs, simplifying the process by connecting councils to pre-qualified local Queensland suppliers, big and small. This saves time and money, reducing councils' need to tender, advertise and prepare contracts.

Councils were asking for help with procurement, which is why the LGAQ created Local Buy in 2001. Access to Local Buy is a valuable component of LGAQ membership, with the profits from Local Buy returned each year to the LGAQ and invested to help offset council membership fees.

Local Buy's pre-qualified arrangements are unique and a first for local government in Australia, as they are open every three months to new suppliers – compared to every two to three years for other states or panels set up by individual councils. Local Buy has 52 arrangements under five broad portfolios: fleet, civil works, ICT, consultancy, corporate equipment, corporate services and industrial commodities.

Local Buy arrangements are trusted and used by a wide range of councils in Queensland and around Australia. They are also accessible by a variety of other organisations including universities, Not-for-Profits (NFPs) and utilities.



#### Our achievements over the past 12 months include:

- ✓ Facilitated the cost-effective and legislatively compliant procurement of \$850 million in spend up \$100 million (12 per cent) on the previous year
- ✓ Local Buy was used by 561 organisations across Australia, including 255 in Queensland and all 77 Queensland councils
- Implemented 10 new or refreshed arrangements, diversifying the arrangement spend categories
- ✓ Increased the total numbers of suppliers to more than 3,800
- Provided supplier fee exemptions to 1,575 small businesses, social enterprises, charities and First Nations suppliers
- Continued to support public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centers across Queensland, and through our partnership with Queensland Public Libraries Association (QPLA) invested \$35,000 in public libraries
- Connected 64 councils to their supplier network through Local Buy's fully funded procurement technology, delivering improved council outcomes with compliance, value and sustainability
- Enabling improvements in councils' procurement, digital and data programmes to enable stronger data-driven decision making and local community outcomes

#### Peak Services & Local Buy Community Support Program

Peak Services has helped councils to secure more than \$40 million of grants for various organisations in the 2022-23 financial year alone, bringing the total of grant funding wins to more than \$130 million.

In addition, during the past year, Peak Services has directly supported numerous community-based events under the Community Support Program, including (but not limited to):

#### Sponsorship

## 2022 Somerset Rail Trail Fun Run or Ride (Somerset Regional Council)

The event beneficiary, Mercy Community
Lowood, provides targeted support and
services to children and families in Lowood
and surrounding areas, such as an integrated
early years service, targeted family support
service and a Centrelink agency.

#### Sponsorship

## 2022 Bedourie Camel and Pig Races (Diamantina Shire Council)

The event benefits Queensland's tourism economy, driving visitation and supporting local jobs.

#### Sponsorship

## 2022 Carpentaria Mayoral Ball (Carpentaria Shire Council)

Providing financial support to a north Queensland community to host an event that drives strong economic and social outcomes for the region.

#### Sponsorship and support

#### 2023 Long Drive for Drought

Supporting Queensland farmers through, and in partnership with, Drought Angels, and engaging key stakeholders in the outback, Queensland councils and for the first time ever New South Wales councils, this event supports rural and remote communities, councils, farmers and the regional towns and communities the convoy visits.

#### Sponsorship

## 2022 Beat the Heat (Cloncurry Shire Council)

The festival aims to bring the community together to celebrate Cloncurry and boost the local economy by attract tourists and keeping them in the region for longer.

#### Sponsorship



2022 Legends of League Norfolk Island (Norfolk Island Regional Council)

This community-based event positively impacts to the local community, specifically economic growth, health and wellbeing, promoting a First Nations community, aiding children and youth adolescence and promoting the work of local government.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Northern Peninsular Mud Rally and Pig Hunt (Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council)

This event brings the community together and draws visitors to the Cape York
Peninsula. Hunting is an integral and essential part of life in the Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) and this event is an opportunity to reflect, respect and celebrate this culture. The Pig Hunt puts hunter against hunter whilst caring for country by reducing feral pigs and their detrimental impact on our environment.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Dirt n Dust Festival (McKinlay Regional Council)

The festival supports tourism and provides financial stimulus in the region.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Festival of Outback Skies (Flinders Regional Council)

The festival is designed to attract tourists to the region, bring the community together and embrace the essence of the outback.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Dinner En Rouge (Redland City Council)

Redland City Council's annual fundraiser to raise awareness and funds to help prevent domestic and family violence.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Santos GLNG Mayors Ball (Gladstone Regional Council)

To raise funds for the Zonta Club of
Gladstone, Quoin Island Turtle Rehabilitation
Centre (Wildlife Environment Conservative
Foundation) and the Gladstone Animal
Rescue Group. All proceeds from the Ball are
equally distributed between the beneficiaries.

#### Sponsorship



2023 Santos GLNG Mayors Ball (Gladstone Regional Council)

Peak Services offers a yearly \$10,000 bursary to an innovative council in honour of the late Winton Shire Mayor, Graham 'Butch' Lenton. The Peak Services Butch Lenton Award acknowledges the use of innovation in regional, remote and First Nations councils to overcome challenges and provide benefit to the community.

#### Industry Development Fund

The Local Buy Industry Development Fund (IDF) was established in 2007 with the aim of benefitting local government in Queensland by providing financial assistance towards improving technology transformation and business processes using technology. The IDF has evolved with a forward focus being to fund macro-themed projects that benefit local government broadly, or could be scaled to benefit broadly, whilst also continuing to support micro projects that satisfy the criteria and benefit individual councils. Local Buy and Telstra's primary aim through the IDF continues to support technology innovation that helps local government meet community needs.

Since its establishment,
the fund has made \$5.8
million worth of investment
into local Queensland
communities via projects
such as:

Cybersecurity

Infrastructure upgrades

Smart technology – including Internet of Things (IoT), road and flood monitoring cameras, CCTVs and special insights

Network upgrade and expansion

Remote networking and transmitting

Photo by Tim Cox, Communications Advisor

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Disaster recovery technology



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