Vol 2 Issue 20 – Monday 25 September 2017

Dear Mayors and Councillors

Over the last few months I have continued to fit in visits to both metro and regional councils. I have a South East trip coming up soon also.

I appreciate the willingness of councils to fit me into your already highly committed timeframes – so thank you.

I hope that during these visits everyone takes the opportunity to both gain info from the LGA but also give me feedback about your views on various matters.

I am a firm believer in frank and fearless discussions and that those discussions should occur within the family of local government.

I hope my visits add to that knowledge so public debate is more informed.

LGA President Mayor Lorraine Rosenberg

Celebrating our wins

As a sector – and as your Association – we don’t always do a great job talking up our achievements. We know the value we deliver for our communities, but often it’s the fringe issues that get the most attention.

However, as we head into the final few months of the year, it’s worth looking back on what we’ve been able to accomplish by working together.

We are well and truly stronger together, and the list below is evidence of what we can achieve with a collaborative approach.

**State Local Government Infrastructure Partnership**

LGA advocacy secured a $25 million State Government commitment to local government infrastructure projects in late 2016, and earlier this year, we helped distribute this funding to 28 councils.

The total value of projects funded through this program is around $120 million, and they will support 190 jobs a year over the next three years.

**CWMS Funding**

This year, the LGA negotiated a 10-year $47 million extension to the Community Wastewater Management Scheme funding agreement with the State Government, enabling us to continue to work with councils to install vital community waste water management systems in rural and remote communities.

**Fund My Neighbourhood**

The LGA has worked closely with the State Government on this program, and has supported councils that are assessing and costing around 1500 applications.

The estimated value of proposed projects on land owned or managed by councils through the first round is more than $100 million, with $40 million of State Government funding over two years allocated to the program.

**LGA Workers Compensation Scheme**

Earlier this month Return To Work SA renewed the LGA Workers Compensation Scheme’s (LGAWCS) registration as a self-insured employer for a five year period – the maximum extension allowable.

To date we’ve saved around $250 million by working together to self-insure our workforce.

**LGA Mutual Liability Scheme**

The LGA, in conjunction with the LGA Mutual Liability Scheme (LGAMLS), has successfully negotiated with the State Government to extend the Treasurer’s Indemnity for another three years, enabling the Scheme to provide unlimited civil liability protection in the event of a catastrophe.

**LG Risk Schemes**

Next month, the LGAWCS, LGAMLS and LGA Asset Mutual Fund will return $6 million in Special Distribution funds back to members of the Schemes, further demonstrating the mutual benefits of a strong and aligned sector.

Planning

The LGA has saved all SA councils between $4,000 and $36,000 this year through successfully advocating for the deferral of local government contributions to the SA Planning Portal until 2018/19.

The Association also produced templates for councils to assist with the establishment of new Development Assessment Panels.

Regional Youth Traineeship Program

This year we’ve administered two concurrent rounds of the highly successful Regional Youth Traineeship Program, which includes 114 positions across 47 local governing authorities (45 regional councils, Outback Communities Council and Yalata Aboriginal Community Council).

One of the program participants – Rural City of Murray Bridge trainee Sandy Beaton – was recently named SA Trainee of the Year.

Boundary adjustment reform

We worked closely with the Government on their Local Government (Boundary Adjustment) Amendment Bill 2016, and as a result we will have (when it comes into effect) am ore transparent and independent process for councils and communities that wish to consider changes to their boundaries.

Local Government Functional Support Group

Changes made to the State Emergency Management Plan recognising the role played by councils during emergencies led to the creation of the Local Government Functional Support Group.

As a result, the LGA and member councils now have a “seat at the table” when the State Emergency Centre is activated during significant emergency events.

FAQs indexation

LGA and ALGA advocacy saw the return of indexation for Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) in the 2017/18 Federal Budget, delivering an additional $4 million for SA councils in 2017/18.

It also resulted in the return of supplementary road funding for South Australia, with a $40 million commitment spread over two years.

Industrial relations

The LGA has appointed an industrial relations expert to provide councils with advice as required, and also spearhead work the Association is doing to identify and drive IR efficiencies across the sector.

Sector morale

The LGA recently appointed a Sector Development Partner to develop a program to improve sector morale.

Feedback from previous engagement with councils, and Mayor’s and CEO’s Forums, will inform this program.

Electricity

LGA Procurement has saved millions of dollars for councils though locking in below-market electricity rates for councils for 2018 and 2019, whilst earlier this year the LGA worked with 42 councils to undertake strategic energy audits, including providing bespoke recommendations.

Unity

We are continuing to improve our Unity CMS system which is used by 58 councils, and recently released a major update including features that make it easier for councils to manage content on their websites and in the My Local Services App.

We’ve also recently signed up Newcastle City Council to roll out our My Local Services App to their community.

MOU with TAFE

At our OGM in April, the LGA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TAFE SA to better deliver training courses – both in person and online – to council members and staff.

LGA Procurement

LGA Procurement continues to grow and is currently in the process of doubling its staffing numbers to respond to increased enquiries and consultancy engagements.

Value proposition

Earlier this year UHY Haines Norton independently verified the average value provided by the LGA to member councils at almost $1.6 million annually.

We are committed to working collaboratively with member councils, as well as our partners in state and federal government to increase the value we provide to members, and to our communities.
Good news stories from our sector

The Westside Weekly Messenger recently ran a great story on West Torrens Mayor and vintage car enthusiast John Trainer.

John has announced he’ll be retiring from our sector in 2018 after more than 17 years leading West Torrens, and I look forward to receiving a postcard from his planned trip to India!

Port Pirie journalist Greg Mayfield recently published two interesting articles on key leaders in our sector.

The first, an overview of the achievements of Prospect Mayor and ALGA President (and former Port Pirie local) David O’Loughlin, was titled ‘Our David now a Goliath’.

The second was a feature on re-elected Mount Remarkable Mayor Colin Nottle’s vision for his community.

The CityCoast Weekly wrote about the City of Marion’s $2 million investment in shade sails over playgrounds to encourage kids to be active during the summer months, and it was great to see a positive reaction from a local parent highlighted.

Finally, a visit to the Limestone Coast by delegates from the Chinese province city of Tai’an, hosted by Naracoorte Lucindale and Robe mayors Erika Vickery and Peter Riseley received a positive write up in the local Naracoorte Herald.

Council Members Forum

Register now

27-28 October • LG House • 148 Frome St, Adelaide

This year’s Council Members Forum will be held from 27-28 October at LG House in Adelaide (previously to be held at the Stamford Plaza). The venue and fee have been changed as a result of feedback from the sector.

The focus of this year’s forum is “improving our advocacy”, reflecting the important role that we all have to play in advocating on local issues, both within our councils and to our communities.

The event will cover the major issues facing our sector, and provide an opportunity for participants to share their own views and experiences, and improve their advocacy skills.

More information – including a link to the program - can be found here.

This is shaping up to be a fantastic event, and I would encourage you to attend.

For further information or to submit feedback please email: The LGA President or call 08 8224 2000.