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ARMED AND READY FOR A NEW TERM

AS THIS TERM OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT DRAWS TO AN END, IT'S WORTH CASTING OUR MINDS BACK OVER THE PRECEDING FOUR YEARS AND HOW IT'S CHANGED.

The April 2012 council election was like none before. First, we had our election date pushed back by a month to accommodate an early State poll that delivered a momentous landslide victory to the LNP. Then, four weeks later, we witnessed the biggest clean-out of mayors and councillors since WWII.

It was a tumultuous start to our four-year term.

Whatever you thought of the Newman Government, they burst into power and immediately disrupted the status quo with a succession of austerity measures.

The first city-based LNP government in a century, their reforms touched every element of council business.

In all, the LGAQ responded to 367 policy papers or legislative reforms during their short but historic period of office.

Then, in late 2012, we saw the demise of the Rudd/Gillard/Rudd Government and the election of the Abbott Coalition Government, but not before then PM Kevin Rudd scuttled, for the sake of one week, an historic opportunity to recognise local government in the Australian Constitution via referendum. It's an absolute shame.

But the political world continued to spin on its axis and, at the start of last year, a minority State Labor Government was elected in Queensland, ushering in more significant change.

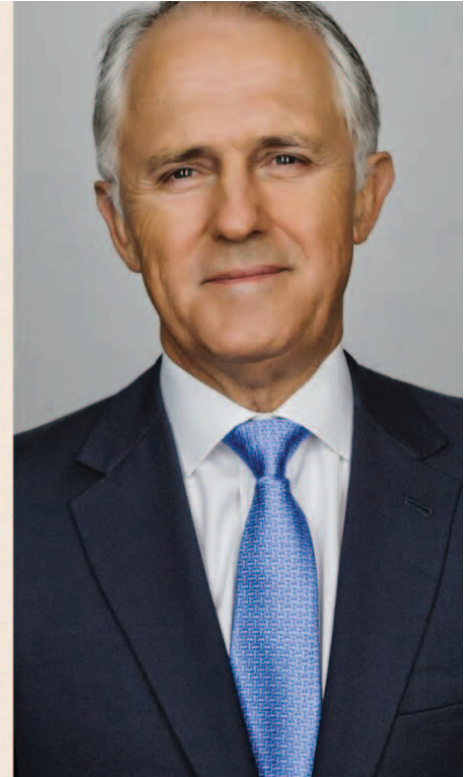
Nine months later, we witnessed the end of Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the emergence of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull. It's been a veritable political roller coaster ride at the state and federal levels.

It's been a more subdued quadrennium within our ranks.

Rates have risen much more moderately,



Anastacia Palaszczuk
and Malcolm Turnbull



debt accumulation continued but at a much slower rate, and councils trimmed 4000 - almost 12 per cent - of its total workforce.

The one exception to that pattern of constraint and sobriety is the high and unacceptable CEO turnover rate within our ranks, a problem we are working on with the LGMA.

As we go to the polls, the *LGAQ Community Attitude Survey* shows nothing of the political angst that existed towards elected members just four years ago.

It looks normal to us, but that can change in a flash and, while the State referendum on four-year terms has bipartisan political support, who knows what impact it will have in our own polls.

It's fair to say collectively we have righted the ship this term, certainly in the eyes of our communities.

As we go to print, some 14 of our mayoral colleagues are signing off to embark on the next chapter of their lives, as I too have done

after 19 years as a councillor and just short of what will be four years as your president.

As I indicated at Annual Conference last year in Toowoomba, as the LGAQ is a corporation I will remain at the helm until mid-year when a new policy executive and acting president take over the reins at LG House.

Our successors as mayors and councillors will have the final say on who the president is for the 2016-20 quadrennium at next year's Annual Conference on the Gold Coast.

It's been a huge four years for all of us in local government.

Thank you all for your significant and valued contributions in your communities, on your councils, in regional organisations and through your involvement with the LGAQ.

It's greatly appreciated.

Finally, equal best wishes to those who, like me, are not contesting the elections and to those dedicated members vying for another term on March 19. ◀



DUCKS IN A ROW

AS THE NEW YEAR STARTS, THE LGAQ HAS DONE ALL WITHIN ITS POWERS TO PREPARE TO SERVE THE NEW CADRE OF ELECTED MEMBERS WHO COME INTO OFFICE ON MARCH 19.



*The upcoming elections will be the dawn of a new term
Photo courtesy The City of Gold Coast*

We are ready. Our ducks are in a row. We've got a 2020 vision.

A great deal of thought has gone into refreshing and updating the Councillor and Mayoral handbooks and LGAQ personalised induction packs that are both unique to the LGAQ.

Our Elected Member induction program is all sorted for April and May and letters have been sent to CEOs outlining places, dates and times of these fantastic events.

The Biennial Civic Leaders Summit date and venue has been set for Royal Pines on the Gold Coast for July 13-15. Make sure you book this unique offering in your diaries.

We are also geared up to hold the LGAQ Policy Executive elections through April and May so a new policy executive, elected by member councils, can take office from late June 2016.

Of course, with president Margaret de Wit retiring from council office we will also be electing a new, permanent president at this year's Annual Conference to serve through to 2020.

Our Advocacy Plan was launched late last year and we are already vigorously prosecuting that agenda with state ministers and their advisors.

Since the State Cabinet shake-up late last year, the LGAQ has met all the new ministers including our new Assistant Minister Jennifer Howard and the new or reshuffled Directors-General.

At a deeper level, your association has wrapped up its five-yearly, deep-dive review "Reimagining the LGAQ".

Under the Better Councils, Better Communities banner, the Association will refocus all its activities during the next council quadrennium around three themes: our assets, our people, and our story. These themes encompass the things you have told us are important to you and your community during in-depth discussions in the last few months of 2015 - financial sustainability, asset management, workforce planning and productivity, and community engagement.

Work is also well advanced via external review by KPMG and Corrs Westgarth

Chambers on the future strategic direction and legal shape of the LGAQ-owned entities. It is due for final resolution by Easter this year.

In short, we've had a spring cleaning at LG House; we're in great shape and are ready to serve you, our members, during the next four years.

As this will be my last editorial prior to the forthcoming elections, I want to genuinely thank those elected members who are retiring and wish you well for the future.

For those intrepid folk stumping up again to the electoral lottery on March 19, the best of luck to you. ◀



COUNCILS SOLDIER ON, DESPITE NATURE'S WRATH

WHETHER IT BE DROUGHTS OR FLOODING RAINS, THE OPTIMISM AND DEDICATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS TO COPE WITH WHATEVER IS THROWN AT THEM IS SOMETHING I EXPERIENCED FIRST-HAND WHEN I VISITED NORTH-WEST QUEENSLAND IN JANUARY.

It really brought home to me once again the importance of this grassroots level of government, and how vital it is for all levels of government to work together to deliver the best outcomes for all Queenslanders – wherever they live in this vast and varied state of ours.

At 1.7 million square kilometres – nearly seven times the size of the British Isles – we find ourselves in the unusual position of having almost one-third of Queensland impacted by droughts and flooding at the same time.

So while more than 80 per cent of the state was drought-declared, 24 councils across Queensland were eligible in mid-January to receive assistance under the joint Federal/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements to either prepare or re-build following floods.

The Palaszczuk Government will continue to lobby the Federal Government to ensure we secure the best funding deals possible for Queensland councils through the NDRRA.

My trip to Mt Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek, Karumba, Normanton and Burketown in the first week of January was to inspect the train derailment on the Mt Isa-Townsville railway line, and tour the flood damage.

What a contrast to the landscape I experienced at last year's Bush Councils Convention in St George, and the Bush Forum in Longreach, where the crippling drought topped the agenda.

It shows resilience is the name of the game, and that's why our government



Deputy Premier and Local Government Minister Jackie Trad inspected the train derailment on the Mt Isa-Townsville railway line during a tour of flood-stricken northwest Queensland in January.

“This program will help local governments fund projects that will reduce the impact of floods, cyclones, bushfires and storm surges, as well as boost business and job opportunities.”

made an election commitment to better protect vulnerable communities from the impacts of natural disasters through establishing the \$40 million Community Resilience Fund.

This program will help local governments fund projects that will reduce the impact of floods, cyclones, bushfires and storm surges, as well as boost business and job opportunities.

My regional tour of north-west Queensland also gave me the opportunity to meet with mayors and councillors and, for some, to farewell them ahead of the upcoming March elections.

It takes a special dedication to serve on

council and represent their communities in these huge local government areas, and I would like to pay tribute to those who are retiring at the upcoming local government election for their hard work, long hours and vast distances they have travelled to make their communities better, safer, stronger.

Thank you, on behalf of the people of Queensland, for your service.

The March polls will usher in a new wave of mayors and councillors, and I look forward to forming strong bonds and continuing our productive dialogue to deliver the good decisions that affect Queenslanders on a daily basis – whatever the weather throws at us. ◀



JACKIE TRAD / DEPUTY PREMIER, MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT

GUEST SPEAKER

COMMISSION IN POLL POSITION

THIS COMING MARCH WILL SEE THE SECOND QUADRENNIAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF THE *LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT 2011* AND MY FIRST AS COMMISSIONER.

The importance and scale of a local government election is immense and this project has seen unprecedented co-operation between Queensland local governments and the Electoral Commission Queensland, focused on successful promotion of this important division of government, cost reduction and technological advancements.

From Aurukun through to Yarrabah, there are 77 councils that form the vital third tier of government in Queensland.

The community engagement spearheaded solely through local councils is the bedrock of political activity in Queensland and the importance of local governments' role in the community cannot be overstated.

From the development and planning of a community through to the services relied upon by all Queenslanders, local councils are the most present and relevant level of Australian government.

The scale of Queensland council and mayoral elections is considerable, and they present a logistical challenge equal to, and arguably more significant than, a state general election.

The majority of councils will have multiple polling booths that must be supplied with equipment such as privacy screens, ballots boxes, electoral rolls and ballot papers.

To order, store, mobilise and track these deliveries is an enormous task.

The Commission is constantly looking for ways to innovate and provide a better electoral service to Queensland.

At this election we will be introducing a number of new initiatives including the

The cornerstone of a successful local election is the partnerships between councils and the Commission.

Electronic Lookup and Mark Off Device (ELMO) and ballot paper scanning.

The ELMO device is a tablet-based electoral roll system designed to reduce our reliance on paper certified lists.

Following a successful trial during the state general election, ELMO will be rolled out in its full capacity for the March polls.

At previous elections counting of "first past the post" ballots was an exacting, onerous process requiring significant staffing and oversight.

Through consultation with individual councils, new ballot paper scanning machines will be trialled in Toowoomba, Mackay, Noosa, Gladstone, Lockyer and Livingstone.

This automated process tallies votes for each candidate and delivers accurate and auditable results much faster than by hand.

We hope these exciting initiatives will benefit the electors, councils and the Commission by reducing voter processing time and administration expenses.

Furthermore, these systems will add an extra layer of security over individual elector's details and election results to bolster community confidence in the electoral system.

I must also remind candidates neither the Commission nor the Queensland Police Service will tolerate bad behaviour at polling booths.

Queenslanders have the expectation

they will be able to attend an election without feeling intimidated or harassed by canvassers or supporters, and their passage will not be obstructed by signage or paraphernalia.

I ask candidates remind their supporters to obey both the directions of polling booth officials and the advertising laws of their local government authority.

Finally, I would like to thank the representatives of the councils who have been generous with their time through the consultation and planning process.

These efforts have assisted the Commission to prepare for a successful election through cost saving ventures such as polling booth planning and sharing of council premises for returning officer accommodation.

Jointly through co-operation with my staff, local councils have contributed to the Queensland Government's objective of increasing integrity and accountability in government through the delivery of an open, accountable and accessible electoral service for all Queenslanders. ◀



WALTER VAN DER MERWE / ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER



LEAVING ON GOOD TERMS

MARCH 19 MARKS THE END OF AN ERA FOR SOME OF QUEENSLAND'S MOST RESPECTED MAYORS. FIVE RETIRING LEADERS REFLECT ON THEIR TIME AT THE TOP OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THEIR PLANS FOR LIFE AFTER PUBLIC OFFICE.



THEY'LL SIGN OFF FROM PUBLIC LIFE AND BEGIN A NEW CHAPTER OF THEIR LIVES.
SOME PLAN TRAVEL, OTHERS WILL DOTE ON THEIR FAMILIES BUT ALL RETIRING
MAYORS WILL LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES.



LOGAN CITY MAYOR PAM PARKER

Logan City Mayor Pam Parker has never seen herself as merely a politician. Nor has she ever viewed her community as simply a base from which to gain rates.

Rather, she has adopted the approach "a caring leader will walk in other people's shoes".

When she relinquishes the reins, she'll have proud memories of not just her achievements as mayor, but also her leadership in times of grief and turmoil.

"One of the most emotional challenges was the housefire in 2010 when 11 members from the one family tragically died," says Cr Parker, who became Logan's first female mayor in 2008.

"The outpouring of grief and care by the community to this family is something I will never forget.

"Also the 2013 floods in the south-west of Logan brought out the lioness - the

protector in me - demanding rapid responses to community needs."

A deeply distressed woman who had been rendered homeless and was being ignored by the state department and a previous MP's office credited Cr Parker for saving her life.

"I will never forget her saying to me, 'I'm alive today because you cared when no one else did'," Cr Parker says.

She hopes to be remembered as a "true people's mayor" who fought relentlessly to build a brighter future for her city by creating strong foundations for the next council administration.

"My highlights were being part of a team that oversaw successful boundary reform, transformed our development approval operations to be the best in the state and, more recently, implemented our online environmental offset estimator," Cr Parker says.

"In early 2016 we will be launching our infrastructure charges estimator, creating new age planning practices in Logan.

"Promoting Logan like there is no tomorrow is something I thrived on and I loved initiating the City of Choice Summit, which will bring about generational change for the community of Logan."

She said she never took her job for granted.

"I want to say thank you to the people of Logan for the true privilege of being your mayor for the past eight years and a councillor for the 11 years prior," Cr Parker says.

Despite retiring from local government, there'll be little time for leisure.

"I have been approached to be on a couple of boards and I want to engage the speaking circuit and empower women with self-belief for leadership," she says.



MT ISA MAYOR TONY MCGRADY

Once he wraps up an accomplished 43-year career in state and local government, Tony McGrady has vowed to be a "nuisance" - but only to family.

"Our son's wife is expecting our first grandchild in March, so I plan to be an interfering grandfather, be a nuisance and spoil the baby," the Mt Isa mayor says.

"I will not be interfering with the next council. I will not be writing letters to the local paper."

His list of achievements as mayor is long, but his proudest are those that have had a direct impact on his community, including establishing a "cancer house" in Mt Isa where people with cancer and

support groups can meet and "take their journey to healing", helping start the Annual Mt Isa Music Festival, which attracts high-calibre acts such as Troy Cassar-Daly, The Wolverines, Kasey Chambers and Beccy Cole, and re-opening the old Lions Youth Camp on the banks of Lake Moondarra.

Cr McGrady was voted in to Mt Isa City Council in 1973, becoming mayor in 1985.

In 1989, he was elected State Member for Mt Isa. He remained an MP for 17 years, during which time he held several ministerial positions and the role of speaker, before retiring from state politics. But he retained his desire to serve Mt Isa

and in 2012, successfully stood for mayor of the mining city again.

He says his roles in public office differed substantially.

"As mayor, you are in direct contact with your community - you are very aware of almost every issue in your community and the buck stops with you because in reality you do, in most cases, have the ability to make changes," Cr McGrady says.

In addition to doting on his growing family, he is looking forward to having more time for leisure and travel.

"That cruise ship berth at Hamilton Wharf looks very attractive to me," he says.



BALONNE SHIRE MAYOR DONNA STEWART

"Velvet pants, a cream ruffled top and ballet slippers – before they came back into fashion," recalls the state's best-dressed mayor of her outfit 34 years ago on her first day in local government.

And with a style of governance as highly regarded as her style of fashion, the mayor will certainly not only be remembered for her impeccable dress sense.

The time-honoured mayor remembers the very reason she decided to run for local government all those years ago.

"I was a 31-year-old mother who'd educated my children as much as I could from our family farm in the Maranoa Region

before I had to start driving them in to town to school," she said.

"Jack Brabham was what they called me. The kids said I'd do more 360s on that old dreadful dirt road than the racing legend himself.

"But, in all seriousness, I knew something needed to be done about those roads."

At a time where local government was all about the three Rs – rates, roads and rubbish – it was the second that drew her in.

Cr Stewart has witnessed many great achievements for the region in her time, but considers the establishment of the grain receivable centre as one of the greatest.

"I used to see the farmers driving such long distances to deliver their grain and thought that was a bit silly, so I set a goal to have one set up in the region," she said.

"My heart still fills with pride when I drive past and see the piles of grain.

"I remember when it opened the Grain Corp rep said I'd had to have been the most persistent woman he'd ever met, because when he'd heard about the idea he never thought it would happen."

She says it's time to hang up the boots, go back to the farm to her "long-suffering husband and to do and I please with my time."



CENTRAL HIGHLANDS MAYOR PETER MAGUIRE

By the time mayor Peter Maguire retires, he'll have dedicated 28 years of his life to local government.

"It's been a good ride, but it's time to pull up stumps," the Central Highlands stalwart says.

Affectionately known as "Maggot", he admits he's sad about stepping down as mayor – a job he's held for 16 consecutive years – but trips to Fiji and the Panama Canal with his wife will help the transition. He'll be 58 – "too early for retirement" – so he'll busy himself with his business interests, which include a travel agency.

Cr Maguire was elected councillor for the former Emerald Shire in 1988. Twelve years later, he became mayor.

When the State Government forced councils across Queensland to amalgamate in 2008, Emerald joined the Central Highlands Region.

Suddenly Cr Maguire was mayor of a super council that serviced 33,000 people, tasked with guiding it through a costly and highly stressful merger.

"The first 12 months cost us \$6.2 million," he says.

He'll leave the council in good stead; proposed meatworks and inland ports and several other projects promise prosperity for the region.

Cr Maguire says his fondest memories all involve his constituents and colleagues.

"I enjoy working with people and working with wonderful staff and councillors," he says.

"There are so many things you can achieve if you work as a community.

"We are the level of government that's closest to the people and we're the ones who can have the most impact on people."



LOGAN CITY COUNCILLOR AND FORMER MAYOR GRAHAM ABLE

Next year, Logan City Councillor Graham Able will be able to fulfil one of the most important promises he has ever made – to take his wife to the United States.

Cr Able, who served as the city's mayor from 2006-2008, will turn 65, an age he feels is ideal for retiring despite still having the energy to walk the streets and press the flesh with his constituents.

"I've loved every moment of it," he says of

his 31-year career in local government.

After building up Logan's first cleaning business, he ran for council in 1985.

"I only planned to do one term," Cr Able says.

At the time, Logan's population was 68,000 (it's now 312,000) and the city had a dubious reputation.

But helping the city develop fuelled Cr Able's desire to continue serving.

He's particularly proud of the Berrinba Wetlands, Logan Gardens, Tygum Lagoon and the Logan Artists' Association, which was funded by his divisional allowance.

"When I started, we only had one library; now we've got seven," he says.

The next chapter of his life involves travel and "reinventing a new me", he says.

"I promised my wife I would take her to America, so I will," Cr Able says.

COUNCIL NEWS FEED

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS HOUSE PRICE FACTORS

Movements in the share market, disposable family income and the unemployment rate have a strong influence on house and unit prices in South-East Queensland, according to a new report on what factors drive the region's housing market.

The *Economic Analysis of SEQ Dwelling Prices* report, by economic consultants AEC Group and using Corelogic RP data, also confirms the biggest influence on the supply of housing is prices rather than government policy.

It insists the factors influencing South-East Queensland's housing market are different than those for the rest of Australia in that increases in the supply of housing did not necessarily lead to decreases in housing prices.

Local Government Association of Queensland chief executive Greg Hallam said the AEC Group analysis was the first in-depth economic study of what factors influenced the demand for and supply of housing in South-East Queensland.

"It's an enormously valuable report because it shows the SEQ market is unique. You cannot assume the factors driving prices elsewhere in Australia will apply to this region," he said.

"The report also underlines the spuriousness of claims there is an undersupply of housing in South-East



Queensland. In fact, the report states stocks may be in oversupply, thereby suppressing house prices."

He said one of the most interesting findings in the report was factors affecting housing demand varied from one council area to another.

"For example, increases in disposable income had a strong influence on house prices in Logan and Ipswich but in Brisbane

the big factor affecting house prices is the home loan rate," he said.

"When it comes to prices for residential units, on the Gold Coast, home loan rates, real disposable income and the unemployment rate are the big influencers, while on the Sunshine Coast, movements in the All Ordinaries Index are significant."

A copy of the report is available at www.lgaq.asn.au. ◀

BRISBANE TO HOST PURCHASING CONFERENCE

Purchasing executives from across Queensland will descend on Brisbane in March for the 2016 Government Procurement and Fleet Conference.

The event, which has been running for the past six years, will feature expert speakers from the public and private sectors.

Delegates will be able to share new ideas and network with local and

State Government officers and entities involved in making decisions about purchasing.

The conference will be held at the Royal International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Brisbane on March 14-16.

For more information, visit localbuy.net.au or contact Simone Sakzewski on 3000 2272 or ssakzewski@localbuy.net.au. ◀

44%
OF COUNCILS
HAVE A
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VERSION**
OF THEIR WEBSITE



DISASTER DATA JUST A CLICK AWAY

Sunshine Coast Council's Disaster Hub website has claimed more accolades for innovation, this time at the Australian Information Industry Association (AIIA) iAwards.

Disaster Hub has already been recognised with an e-Government Award, while the council's information technology staff member Ann Yardley was awarded ICT Professional of the Year, a premier Federal Government award.

"Disaster Hub provides real-time information for the public, media and external agencies before, during and after disaster events," Sunshine Coast Mayor Mark Jamieson said.

"People can visit Disaster Hub for all the information they need to prepare their homes and businesses, and then stay up-to-date with important information such as road closures, weather warnings, preparedness advice and breaking news.

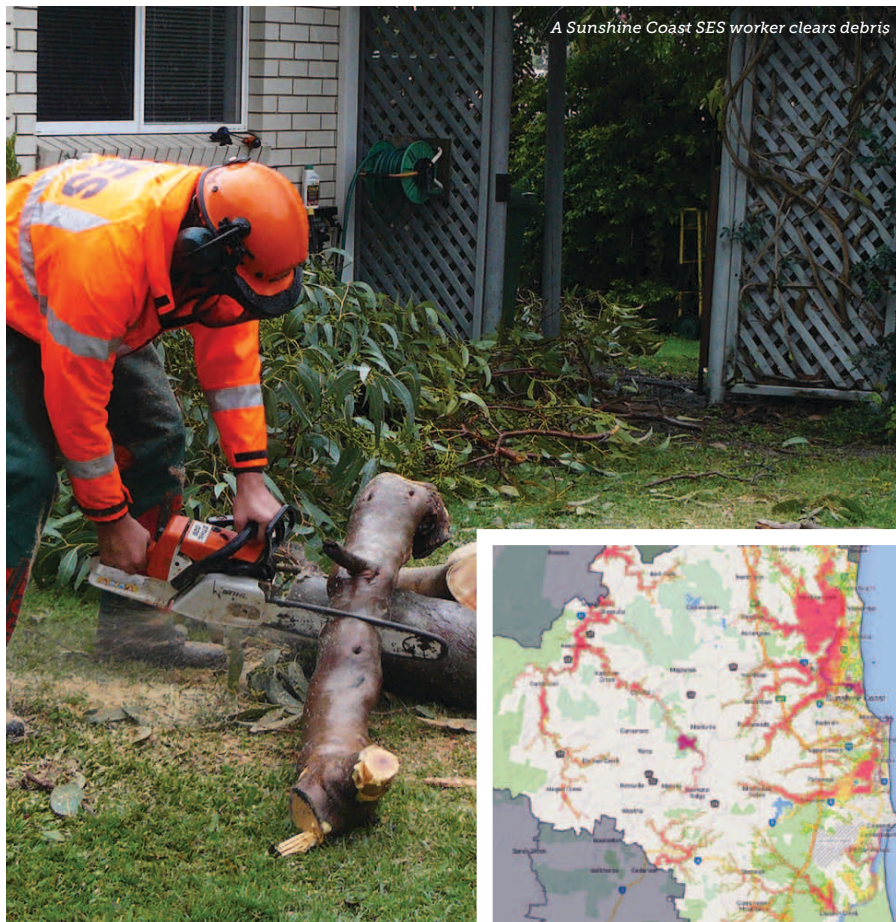
"It's also a critical tool for our Local Disaster Co-ordination Centre during all types of disasters.

"It allows us to gather intelligence and help make decisions very quickly during emergencies and disasters.

"It uses geospatial mapping technology to identify risks and hazards in any given location, providing a damage impact assessment for emergency services during events.

"It's a great asset for our disaster operations and it contributes significantly towards the safety of our community."

Mayor Jamieson said the council tested new risk mapping functionality during its recent annual disaster exercise Exercise Firestorm,



A Sunshine Coast SES worker clears debris

which involved Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Local Disaster Management Group.

"Disaster Hub worked with fire mapping technology to determine evacuation

strategies, emergency communications and the actions required to keep our community safe during a bush fire event – and we received great feedback from all involved," he said. ◀

TORRES SHIRE CEO TO HELP GUIDE RECOGNITION DISCUSSION

Torres Shire Council chief executive officer Dalassa Yorkston has been appointed to the recently established Referendum Council on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced Ms Yorkston's inclusion in the 16-person group to guide the engagement process to ensure all Australians can have their say on recognition of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander people in the constitution.

The Referendum Council will guide the national discussion about recognition and employ both digital and traditional communications to engage the public, as well as a concurrent series of indigenous-designed-and-led consultation activities.

Ms Yorkston joins prominent Australians including Noel Pearson, Amanda Vanstone, Dr Galarrwuy Yunupingu and Professor Patrick Dodson on the council. ◀



Dalassa Yorkston

NEW APPOINTMENT TIGHTENS LOCAL AND STATE TIES

New Assistant Minister for Local Government Jennifer Howard has vowed to further strengthen the relationship between councils and the state.

The Ipswich MP made the commitment when she met with the Local Government Association of Queensland after being appointed to the position in December last year.

LGAQ president Margaret de Wit said Ms Howard would provide valuable support to Local Government Minister and Deputy Premier Jackie Trad, who had established a productive rapport with the sector in the past 12 months.

A former business owner, Ms Howard has been an active member of school P&Cs, sporting clubs and other community groups in Ipswich, where she has lived for more than 30 years.

In 2005, she was instrumental in setting up the Ipswich Women's Development Network, a not-for-profit organisation that provides an annual scholarship to a local female student at USQ's Ipswich campus. ◀



Did you know

90 per cent of councils use their websites to advertise vacant jobs



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CUTTING EDGE PRECINCT PRESERVES RICH PAST



(Left to right): Cr Dave McMahon, Cr Rick McDougall, Cr Joan White, Cr Rick Kearney, Cr Lori Mackay and Cr Robert Mackenzie listen on as Mayor Graeme Scheu shares the history of the Goondiwindi Regional Civic Centre

The final stage of the Goondiwindi Regional Civic Centre redevelopment will be finished within months, marking a transformation that modernises the facility while retaining its rich history.

Mayor Graeme Scheu officially reopened the complex in December, giving the public an overview of the precinct that comprises two cinemas, an art space, a visitors' information centre, a modern library and the council's customer service centre.

The centre also contains the Border Rivers Chamber of Commerce, the Family History Group and the Gunsynd Museum.

"A multipurpose complex like this was the only way a town like Goondiwindi would ever be able to afford all of the sections included in the Civic Centre," Cr Scheu said.

The final stage of the \$5 million redevelopment is expected to be completed by May, with the former library being converted to council administration offices and chambers.

"Finally council staff in Goondiwindi will all be under one roof, something that will produce enormous work morale and benefits," Cr Scheu said.

The centre boasts state-of-the-art features such as new flooring, digital projection equipment and retractable cinema screens to allow live performances on the stage.

Cr Scheu said the precinct was also designed to ensure its heritage was preserved.

"The complex design is a wonderful mixture of old and new and the original boardroom has been totally refurbished back to the original state including the impressive cypress floors," he said. ◀



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SOMERSET BATS UP TO MANAGE PESKY PROBLEM



The bat colony at Kilcoy on fly-out



Somerset Regional Council Mayor Graeme Lehmann and Australian Bat Clinic director Trish Wimberley inspect the Linville bat colony

More than 1.5 million bats have mobbed the Somerset region, forcing the council to investigate long-term legal measures to manage the critters.

Mayor Graeme Lehmann said flying foxes were causing distress among residents of Kilcoy, Esk and Lowood but the council was powerless to provide an immediate remedy because of state and federal legislation.

"The community expectation is council should sort out this issue and move the bats on, and while council would love to provide immediate action, the bats are not going to leave our community overnight," Cr Lehmann said.

"What we have done is consulted with a bat expert to investigate the colonies and to find out if council can, under the State Government-imposed flying fox management options, do anything to move them on."

The roosts had populations of little red flying foxes, black flying foxes and the federally-protected grey-headed species.

In December, the council met with the Australian Bat Clinic's director Trish Wimberley to inspect the colonies.

"Council has been advised we are unable to do anything at any of the bat colony sites in Somerset due to their breeding cycle," Cr Lehmann said.

"Many of the bats are pregnant or rearing dependent young and therefore cannot be moved on or have their roosts disturbed."

Ms Wimberley said the explosion in bat numbers was a direct result of weather events.

"What is happening is an abnormal occurrence and it is because of the drought and fires out west that they (bats) are

changing their patterns," Ms Wimberley said.

"They are changing their flight paths and storing their reserves before they make the big hike north."

Cr Lehmann said the council was exploring options to manage future colonies while abiding by government legislation.

"Council is sourcing quotes to remove vegetation at these sites which may potentially include roost modification and creating a buffer zone between existing colonies and residential properties," he said.

"I sympathise with residents and understand this is a difficult time for them, particularly those that are directly impacted by the odour and noise coming from these colonies, however, I ask them to be patient and trust the experts and hopefully they will move on soon." ◀

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mvd02032

REVIVAL FOR MACKAY'S CITY CENTRE

(Below and right) Mackay's city centre is undergoing a soul revival



Mackay has begun the journey of redefining the purpose of its city centre with the completion of an \$18 million revitalisation project.

The project was funded by the Federal Government and Mackay Regional Council on a 50-50 basis.

Its official opening was a sight to behold as Australia's first smart phone interactive public artwork was unveiled.

Cane Fire, created by Niche Arts, highlights the sugar industry, which has been the backbone of the Mackay economy for more than 140 years, and drew a huge crowd as it was activated.

Visitors to the city centre can use wireless and smart phone technology to interact with the sculpture, located on the Victoria and Wood streets roundabout, to create their own work of art with light and mist.

"The project in the city centre core was completed in four stages during a 12-month period and council had a full-time engagement officer working with local businesses to ensure they were engaged and informed throughout the project," Mayor Deirdre Comerford said.

To help businesses through the construction phase, council waived outdoor dining fees, trade waste fees and provided free off-street parking.

"What I am most proud of is the number of property owners who participated in a Façade Improvement Scheme initiated by council," Cr Comerford said.

"This has greatly improved the overall visual amenity of our city centre as council worked on the public realm."

As part of the City Centre Revitalisation Project, the heritage-listed former Pioneer Shire Council building in Wood Street was fully restored along with the adjacent parkland. This restoration has already won awards.

A local businessman has also gifted the council a major building and associated carpark right in the middle of the project site.

The council has welcomed the gift and is presently renovating the top floor into a state-of-the-art, inner-city library.

The ground floor will remain tenanted, providing an ongoing income stream for council.

"We believe libraries are great foot traffic generators and will be a wonderful addition to add life to the new City Centre," Cr Comerford said.

"The library we are creating is high-tech and modern, aimed at drawing young people into the city library.

"It is also pleasing to see a number of empty buildings being sold as new owners seize the opportunity to now do business in the reactivated City Centre." ◀

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LGAQ BOOSTS FLEXIBLE TRAINING OPTIONS

Queensland's peak local government body has increased its investment in online training to help elected members and council executives upskill while juggling ever-increasing demands.

Total Solutions, the training arm of Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), has appointed a full-time e-learning developer to create custom educational products.

The company has also launched two new online programs, Authorised Persons and Local Government Worker, both of which are highly requested by councils.

Total Solutions manager Elizabeth West said online learning was just as viable as instructor-led training had been in the past, achieving excellent results in shorter timeframes in a more cost-effective manner.

"Councils can now pre-purchase these courses bundles and have them on-hand when required," she said.

"These two programs are the first online programs developed through our new online course development venture.

"We believe our investment in this area will alleviate some of the budgetary



pressures and time constraints local government agencies contend with when training staff."

Total Solutions has also established partnerships with a prominent online training provider, e3 Learning, and access to its range of programs including a library of courses in the areas of compliance, human resources management, management foundations and information technology.

"The online courses can also be managed through a Learning Management System (LMS) in the E3 range," Ms West said.

"At LGAQ, we have decided to focus on investing in e-learning products to complement our traditional instructor-led local government specific training programs and we hope online training will give more local government employees the opportunity to receive training." ◀

53 PER CENT OF COUNCILS ARE EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF USING DRONES



THE PITFALLS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Councils were given a timely reminder of the pitfalls they face when undertaking disciplinary action against employees in a recent decision of the Queensland Industrial Court.

The Industrial Court found that the provisions in the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation) requiring an employee to be given notice of the grounds for disciplinary action and the opportunity to respond were mandatory. As a result, the summary termination of an employee without carrying out a formal disciplinary process in compliance with the Regulation was found invalid.

Unlike private employers, councils are governed by a formal legislative framework that prescribes a set process for carrying out disciplinary action. That process is set out in Division 1, Part 3, Chapter 8 of the Regulation.

Section 279 of the Regulation prescribes the circumstances in which the chief executive officer may take disciplinary action.

Disciplinary action can be taken if the chief executive officer is satisfied that the employee has:

- failed to perform their responsibilities under the Act; or
- failed to perform their responsibilities under the Act in accordance with local government principles; or
- taken action under the Act in a way that is not consistent with the local government principles.

The disciplinary action must be conducted in accordance with section 283 of the Regulation. This requires written notice to be given to the employee of:

- the disciplinary action to be taken;
- the grounds on which the disciplinary action is taken;
- the particulars of conduct claimed to support the grounds; and
- the employee to be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the information contained in the written notice.

If the above requirements are not met, any disciplinary action taken is likely to be rendered invalid!

If you are dealing with a disciplinary matter it is important to check that the requirements of the Regulation are being met. ◀

SUZANNE WISHART /
TOTAL SOLUTIONS



NEW FLEET CONTRACTS DRIVE DOWN COSTS

Since Local Buy launched two new fleet contracts, securing major manufacturers of vehicles and machinery, significant savings have been achieved for local government clients.

The company's new plant machinery arrangement has nine separate equipment categories including earthmoving (motor graders, excavators and loaders), material handling (forklifts and telehandlers) and road compaction (rollers and compaction equipment).

Tractors and mowers, elevated work platforms, ATVs and work utilities, compressors/generators and a broad range of small engine machines are also available to councils through this arrangement.

Local Buy has also launched its specialised trucks and bodies contract nationally, supplying truck bodies in more than a dozen different categories.

Leading manufacturers in Queensland have been through a rigorous tender and evaluation processes and have been appointed to this arrangement, which predominantly covers refuse/compactor trucks, street sweepers and road maintenance vehicles.

Service bodies for trucks and utilities, tipplers, tankers and trailers, along with other builds on both new trucks, light commercial vehicles, truck-mounted cranes and elevated work platforms are also covered.

There are also new categories for the supply of mobile libraries, construction site caravans and, in a first for Local Buy, wheelchair conversions for buses and motor vehicles.

Both of these fleet contracts are accessible via the VendorPanel and are open to local government buyers, State Government departments, government-owned corporations and not-for-profit organisations. ◀



**SHANE GRIMSTONE /
LOCAL BUY CONTRACT
AND RELATIONSHIP
MANAGER (FLEET)**

ERGON HEEDS LGAQ CONCERNS OVER TARIFF REFORM

Councils will need at least 12 months notice to investigate the impact of electricity tariff reforms and determine if they will need to install power factor correction equipment, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) says.

In representations to Ergon Energy and the Australian Electricity Regulator (AER), the LGAQ has called for sufficient lead time for affected councils to plan for pricing changes.

Ergon, under its Network Tariff Reform Program, initially proposed the introduction of kVA charging for sites that consume more than 100MWh of electricity (but less than 4GWh) per annum.

The reforms are aimed at establishing

fairer and more equitable pricing structures, but the LGAQ has argued local government will need a minimum of 12 months to investigate the impacts and, where necessary, purchase and install equipment to mitigate potential increases in power costs.

In its Tariff Structure Statement to the AER, Ergon listened to concerns raised by the LGAQ and declared its intentions to defer kVA charging until after the 2019-20 financial year.

The AER will publish its draft decision on the proposed reform by July this year and release its final decision in January 2017.

The LGAQ will continue making representations to the AER to minimise the tariff reform's impact on councils. ◀

SUCCESSFUL MISSION TO GET AQUATIC ATTRACTION



An artist's impression of the Mission Beach aquatic facility

More than 20 years of tireless lobbying has paid off for the Mission Beach community, which will finally get a top-class aquatic facility.

Cassowary Coast Mayor Bill Shannon said Federal funding of \$3.49 million towards the project was a milestone in efforts to build a drawcard facility in the coastal town.

"Mission Beach is the only community of its size in Queensland not to have a swimming pool - this project addresses that anomaly," Cr Shannon said.

"The project provides a long-awaited safe swimming facility in the Mission Beach community as well as delivering for tourism in Mission Beach and the Cassowary Coast region."

Plans for the Mission Beach aquatic facility include a six-lane 25m lap pool, a recreational lagoon-style pool and a hydrotherapy pool.

The project will have a rainforest theme, with the complex planned for the central location of MARCS Park with its rainforest backdrop. ◀

PROSPEROUS PARTNERSHIP TURNS ANOTHER PAGE

A partnership with Local Buy has netted the Queensland Professional Libraries Association (QPLA) a rebate of more than \$27,000.

The procurement firm, which is a subsidiary of the Local Government Association of Queensland, presented the QPLA with the rebate cheque at a conference dinner.

Local Buy has partnered with the QPLA since 2006 to provide procurement services to councils in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Each year, 25 per cent of the fees charged to councils under this arrangement is rebated to the QPLA, enabling the association to conduct professional development activities for public libraries.

Local Buy's category manager – commodities and consultancy services, Aileen Carrol, presented the 2014-15 rebate cheque of \$27,000 to QPLA president Marion Morgan-Bindon at the association's annual conference in Redcliffe.

During the conference, themed "Partners in Time", Paroo Shire claimed the 2015 Local Government Authority Award and the Delegates'

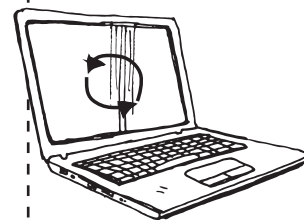
Local Buy's Aileen Carrol and QPLA president Marion Morgan-Bindon



Choice Award for its "Glamour Photo Good Behaviour Initiative", which helps local schools reward students who regularly attend school and display exemplary behaviour. ◀

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More than 80 per cent of councils are updating their websites at least weekly, with almost 50 per cent updating them daily



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MORNINGTON'S GLORY DAYS ARE NEAR

WORDS BY LAYLA KIRCHHOFF

IMAGES BY MORNINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL





MORNINGTON SHIRE STATISTICS

BRAD WILSON
MORNINGTON SHIRE
COUNCIL MAYOR



AREA ▼
1332sq km

POPULATION
**1322**

ASSETS ▼
\$123,911,476

STAFF
**96**



In the past year, Queensland's picturesque region spanning the Wellesley Island group has seen significant developments under the leadership of the Mornington Shire Council. These developments are setting precedents for the broader changes sweeping through the remote North Queensland region.

The Mornington Shire Council has undergone wide-ranging reforms that have addressed structure and efficiency, strategic planning, asset and financial management, community engagement and accountability, and corporate governance.

Added attention has also been given to how the intended direction of such restructuring interacts with general frameworks for political and community governance.

Engaging the island community and other local stakeholders in the planning process is central to the council's vision of moving the region forward, along with maintaining ongoing partnerships with other groups involved in implementation, especially sound intergovernmental relations in which the local voice is heard and respected.

The council serves its 1500 residents in many ways, including maintaining nearly 300km of roads; working with service providers on programs to help the community; lobbying for a recreational facility and children's playgrounds; preserving land to conserve the regions native bush land for the future; supporting community to lead an active, healthy life through educational events; advocating for a community hub (disaster/cyclone shelter); encouraging greater interaction and learning; providing domestic and commercial garbage collections each year; improving public access (transport via sea/air) while campaigning for an aquatic centre to improve overall social health.

Indeed it takes a unique, yet forward-thinking council to celebrate traditional culture while embracing economic

development for a sustaining future, but this is what really sets the region apart.

Mornington Shire Council shares values with the community, aiming to become one of Australia's most sustainable, progressive remote regions.

It's well on the way, winning countless national awards and staff scholarships in 2015 alone. In the past year, the council has significantly impacted on the capacity building of locals with close to 100 indigenous employees filling roles in management, technical, environment, building and others trades within Australia's most remote housing arm, as well the reestablishment of Mornington Island's rural fire brigade.

The Wellesley Island Archipelago will grow and develop and the council believes the community will need new services, infrastructure and job opportunities to grow with it so residents and visitors can access the services and facilities they need. Without this growth and investment, the region will likely lose the resources and expertise required to preserve its unsurpassed lifestyle, natural assets and rich biodiversity.

This is why the council is looking to the future and actively seeking state and federal support to provide the financial security it needs to make important decisions now to achieve prosperity and secure the lifestyle, arts and environment the people of Mornington Shire desire and deserve.

With the consistent new focus on the responsibility of engaging the community and other local stakeholders in formulating a strategic vision, Mornington Shire Council is implementing strategic plans and associated budgets to modify and sustain the organisation and region as a whole, including major works such as the Mornington Island Aerodrome upgrade and establishing the Jetty and Foreshore Business and Recreation Precinct – the only access to goods/supplies for

residents is by a once weekly barge.

Mornington Shire Mayor Bradley Wilson says Mornington Island had high levels of disadvantage and a limited economy based on community services and few commercial enterprises.

"There is a clear and acknowledged need to improve the social, cultural and economic life of Mornington Island residents by establishing new businesses, supporting existing organisations, and implementing special projects to improve access, infrastructure and opportunity," he says.

"Council is aiming to initiate life skill programs for residents that will encourage participation and support youth in leadership, education, cultural activities, employment and training opportunities.

"Another driving force is the goal of increasing community ownership of enterprises involved in the delivery of trade and social services across the community, thereby improving the local economy and creating opportunities for local people to take up local jobs.

"This can be seen in the newly established housing program model, where council has more than 80 local indigenous residents employed and benefitting."

And with the roles, responsibilities and authorities of remote local governments varying greatly across Australia, attitudes to the role of this extremely isolated council could fairly be described as ambivalent based on history.

"There is an apparent reluctance to strongly support major works that will see this community thrive," Cr Wilson says.

"Moving the region forward has been the central vision for one of Australia's most isolated councils since June 2014, yet in terms of following through with funding support and the Northern White Paper, governments are just sitting on their hands, emblematic that less is indeed provided.

MORNINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL

Mayor
Brad Wilson

Deputy Mayor
Sean Linden

Council
Cr Robyrta Felton
Cr Bobby Thompson
Cr Jimmy Wilson

The Mirndiyan Arts runway models who will be promoting exclusive Wellesley Island designs at the Melbourne Fashion Festival 2016
Photo courtesy GRACE LILLIAN LEE

"Therefore in Mornington's case, the council has taken the lead role, trying to invest in infrastructure projects to support economic growth and address disadvantage."

Striving for an improved level of economic activity and increased productivity will mean a greater increase in employment and a higher skilled workforce. Regardless of geographical locations, the capability for the council to deliver major projects will not only advance the township from extreme disadvantage and heavy reliance on service providers, but also will improve partnerships and lead to the stability and viability of the community.

"Local government has a role as an effective service deliverer, achieving outcomes and value for money," Cr Wilson says.

"This has to be balanced by engagement of an informed citizenry in collectively solving community problems, which can be complex in nature due to cultural sensitivities.

"We are trying to achieve greater emphasis on local people as well as physical and financial capital for the future."

Mornington Shire Council understands the importance of community governance and the process by which issues are collectively solved to meet a society's

needs, particularly when the residents are as isolated as this Gulf town.

The council has a growing expectation to act more strategically to reflect and represent the needs and aspirations of the community, and to ensure sound management of community assets.

These goals cannot be achieved unless the political arms of state and federal governments have the capacity to discharge their responsibilities effectively to support the local council to build that capacity and invest in Wellesley Island residents. ◀



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING YOUR COUNCIL AT THE MOMENT?



BRAD WILSON
MORNINGTON SHIRE
COUNCIL MAYOR

Councillors are aiming to identify new opportunities to improve processes and help set direction for innovation or improvement initiatives while communicating with stakeholders and facilitating (capacity building) workshops. This is a challenge, yet we are taking the lead on service delivery. Council is motivating and setting direction for the entire region and surrounds.



SEAN LINDEN
MORNINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
DEPUTY MAYOR

In a culturally rich region, famous for arts and creativity, council will connect the dots in order to secure quality of life and greater opportunities to shape a strong foundation for the future generations. Our remote council is building on a vision to move the region forward; to develop a local economy that will achieve sustainability.

Given we don't know what the future looks like, Mornington Shire Council believes organisations must work together to start creating opportunities and programs that cultivate skills within the region - allowing individuals to participate, learn and think strategically.



FRANK MILLS
MORNINGTON SHIRE
COUNCIL CEO

What's really great about this current council is we are all working towards a better future. The mayor, councillors, council staff and the community are coming together and building on the momentum of change that is sweeping through our community and the wider region. Council is taking a lead role in economic development, service delivery accountability and training and employment of local people while cultivating findings and insights into evaluations that will make Mornington Shire stronger. Ever mindful of the strength of culture for the people of the Wellesley Islands, we are working together, strategically influencing how the region grows and develops while tackling issues like unemployment and isolation.



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GLX Club Cab model shown with optional tray accessory

CHANGE OF NAME FOR LGSUPER



LGIAsuper chief executive officer David Todd

LGsuper, the fund for current and former Queensland local government employees and their spouses, will become LGIAsuper from February 8, 2016.

In a move that aims to bring greater clarity to the brand, the change of name will eliminate confusion in the market with other funds and organisations.

LGIA stands for Local Government Investment Australia and, while the fund retains the existing stylised green tree icon, it will incorporate the new tagline Let's Grow.

LGsuper chief executive officer David Todd said the fund will continue its tradition of being responsive and progressive.

"Our name is changing but we remain the same great fund, committed to helping members achieve their financial goals in retirement by delivering secure services members can trust and industry-leading performance that is consistently reliable," he said.

Contact LGIAsuper for more information. ◀

CLEAN UP WITH LESS EFFORT



Rover's Jet Blower is equipped to assist in quicker yard clean-ups with minimal effort required. This high-airflow leaf blower pushes an incredible volume of 650 cubic feet of air through the end of the nozzle every minute at speeds of up to 208km/h thanks to its durable two-stroke 27cc engine.

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deliver superior control over leaves and debris. The tapered nozzle allows you to continue to focus on a particular area and increase airspeed, all the while maintaining volume. The Rover Jet Blower is also Battery Starter compatible, giving you effortless starting to save you time and energy (Power Start Battery Starter sold separately).

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MAINTAINING THE ROADS... AND YOUR EDGE

Australia relies as much on road transport as any other nation in the world, and is challenged on critical fronts like few others.

Today, more funds for roads are being spent on the maintenance of the road. Limiting the deterioration rate of the road pavement is therefore an essential goal, as typically maintenance is the largest single component of a council's or road agency's recurring costs.

Proper design, use of quality materials and construction methods are needed for optimum performance as are optimum maintenance strategies.

Supported by Austroads, TMR and IPWEA, the Centre for Pavement Engineering Education (CPEE) is providing training opportunities throughout Queensland via practical courses offering specialist



knowledge and skills enhancement for pavement engineers and supervisors. Topics range from pavement design through to understanding pavement defects and maintenance options - a new course introduced to meet demand.

Contact the Centre for Pavement Engineering Education for more information. ◀

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CHEERS TO THE EAR-BASHERS

LEAFBLOWERS ARE THE GREATEST CURSE SINCE THE CHILD-PROOF PILL BOTTLE WAS INVENTED. FOR ALL THE NOISE THEY GENERATE, THEY JUST MOVE THE RUBBISH AROUND, OFTEN DOWN THE STORMWATER DRAINS FROM WHERE THEY CAN SPRING AN AMBUSH WHEN IT RAINS.

And, I particularly dislike the 7.30am Le Mans start when gardening contractors stand with starter cords in hand waiting for the half hour to strike.

I've a good mind to complain but – curses – they're well within their rights.

To the second.

If I did turn my angst into action, I'd be just one man in a queue stretching from the border to Cape York having a whinge to my local council.

Complaining seems to be the great Queensland participant sport, although I don't know when it began.

Probably in the year dot, but you can trawl through the Australian Archives and find instances going way back to before the Great War.

They didn't have leafblowers then but they did have dead horses in streets, mountains of manure and lots of dogs tearing down sheep and generally making a nuisance of themselves.

Oh, and rats.

If nothing else, it made councillors masters of euphemism.

In 1934 Warwick Town Council was told stray dogs had "gone to their doom" in the new "lethal chamber".

Some things don't change as pooches and pussycats regularly top the list of complaints to Queensland councils.

They bark and they meow, they bite, they piddle and they poop.



Dogs are the main villains, with 98 per cent of a staggering 5700 complaints about animal noises in Brisbane relating to barking mutts. Dogs actually feature in a staggering 15,000 complaints.

But there are plenty of other things to whinge about, with uncut council grass high on the list and, in some places, looming as an election issue.

And then there are noisy pool pumps, air-conditioners, mowers, backyard mechanics and after-work home handymen.

And leafblowers, but we won't go there.

But if councillors think they're copping an ear bashing, hark back to Arthur Laurie, vice mayor of Brisbane, in 1937.

Poor Arthur had had enough when he had a small dummy spit, complaining he was kept so busy from early morning to late at night that he had not a minute to himself. (He was also putting the case for a bigger pay packet.)

"As often as not I am pulled out of bed by a telephone call from ratepayers with a request or a complaint," he said.

"Before I can finish my breakfast the telephone rings again and I have to eat cold eggs.

"One or two ratepayers look in before 8 o'clock on their way to work," he finished with, which makes me think Arthur should have had a dog.

And then: "Someone recognises me on the tram and I cannot read my paper because I have to listen to a testy old gentleman's protests about the scandalous way the city council lets small boys scorch down the footpath on scooters.

"And no alderman can ride on a tram at peak hours without having to listen to complaints about overcrowding.

"No matter how early I get to the city hall – usually about 9 o'clock or a little after – some constituent is waiting for me. Sometimes half a dozen are waiting."

The complaints? Mostly people looking for jobs, women complaining about smoky bonfires next door on washing day, and the garbage man failing to turn up.

And dead dogs in their street.

"What does an alderman do?" he asked.

He answered himself: "Think what a member of parliament does and double it, for an alderman is a shock absorber between citizens and the city, and between the politicians and the public.

"He bears the burden and the blame of far more than his proper share in the government of the people and he gets far less than his due of the credit to which his arduous public service entitles him."

Arthur's eloquence won the day and aldermen got a £100 pay rise for Christmas.

But I still have to put up leafblowers. ◀



PROMISE OF FREE PIGS WON'T FLY IN ELECTION

KING HENRY IV OF FRANCE STARTED IT BY SAYING HE WISHED THERE TO BE "NO PEASANT IN MY REALM SO POOR HE WILL NOT HAVE A CHICKEN IN HIS POT EVERY SUNDAY".

The American Republican Party liked the sound of it and, in the 1928 US presidential elections, published a circular promising if its candidate Herbert Hoover won there would be "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage".

The voters apparently liked the idea of going for a drive in a new car and coming home to chicken for dinner, and Hoover won.

The next year the Great Depression struck and a lot of people found themselves not only without a chicken but also without a pot in which to put one.

This was good news for the chickens but not for Hoover, who was voted out at the next election.

In Papua New Guinea, voters have been known to be encouraged to vote for a particular candidate with gifts of beer, pigs and more recently, good old-fashioned cash.

A study by the Australian National University found in the 2012 elections, the going price for a first preference vote on election eve was as high as 3000 kina, or around \$1400.

Australian voters are, of course, much more sophisticated and would not be tempted to sell their vote in exchange for a pig or several slabs of beer.

Admittedly, this has never been tested for as far as is known, no candidate for political office in this country has ever offered a free pig or even a free chicken as part of his or her election strategy.

Instead, we are more accustomed to hearing promises of what a candidate may or may not do if elected.

This makes us a lot more fickle. If, to the horror of your partner, you've just arrived home with a free pig, then the source of the pork knows they have your vote in the bag.

If, however, they've promised to give you a free pig after, and only if, they're elected then they're less certain of your support.

Candidates in our political system instead have to rely on convincing people they've either done a good job and deserve another term or will be better at the job than the person currently doing it.

I once, very briefly, considered running for public office after consuming several beers in the office of a councillor long since retired who urged me to have a go.

This ambition was stillborn when I realised if I was a voter in my ward, I wouldn't vote for me.

It also occurred to me I'd have to be nice to most of the people most of the time, even to those people who irritated me beyond all reasonable bounds.

I am not terribly good at this. My wife has accused me of not liking people. I have pointed out, in my defence, there are quite a few people whom I like and admire. It just happens they are vastly outnumbered by the ones from whom I would run barefoot over a paddock full of broken glass to avoid.

Door knocking, then, an essential element of any campaign, would have presented difficulties.

Arriving unannounced on someone's front steps and declaring, "Hello. I'm running for council. I find you incredibly annoying but please vote for me" was probably not going to work.

Thus was the great city of Brisbane denied the civic contribution that may have been made by Councillor O'Connor.

Instead, I remained a newspaper reporter and, as such, observed council elections at close range.

I covered one campaign in which a rumour was spread a particular candidate had over-indulged in alcohol and behaved unsociably in a well-known city restaurant.

There was no basis for this rumour, which was spread by his political opponents and, as far as I know, it never happened but the fiction became an accepted fact.

It may not have been the only factor in his subsequent loss, but lose he most certainly did.

I was also close to the campaign of Jim Soorley who was seen as no threat to the charismatic incumbent, Sallyanne Atkinson.

When he held a press conference, he'd be lucky if two journalists turned up to cover it. When Sallyanne held one, the television

A study by the Australian National University found in the 2012 elections, the going price for a first preference vote on election eve was as high as 3000 kina, or around \$1400.

camera crews would be falling over each other. But, Soorley went on to win in one of the greatest upsets in the history of local government politics.

I interviewed him over lunch not long after that victory and it seemed to me he still couldn't quite believe what had happened.

He soon got the hang of his new job, however, and went on to win the next three elections, serving as Lord Mayor of Brisbane for 13 years.

Politics, then, seemed to me to be a rather perilous line of work, one in which you could be the darling of the media and an adoring public one day and wake up unemployed the next.

With local government elections looming, it would be fair to assume there may be more than one candidate wondering which way the fickle winds that drive political success will blow.

It's not too late to trot out a variation on the old "chicken in every pot" line.

How about a pizza on every plate with a supersized drink and large fries on the side? ◀



TECH TOUR BOLSTERS SMART CITIES VISION



Electro-mobility, micro electricity grids, and the technology and governance surrounding Smart Cities were some of the key areas experienced by a delegation of Local Government Association of Queensland senior managers and Telstra executives to the United Arab Emirates and Europe.

The November trip, which was funded by Telstra/LocalBuy's Industry Development Fund, provided an opportunity to meet and share knowledge of the challenges with local government leaders, technology companies, international not-for-profit organisations, and state and national governments.

LGAQ chief executive officer Greg Hallam said the 16-day mission included several meetings with global leading thinkers in areas of the Internet of Things, reducing carbon emissions, creating new job opportunities, the use and management of data, traffic management, improved service delivery through technology and value in having the right corporate structure for innovation.

"One of the highlights was attending the Smart City World Expo where 500 exhibitors and 400 cities showcased their solutions and discussed what worked and what didn't," Mr Hallam said.



"We had undertaken a lot of research beforehand involving European Union and other independent reports as to who were the leading smart cities and the research kept pointing to places like Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Tallinn in Estonia.

"Strong political leadership has been a key characteristic but equally important has been the governance model to facilitate genuine innovation and collaboration."

Recognising the scalability of technology was one of the key learnings.

"It doesn't really matter if the community is 500,000 or 500 people, the solutions are there and we're already seeing that in some of the innovative projects in places like

The trip highlighted the solutions are there and off-the-shelf, and can be implemented in areas throughout the state

Cherbourg and Winton," Mr Hallam said.

He said the concept of scalability aligned nicely with the LGAQ model of demand aggregation and the services LocalBuy provided to councils.

"The trip highlighted the solutions are there and off-the-shelf, and can be implemented in areas throughout the state," he said.

"Tallinn was very impressive; it is a city of 400,000 leading the world in areas of online citizen participation, innovation and internet security and aspects of that structure could be replicated in areas here."

A report will be made to the State Government and councils in the near future. ◀



(Above and below left) The LGAQ took part in a Smart Cities tour of Europe and United Arab Emirates

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CURRENT EVENTS



Mayor Scheu addressing the guests before the ribbon cutting – L-R (front row only – official guests, Graham Secombe, Director Aspect Architects & Project Managers, Kerri & Greg Lawson, Lawrence & Linda Springborg, John Woods GRC and Phillip Gall GRC

GOONDIWINDI REGIONAL CIVIC CENTRE OPENING

Goondiwindi Regional Council's official opening of the Goondiwindi Regional Civic Centre saw a great turn out from the public and council staff.



Joan Bishop and Coral O'Shea (Joan is the daughter of the late Bill Bishop, part owner of Gunsynd)



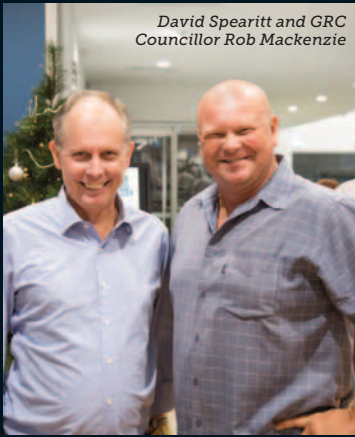
Councillor Lori Mackay, Esme Cairns – Goondiwindi Training & Technology and Brooke Saxby, Executive Officer, Border Rivers Chamber of Commerce



GRC CEO Carl Manton, Councillor Rick Kearney and Member for Southern Downs, Lawrence Springborg



David Spearitt, Orion Consulting with Councils Director of Community & Corporate Services, Jason Quinnell



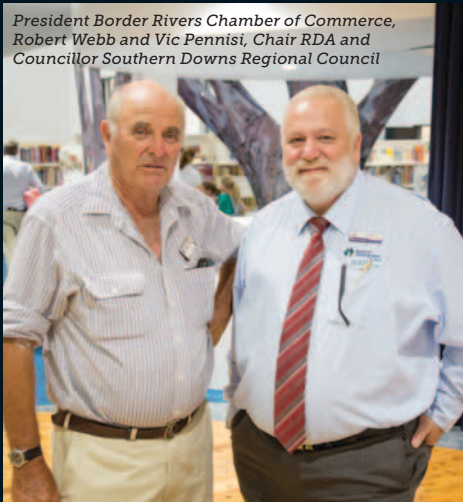
David Spearitt and GRC Councillor Rob Mackenzie



Linda Springborg (wife of Lawrence) and GRC Councillor Rick McDougall



Phil Percival, Gunsynd Museum and GRC Mayor Graeme Scheu



President Border Rivers Chamber of Commerce, Robert Webb and Vic Pennisi, Chair RDA and Councillor Southern Downs Regional Council



View of guests from the mezzanine level



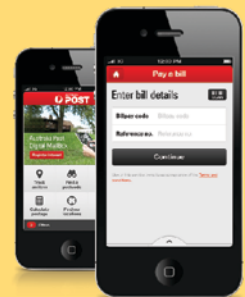
Kerri and Greg Lawson, G&K Lawson Constructions



Noni McDougall, Michelle Kearney, Councillor Lori Mackay and Coral O'Shea



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Cloncurry Merry Muster, Rodeo Queen and Miss Rodeo Australia Entrant Katy Scott promotes Cloncurry with Acting Premier Jackie Trad (right) and Acting Mayor Jane McMillan (left).



Queensland's Acting Premier Jackie Trad discusses Cloncurry's water infrastructure and water security with Acting Mayor Jane McMillan.

CLONCURRY SHIRE DISCUSSES WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Cloncurry Shire Council was one of the many places in Queensland to experience high volumes of rain late December. Queensland Deputy Premier Jackie Trad visited the region to discuss the water infrastructure after the heavy downpour.

Cloncurry Weir.
Image supplied by Peter Fitchat



ISAAC REGIONAL COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS 2016

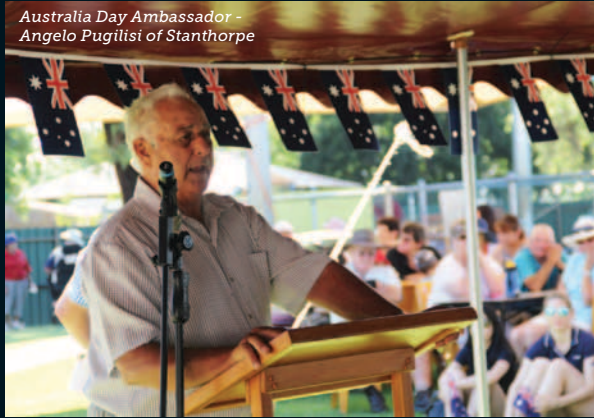
Isaac Regional Council, like many Queensland councils, helped celebrate Australia Day with its communities and congratulated all Australia Day Award winners and new Australian Citizens for 2016.



BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY 2016

Many councils across Queensland host community Australia Day Awards to recognised local unsung heroes. Here are some images of Balonne Shire Council's event.

Australia Day Ambassador -
Angelo Pugilisti of Stanthorpe



Balonne Mayor
Donna Stewart with
Harry Scriven



Mayor Donna
Stewart with
Dr Pam Turnock



Mayor Donna
Stewart with
Dan Dwyer



Mayor Donna
Stewart with
Gerry Banks



Mayor Donna Stewart
presents Joshua Price
with his award

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troy@sureplay.com.au

SUPPLIERS OF



WESTERN DOWNS BRIDGE RECOGNISED

Western Downs Regional Council congratulated its Works and Engineering Team who recently received a Highly Commended through the Get Ready Queensland (GRQ) Resilient Australia Awards 2015 for the newly replaced Mercy Pedestrian Bridge in Dalby. The bridge was recognised as a frontrunner amongst the statewide entries as an initiative towards disaster resilience, making our communities stronger and better prepared to manage natural disasters.



coming events

MARCH

March 19, 2016
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
The LGAQ will provide live online election analysis and media commentary from a dedicated election bunker

JULY

July 13-15, 2016
CIVIC LEADERS' SUMMIT
RACV Royal Pines, Gold Coast

OCTOBER

October 18-20, 2016
120TH LGAQ ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

WATERWAYS CLEANED UP

Rockhampton Regional Council has been conducting works at various waterways around the region. The works are part of a joint project between Rockhampton Regional Council and the State Government. More than 20 waterways will be cleaned up as part of the project - with removal of debris from each creek, the protection of various banks and some reshaping to reinstate channels.



Member for Keppel Brittany Lauga, North Rockhampton resident, and Cr Tony Williams who took a look at the recent works at Frenchman's Creek

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SAVVY COMMS

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

During nearly a quarter of a century as a journalist, covering all levels of government in Australia, I've met many politicians and senior managers and bureaucrats who can correctly claim they are good at what they do. But I've only struck a few who are consistently good at publicly explaining what they do, particularly when it comes to dealing with the media.

Fronting the TV cameras, an open microphone, even a junior reporter with a spiral notebook and a pencil, can be a daunting experience. But there is no mystery about how to deal with the media. It's simply about preparation.

Here are five things you should make sure you know before agreeing to that media interview.

Know how journalists think

They are not your cheer squad, nor are they your enemy. They are just doing their job and most of them think that job serves a pretty important purpose; ensuring our public representatives and institutions are accountable and transparent. Most are information rich and time poor so would be grateful to anyone who can explain themselves in a brief, simple, compelling fashion and, importantly, expect no favours for having done so.

Know how their bosses think

Not the same as journalists. Media companies have seen their entire business model trashed by the internet and social media. They employ fewer journalists and expect those who remain on the payroll to work harder and longer for less money. And, increasingly, they are pursuing their own campaigns against this or that government decision to maintain a connection with their audience. Essentially anything to get people to buy the paper or stop switching the channel.

Know what to say

Got something to say? Step back for a moment and decide if it is truly relevant and informative to the people you want to hear it. In other words, make sure it's news. Nothing will lose a journalist's attention faster than a two-page media release that provides no news, whether it comes from a prime minister or a first-time candidate for council.

Know how to say it

Remember the principle of KISS - Keep it Simple, Stupid. Leave out the jargon and buzzwords, as they impress nobody. Always use active voice. Think visually - does this message lend itself to a compelling picture or graphic? Above all, make sure you present your message in way that answers these questions - who, what, where, when, how and why?

Know how to build relationships

Keep up the lines of communication with journalists. If they run something negative, do not put up the shutters or go running to their boss. Contact them and politely explain why you think they got it wrong. If you like what they presented, tell them so. Remember, journalists are people, too, and their role is an important one. Respect it and chances are your relationship with the media will be a healthy one. ◀

CRAIG JOHNSTONE /
LGAQ MEDIA EXECUTIVE



SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

Social media in 2016

Here are a few social media management tips to kick off 2016.

Channel management

Managing the style and tone of the channels on which your council or organisation has a presence - TV, radio, newspapers, website, social media - is obviously a principle duty of a communications professional.

But this year channel management skills will be doubly important.

As social networks gain new features and become even more nimble you need to take a fresh look. Do an audit of each of your social media accounts, how you're using it and what content is working for each. Consider how new features might fit in your strategy. You really need to take a deep dive into each network individually before you can approach your strategy on the whole.

You might think social media networks are starting to look alike. Twitter is looking like Facebook. Facebook will soon have live-streaming tools like Periscope. Everyone is focusing on video. You might be tempted into developing a one-size-fits-all approach to channel management, but resist this. There are differences in utility in each social media network, just as there are for mainstream media. Knowing these differences is the key to your organisation standing out on social media.

Finally, chances are that a new social media platform will emerge this year. Many private sector companies turned to Snapchat in 2015. Make sure you don't neglect research and experimentation with new platforms.

Videography

While 2015 was a big year for video, it has nothing on what 2016 will be like. Facebook's daily video views doubled to 8 billion while Snapchat now reports 6 billion daily video views. That is on top of the YouTube's figures. Surveys show that 70 per cent of private companies believe video is their most effective marketing tool and most of them expect it to dominate their marketing strategy. Communications and social media managers need to have an understanding of videography if they're going to fit into that strategy.

That doesn't mean you need to know how to shoot professional quality video. That's still something you need a specialist to do. But you need to know great video when you see it and an understanding of how your council or organisation can tap into social media video trends.

Platforms like Vine and Periscope, with lower quality expectations. In 2016, the average smartphone user has the tools to become a video content creator. ◀

Edited from an original article by blogger for Hootsuite, Evan LePage.



Isaac Regional Council
December 9, 2015

What a great turn out at yesterday's Christmas Outdoor Storytime and Craft Event. To find out what's happening at your local library this festive season visit <http://bit.ly/1Nu4JkF>



Goondiwindi Regional Council
December 15, 2015

There was singing a-plenty this morning at the Library. Thanks to all the kids and mums for their hearty version of our favourite Christmas Carols and to Librarian Ilorna for such great story telling.



Mackay Regional Council
December 21, 2015

A total of 41 litter baskets have been installed as part of a council and Reef Catchments initiative aimed at reducing the amount of rubbish that enters the Pioneer River and Great Barrier Reef lagoon. The baskets were fitted at various locations around the Mackay City Centre as well as some outlying suburbs. Read more... <http://bit.ly/1Nxq3Hf>



Fraser Coast Regional Council
January 5, 2016

Rural infrastructure has been given a \$3.8 million boost across the Fraser Coast with projects on seven roads a two timber bridges completed or largely finished last year. For more information go to <http://tinyurl.com/j2z8fw7>



TWITTER

FOLLOW @LGAQ ON TWITTER TO JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION TODAY.

Brisbane Times @brisbanetimes

Housing supply not the driver for Queensland home prices: study

Craig Johnstone @johnstonec

Bob Hawke says Australia better off with one national govt and stronger local govt. @LGAQ #woodfordff

iloveqld @ilvqld

More than \$500,000 to support Indigenous Land and Sea Projects @TwitterAU @LGAQ

QCL @qclnews

Local Gov elections are looming. @Qld_Rural_Women's Alison Mobbs ask: "Are you putting up your hand to be counted?"

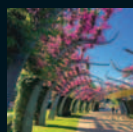
SunshineCoastCouncil @CouncilSCC

Communicating with #SunshineCoast Council is easier than ever with the SCC app: sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Council/News-Centre/New-council-app-launched



Instagram

@ lady_brisbane



lady_brisbane

Pretty as a picture at @visitsouthbank
#southbank
#southbankparklands #brisbane
#brisbanecity #brisbaneriver
#brisbaneanyday #queensland
#thisisqueensland #australia
#seeaustralia #openmyworld
#beautifuldestinations

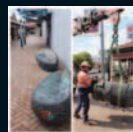
@councillorlisabradley



councillorlisabradley

Much activity happening at the BMX track.
#LoganCityBMX
#UnderwoodPark #Priestdale
#CityofLogan #Queensland
#Australia #visitlogan
#thisisqueensland #seeaustralia

@lockyervalley_regionalcouncil



lockyervalley_regionalcouncil

Have you spotted the new sculptures in #Laidley mall? Get your picture taken with them and tag #laidley #LockyerValley and #luyvalocker
Created by local artist Birgit Grapentin and made possible by the generous support from the #Queensland Government and #nab

@somerse regionalcouncil



somerse regionalcouncil

There is so much to do in Somerset in south east Queensland! Why not visit the beautiful #wivenhoedam or #somerse dam during the festive season. For more visit www.somerse.qld.gov.au
#somerse qld
#reallyclose to brisbane
#damfun #water

TECH TALK

INTELLIGENCE AND INNOVATION DRIVES SMART CITY TRANSPORT OPTIONS

On a two-week study tour of Europe and United Arab Emirates with Telstra executives, the Local Government Association of Queensland was given valuable insight into Smart Infrastructure and Smart Service initiatives.

One of the thought-provoking aspects of a study tour was the focus on electro-mobility – electric cars, buses, scooters and bicycles – as well as the role of autonomous vehicles.

During our visit to Masdar in Abu Dhabi, we travelled in autonomous vehicles to the City Campus.

The pod-type vehicles, which are pre-programmed, are an efficient way to move people around as cars are banned in the city.

While the pods overcame a specific problem for Masdar, the announcement by Toyota, Honda and Nissan during November's Tokyo Motor Show that they will be having autonomous vehicles on the road by 2020 adds considerable weight to this new direction.

This needs to be put in perspective.

Three of the top 10 largest car manufacturers in the world, which combined build in one in five cars on the planet, or about 20 million vehicles each year, are saying they will have driverless cars on highways during the new local government term.

Around the same time the Japanese were making their announcements, Adelaide was hosting the first International Driverless Cars Conference in the southern hemisphere.

As part of the conference, Volvo and the Australian Driverless Vehicle Initiative (ADVI) conducted the first on-road driverless car trials on Adelaide's Southern Expressway.

One of the common themes in both Australia and Japan is the advantage the technology can play in reducing road deaths and accidents.

The LGAO took part in a Smart City study tour of Europe and United Arab Emirates



LGAO CEO Greg Hallam with an autonomous vehicle in Masdar City, a planned city project in Abu Dhabi



“About 90 per cent of all car accidents are due to human error, so using technology could result in significantly different road trips in future.”

But there is also a first mover advantage; IT Consultants AT Kearney estimate the market for autonomous vehicles to be about \$788 billion by 2035.

About 90 per cent of all car accidents are due to human error, so using technology could result in significantly different road trips in future. Some of us already rely on proximity and reversing sensors.

Manufacturers are also experimenting with icons or written messages appearing on windshields, warning sounds and in one case a light-strip, along the length of the car, that changes colour and intensity in different situations.

Google has also developed prototypes but have been taking little steps by focusing on areas such as self-parking and crash avoidance technology.

Both Google and the Japanese manufacturers recognise functions such as emergency braking, traction control and speed limiting, which have been available for a while, is a big leap to applying artificial intelligence (AI)

to these new vehicle which will require considerable trust from both drivers and other road users.

One of the aims of the Australian conference was providing delegates with an opportunity to explore the technology and discuss the research, trials and legislation changes needed to make the driverless car future a reality.

Of course, the legal and regulatory minefield will be substantial before any commercial sales.

There would also be significant issues in the workplace.

However, the extraordinary aspect of the technology is its rapid rate of change. While it is considered AI is yet to match our own sensory perception, it seems more likely a short-term challenge rather than a long-term problem. ◀

The study tour was paid for by the Telstra Local Buy LG Industry Development Fund.

LOU BOYLE /
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF QUEENSLAND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE



GETTING TECHNICAL

ENCHANTED OBJECTS

Umbrellas that tell you when it's going to rain, Ventolin inhalers that alert you when there is more pollen in the air, and mirrors that capture images so customers can compare outfits side-by-side are some of the products termed "enchanted".

Lord of The Rings fans would already know of enchanted objects – the magical sword that glows blue whenever a dangerous Orc was nearby is an example.

But the move from fiction to reality is resulting in a steady stream of products, which combine the power of the Internet

of Things with technology platforms, being available on retail shelves.

It's a different view that believes there will be more smartphones, tablets and screens embedded in every surface.

One of the leaders in product development is David Rose from MIT Media Labs, who has a different vision: technology that atomises, combining itself with the objects that make up the very fabric of daily living.

His book *Enchanted Objects – Design, human desire and the Internet of Things* is a thought-provoking read of what the world could look like. ◀



Memory Mirror

SMART BINS TO SHINE IN FUTURE

The combination of sensors, solar power and compaction technology will reduce collection costs of council bins in parks and other public areas by up to 80 per cent, according to Korean company Clean Cubes.

The solar-powered bins are able to sense bin levels and can send data to allow real-time monitoring, informing when the bin is full. It can also compact the rubbish, allowing eight times its capacity.

The sensor involved in the bins are linked to collection vehicles, which can also result in determining the most efficient travel route to collect and empty the bins.

The concept also may have great benefits in re-provision waste contracts. ◀



Solar Bins in Korea

HOPES RAISED FOR BETTER DATA SOLUTIONS

The Productivity Commission has recently released its recommendations on Public Safety Mobile Broadband, which align with the Local Government Association of Queensland submission that sought greater access to new technologies delivered through carrier-based networks.

For the past two years, councils have been able to access a Wireless Priority Service Solution (WPSS) through the Federal Government and managed state-wide through the LGAQ. WPSS prioritises voice on a congested network.

The LGAQ strategy was then to seek a

similar capability to prioritise data on a congested network.

The solution "LTE Advanced Network for Emergency Services" or LANES should be made available to councils.

The prioritisation of data could result in moving around large files such as excel spreadsheets, mapping information and weather maps, thereby allowing key decision makers to make better informed decisions quicker.

The LGAQ plans to continue to lobby the relevant Federal ministers who are considering the report to ensure councils can access these digital tools. ◀

SERVICE ADVANCES DIGITAL CAPABILITIES

Did you know global IT consultancy company Gartner and the LGAQ have a service that aims to assist small- and medium-sized councils to better manage technology, understand future trends, and develop best practice in their day-to-day operations?

The service, which was recognised in the *Digital Productivity Report*, aims to raise awareness about digital opportunities, the need to improve staff skills levels and the need to develop digital policy guidelines.

Our research confirms councils in Queensland recognise the value of introducing technology to create new business processes, however, determining the right technology and how it is evolving, the impact on staff skills and how that may impact local policy, are all key issues.



The Gartner services offered through the LGAQ include access to research, includes policy templates, technology trends, and peer consultation.

Enquiries for information, reports and policies can be made via gartner@lgaq.asn.au. ◀

RECREATION FACILITIES

COUNCILS PROVIDE A WIDE RANGE OF PARKS WITH PICNIC AND BARBECUE FACILITIES, GARDENS, SPORTS GROUNDS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES. TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE WAYS QUEENSLAND RECREATION FACILITIES ARE BEING BOOSTED.



THE BENEFITS OF KIT FORM STRUCTURES

Landmark Products has been designing, engineering, manufacturing and installing high value open space structures and solutions for more than 26 years. In this time Landmark Products has helped thousands of customers to reduce the impact construction sites have on the community, wildlife and surrounds.

Listed below are the four main steps of the kit-form process and how each step has a big role to play in reducing onsite disturbance for improved community outcomes.

1. Pre-design and engineering

- There is an easier understanding of what the finished product will look like;
- You reduce variations, time and money;
- You get up-front engineered and code conforming results; and
- Components can be broken down for difficult to access sites.

2. Pre-fabricated/factory manufacture

- Factories are better controlled safer working environments than worksites;
- Factory processes allow for better corrosion protection;
- Higher accuracy for factory finished goods;
- Factory waste is minimised and recycled more efficiently.



The Mills Park construction

3. Delivery

- Kit form is grouped for one delivery;
- Kits are easy to unpack during the installation process;
- Kits are grouped and left unopened for increased site safety;
- Kits can be delivered by a crane truck increasing site safety (less manual handling).

4. Installation

- Kit form reduces tools and equipment onsite, which increases safety;
- Kit form reduces tools and equipment onsite, which decreases noise;

- Kit form reduces trades and deliveries to the site, which reduces localised traffic and noise which increases site safety;
- Installation times are quicker, which reduces localised traffic, and noise, which increases site safety;
- Installation is more accurate and finished at a higher level.

Each of these reasons are why kit form engineered and pre-fabricated products are becoming increasingly popular, they ultimately are quicker, safer and reduce local community disturbance.

Contact Landmark Products for more information. ◀

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, COUNCILS AND OBVIOUS RISK

BY DAVID KERWIN, PARTNER AND LUCINDA VELDMAN, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, COLIN BIGGERS & PAISLEY

Councils managing recreational facilities such as sports fields, children's playgrounds and skate parks will almost universally owe a duty of care to take precautions against a risk of harm arising from public use of those facilities.

Good practice dictates councils should consider ongoing risk assessment of these facilities and implementation of reasonable measures to remove any substantive risks, or face increasing liability exposure for injuries occasioned by their use.

In common with private entities, Queensland councils facing injury claims have the benefit of various defences under the *Civil Liability Act*. However, these defences do not have the wide ranging exculpatory effect that a cursory reading of the Act might suggest.

For example, the Act provides a defence for harm suffered as a result of an "obvious" risk of a "dangerous

“...the Act provides a defence for harm suffered as a result of an "obvious" risk of a "dangerous recreational activity”

recreational activity". Courts are inclined to construe the concept of an "obvious risk" narrowly. (See *State of Queensland v Kelly* [2014] QCA 27.) An activity is said to be "dangerous" under the Act only if it involves a "significant risk of physical harm".

Further, even if a risk appears to be "obvious" to an average person, taking preventive measures may still be prudent, particularly as councils are expected to take reasonable steps to remove risks posed to everyone who uses the facility, including children.

Accordingly, the *Civil Liability Act*,

defences do not provide a blanket "safe harbour" for all occasions. Council's culpability in each case will be assessed independently, in the particular circumstances of each case.

Early risk assessments and ongoing use observation are essential to identify the substantive risks for each council recreational facility. Once risks are identified, councils should expect the actions they take will be scrutinised to determine the adequacy of their response to the risk.

Contact CBP Lawyers for more information. ◀

"STITCH IN TIME" THE KEY

It's a given councils need to provide many recreational facilities extensive in their variety and size. There is, however, one key element often underestimated in importance but that is vital to ensuring benefit and utilisation is achieved across all.

What then is it that links leisure facilities such as parks, sporting and entertainment venues, pools, dams, beaches, cycle paths etc?

Roads, including access roads and carparks, are the common denominator, and are at times the facility themselves. This unsung "ribbon of life", the value of which is often overlooked, plays a vital role in our life and enjoyment of recreation.

More the concern, however, is the tendency to minimise maintenance of our roads and pavements when there are competing demands for funding allocations. The "stitch in time" approach has never before been so instructive and appropriate.

Understanding of maintenance and commitment to the most appropriate strategies are essential to ensure design life expectations are met, or exceeded.

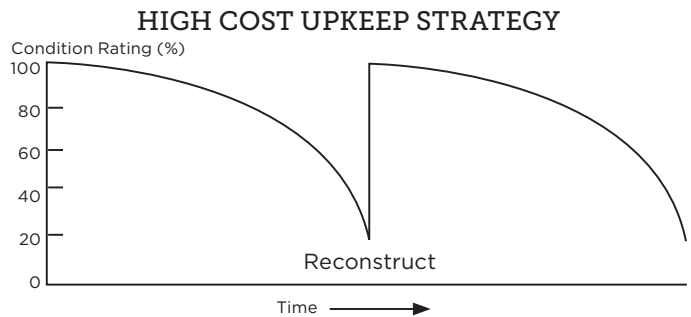
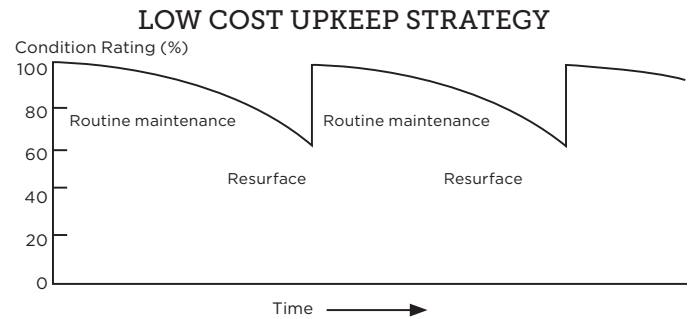
Improved performance is being threatened by the continued loss of experienced road and pavement engineers, and supervisors. The evaluation of pavements, including the selection of the most appropriate maintenance and rehabilitation strategies, is being undertaken by less experienced and less knowledgeable persons.

Why does this have great significance for you? Today's roads and pavement engineers and supervisors need to be more skilled and knowledgeable. This is a priority issue throughout Australia.

Fortunately, one independent entity is committed to educating and training road designers, constructors and maintenance personal with practical "best practice" to gain the most from limited funds. This is via a range of training courses continuing to be offered throughout Queensland in 2016.

Supported by Austroads, TMR and IPWEA, the Centre for

Pictured below: the low cost upkeep strategy versus the high cost upkeep strategy for Queensland councils



Pavement Engineering Education (CPEE) is providing training opportunities throughout Queensland to maximise the chance for attendance even in somewhat remote areas.

Contact the Centre for Pavement Engineering Education for more information. ◀

PLAY IT SAFE AT SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND LAKES

Summer may be almost over, but Seqwater's lakes continue to be a popular destination for recreation.

Visitors are taking advantage of the ideal conditions by exploring South-East Queensland's water storages.

Seqwater chief executive officer Peter Dennis said rangers would still be conducting regular patrols of the lakes despite the holiday peak now having passed.

"We worked with agencies such as the Queensland Police Service and Fisheries Queensland throughout summer and will continue to keep a close eye on both water and land-based activities over the coming months," Mr Dennis said.

"But it is important to remember our rangers can't be everywhere, so we do rely on visitors to play it safe and do the right thing.

"It's important not to be complacent when it comes to safety. You may have



visited one of our lakes before, but conditions could have changed. Sadly, more drownings actually occur in inland waterways than at our beaches."

Mr Dennis encouraged visitors to jump on Seqwater's website for helpful safety hints.

"Discover the range of recreation activities available across the south-east," he said.

"Whether you're a boatie, angler, paddling enthusiast, horse rider or just want to take a dip in the water to cool off, our lakes offer something for everyone."

Contact Seqwater for more information. ◀

SEEKING HEART-HEALTHY COUNCILS

– BIG AND SMALL



“...The awards created a great opportunity for councils to showcase their work in creating active, connected and healthy environments

The Heart Foundation's Local Government Awards are now open for nominations.

The charity is keen to receive nominations from councils who have implemented initiatives to encourage more activity and better health in their community.

Heart Foundation Queensland chief executive officer Stephen Vines said the awards created a great opportunity for councils to showcase their work in creating active, connected and healthy environments for their residents and visitors.

“Last year the Queensland Awards were won by the Maranoa Regional Council and Logan City Council for their work in developing greater recreational spaces, connected pathways, along with physical activity and nutritional programs,” he said.

“It would be fantastic to get more councils nominating in 2016, particularly in the new category for councils with populations under 5000, as it is a great opportunity to share the stories about what is happening in regional Queensland to support better heart health.”

The three categories for the Heart Foundations Awards are:

- Councils with less than 5000 population
- Councils 5000 – 25,000 population
- Councils with more than 25,000 population

The Queensland winner in each category will receive \$2000 and will then be nominated for the national award in their category. A further \$5000 is awarded to the national winners.

The awards are now in their 24th year, and councils will be able to submit nominations from March 28-May 20, 2016.

Contact the Heart Foundation for more information or to register your interest. ◀

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