Message from the President
LGNSW President, Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM provides an update on local government issues.

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Message from the President

Cr Keith Rhoades AFSM

Friday 18 November 2016

I understand that communication from Treasury to all councils is imminent regarding the Emergency Services Property Levy (ESPL) so please look out for this important information.

As you know, the NSW Government was aiming to have the ESPL legislation introduced to Parliament this year, but that didn’t occur with Parliament wrapping up yesterday. LGNSW is advised that the NSW Government now intends to introduce the legislation to Parliament in February next year, ahead of a 1 July 2017 start date.

This means Treasury still wants councils to undertake the land classification and other preparatory work necessary so that councils are ready to collect this levy for the NSW Government on 1 July next year. I understand that Treasury will organise information sessions for councils to discuss this in more detail.

Importantly, we now have a rare and critical opportunity as a whole sector, to examine the detail of the Government’s plans regarding the ESPL and provide our feedback before the Bill is introduced.

This is a very unusual situation, in that councils are being asked to do work ahead of legislation requiring them to do it. On the other hand, if councils don’t do the preparatory work and the legislation is passed early next year, they will be under extreme pressure to put the appropriate mechanisms, systems and training in place for 1 July. These issues require careful consideration by your council and our sector.

Whatever the outcome, LGNSW is confident the draft legislation is now much improved from the sector’s perspective, than what was originally proposed.

LGNSW, with council representatives on the ESPL working group, effectively stopped an unacceptable proposal regarding ESPL implementation from seeing the light of day, and achieved many important concessions including full cost recovery, up-front payment to councils for land classification, agreement to a NSW Government communications campaign, funded training for councils and more.

I will be writing to all councils on this issue shortly. Once you have considered the ESPL information from Treasury, please provide your council’s feedback to LGNSW (email shaun.mcbride@lgnsw.org.au).

Before Parliament wrapped up this week, the Biodiversity Conservation Bill and Local Land Services Amendment Bill were both passed. As previously advised, we were successful in removing councils from a proposed consent role for controversial clearing only applications, a big win. LGNSW made a submission on the draft Bills on behalf of members in June 2016, and some of our 40 recommendations were taken up. Many of our issues related to supporting regulations and guidance that will be released for consultation in the first half of 2017. Our advocacy efforts will continue to ensure these components and the implementation arrangements address the issues we raised. Stay tuned.

We saw in the by-elections last weekend that communities are deeply unhappy about forced amalgamations. Swings of up to 60 per cent against the Government in some booths in the seat of Orange clearly confirmed that people want to keep local government local.

Consistent with our policy set by you, our members, I have called on the Government to rethink its stance on forced council amalgamations and rule out any more. We know they have heard the community’s message loud and clear – it’s now time for them to act.

I have also written to the new Deputy Premier the Hon John Barilaro MP to congratulate him and organise a meeting to discuss matters of mutual interest.

LGNSW met this week with independent research company, Inside Story, to discuss progress into member perceptions and attitudes towards the association and its services. We really do want to know what our members think, and will provide more information on our forthcoming member survey closer to its release.

There is so much more news from this week, but in consideration of your time, I will leave it at that and look forward to hearing your views on the ESPL.
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Conferences and Events

Item 1: Upcoming conferences and events

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Grants and Funding

Item 2: Grant and funding opportunities for local government

NSW EPA Civil Construction Market Pilot Program

Grants of $20,000 to $75,000 are available as part of the EPA’s Civil Construction Market Pilot Program, to promote the repurposing of construction waste.
Community

Item 3: Local Government Forum: Preventing Domestic and Family Violence

Council staff are invited to a free forum on preventing domestic and family violence by through community-based strategies.

Increasingly councils in NSW are implementing initiatives to prevent domestic and family violence in their communities.

This forum will provide council officers with opportunities to share information, learning experiences, and to discuss:

- How different and diverse communities can be engaged
- Managing issues of power/ownership between stakeholders in our communities
- What should be included in community-based prevention programs
- How inequality (particularly gender inequality) should be addressed
- Ensuring that community-based strategies engage groups that face multiple layers of exclusion, for example, those with disabilities, LGBTQI, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Working with 'unlikely' partners (P&Cs, community-based sports teams, scouts and girl guides) and how to ensure strategies are relevant and useful for them.

The following council officers will lead discussions and share their expertise:

- Claudia Guajardo, Fairfield City Council
- Renee Oxford, City of Canterbury Bankstown Council
- Merryn Howell, Cumberland Council
- Maggie Kyle, City of Parramatta Council

Liz Gemes, Senior Policy Officer, LGNSW will facilitate discussion about what local government officers working on domestic violence families need, to support their work.

Luke McCaskie, Senior Policy Officer, Women NSW, will present an information session on new funding framework for prevention and the NSW Blueprint for Reform: Safer Lives for Women, Men and Children.

Register [online](#), or contact Maggie Kyle at City of Parramatta Council for more information.
Environment

Item 4: Biosecurity Regulation Consultation

The NSW Department of Primary Industries has begun consultation on the proposed Biosecurity Regulation and the Regulatory Impact Statement and is holding information sessions across NSW for council staff.

The proposed regulation provides a framework for managing biosecurity risks and protecting the economy, environment and community from pests, diseases and weeds.

Councils are invited to provide feedback to the Department on the proposed regulation and regulatory impact statement by 29 January 2017.

Drop-in style information sessions will provide council staff with an opportunity to meet with relevant biosecurity staff.

They will be held in the following locations:
- Orange, Monday 21 November, 3pm-5pm, Orange Regional Art Gallery
- Bega, Monday 21 November, 4pm-6pm, Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre
- Penrith, Thursday 24 November, 5pm-7pm, Penrith Library Theatrette
- Dubbo, Monday 28 November, 1pm-3pm, Western Plains Cultural Centre
- Griffith, Monday 28 November, 1pm-3pm, Griffith City Library
- Albury, Wednesday 30 November, 4pm-6pm, Albury Entertainment Centre
- Singleton, Wednesday 30 November, 12pm-2pm, Singleton Library

LGNSW will prepare a whole-of-sector submission based on feedback from councils. Please provide a copy of your council’s submission or issues to be raised to Susy Cenedese, LGNSW Strategy Manager.

For more information about the information sessions, see the Department of Primary Industries website.
General Interest

Item 5: NSW EPA Civil Construction Market Pilot Program

Grants of $20,000 to $75,000 are available as part of the EPA’s Civil Construction Market Pilot Program, to promote the repurposing of construction waste.

The program promotes the use of waste from one civil construction project as useful input into another. The grants are directed at diverting construction and demolition waste from landfill through reuse, recycling and circular economy projects in the NSW civil construction sector by May 2017.

The program aims to improve resource productivity, reduce the costs of coordination and minimise the risks involved to result in less material being sent to landfill or large volumes of material being stockpiled.

Grants can be used to fund consultants, contractors, waste service providers and local government personnel.

Contact EPA project officer Celia Tesoriere on 9995 6920 or see the EPA website for details.

Dates and location
Applications close 25 November 2016

Online information
EPA website

Contact
Celia Tesoriere, Project Officer
9995 6920
celia.tesoriero@epa.nsw.gov.au

Ref: R15/002 MM
Roads and Transport

Item 6: Local Government Heavy Vehicle Forum - Blacktown

The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator invites councils to participate in the Local Government Heavy Vehicle Forum (Blacktown 1 December 2016).

Attendance is free, and LGNSW encourages relevant council staff to attend.

The forum is being hosted by Blacktown City Council in partnership with LGNSW and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia.

Key objectives of the forum are to:

- Inform councils about their roles and opportunities under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) and what the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator is doing to assist them
- Showcase councils that have adapted to their roles under the HVNL to reduce red tape and boost local economies
- Encourage council representatives to share experiences and find solutions to unique freight challenges, and
- Identify priority actions to advance improvements in freight productivity and safety

The event will help councils meet their obligations under the HVNL and identify opportunities to improve productivity and safety in the local freight task.

Further forums are planned for regional NSW early in 2017. The forum will be of particular interest to councillors, senior council management and technical staff. Space is limited, so please register online before Friday 25 November.
Roads and Transport

Item 7: National Local Roads and Transport Congress Outcomes

Councils attending the recent Australian Local Government Association National Local Roads and Transport Congress have renewed their calls on the Federal Government for action on freight bottlenecks on local roads.

The congress highlighted a proposed road freight funding strategy from the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) calling for commonwealth investment of $200 million per year for five years to support local government to assess key local road assets on designated freight routes, and to remove bottlenecks that limit capacity on these routes.

The congress also provided an opportunity to showcase examples of councils, including several key groupings of councils from NSW, working collaboratively to understand and improve their regional freight networks.

The congress also included keynote presentations from the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Darren Chester MP and Shadow Minister Anthony Albanese MP, as well as presentations by Infrastructure Australia, CSIRO, National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, Austroads and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

Other important topics covered at the congress included road safety, road pricing reform, and the proposed inland rail project.

For more details on the proposed ALGA road freight strategy, and the council case studies, see the congress bulletin online.
Water

Item 8: Council Views on Water Sharing Plans

LGNSW would like to hear from councils about whether the current water sharing planning process is effective and whether consultation on their involvement in planning is adequate.

LGNSW has been asked by the NSW Parliamentary Standing Committee Inquiry into the Augmentation of Water Supply for Rural and Regional NSW to provide council views on the current water sharing planning process and preparing a response on behalf on the sector.

Please provide comments to Sascha Moege, LGNSW Senior Policy Officer, Finance and Infrastructure, by Friday, 25 November 2016.
Learning

Item 9: Business Excellence in Local Government

LGNSW is offering a new course (14-16 December) on the Australian Business Excellence Framework, an integrated leadership and management system that describes elements essential to sustainable organisational excellence.

The course will provide participants with a clear understanding of how excellence models can be leveraged to drive continuous improvement and business sustainability. The course content refers to three primary global business excellence models - the Australian Business Excellence Framework, the Baldrige Criteria and the EFQM Model.

Organisations use the guidance of excellence models to improve financial performance, develop leadership capability, encourage innovation, increase efficiency and focus on stakeholder outcomes.

By the end of this course attendees will understand:

- the benefits of using the framework
- the underlying principles of the framework and its application to councils
- business excellence concepts
- process improvement and methodologies
- how to assess, score and identify opportunities.

For more information or to register online, see the LGNSW website.
Learning

Item 10: Councillor Training on Financial Issues in Local Government

LGNSW is holding a workshop to help councillors understand how council budgets work and make informed decisions about financial issues.

Participants will gain practical skills, knowledge and confidence in discharging the financial duties of a councillor.

On completion participants will:

- Know the responsibilities of councillors in regard to council finances
- Understand basic accounting procedures
- Know how to read quarterly reviews
- Know how to interpret council balance sheets
- Know what depreciation is and how it affects council’s finances
- Understand how financial information fits into council planning
- Understand the concept of risk and how it fits into financial management issues
- Be able to ask questions to assist in making more informed decisions.

Participants will also have the opportunity to network with other councillors.

Contact LGNSW Learning Solutions to ask about running this course in your area.

Date and location
Tuesday 29 November 2016
Sydney

Cost
$660 inclusive of GST

Online information and registration
LGNSW website: learning

Contact
LGNSW Learning Solutions
02 9242 4081
learning@lgnsw.org.au

Ref: I98/0012 SA
Learning

Item 11: LGNSW Mayors’ Weekend

LGNSW is offering a seminar for NSW mayors, deputy mayors and aspiring mayors to help address complex leadership challenges (3 – 4 December, Sydney).

Mayors are the face of local government and occupy an important and demanding role. People expect mayors to provide the leadership required for councils to work effectively and address community priorities.

Topic will include:

- Current issues and challenges facing mayors and their councils
- The mayoral toolkit – the changing role of mayors and important tools of the trade
- The mayor as community leader – locally and at the regional level
- The mayor as council leader – working with other councillors, chairing meetings
- The mayor and general manager
- State-local relations.

The seminar will include short background presentations, comments by expert panelists and roundtable discussion amongst participants.

Please register online.
Learning

Item 12: Public Workshops

LGNSW’s public workshops in November, to local government professionals and elected members, will address leadership, writing and finance.

**Leadership for Aspiring Women**

Sydney – Tuesday 22 November 2016

If you are trying to break through to supervision, develop skills in leadership or just manage your work/life balance issues, you may need a little help. This workshop is designed to provide a non-threatening environment in which women are able to explore issues which might be holding them back from aspiring to greater achievements at work.

**Writing Winning Grant Funding Applications**

Sydney – Tuesday 22 November 2016

This workshop uses an interactive approach including group discussion, individual writing exercises and a small group proposal writing project. Participants are encouraged to bring in samples of their work, or a current project, to receive individual guidance and feedback.

**Improving Your Report Writing**

Sydney – Wednesday 23 November 2016

This workshop will give participants the skills to write effective, clear and concise reports for managers and councils. In this workshop participants will work individually and in groups to get writing and planning practice during the day.

**Financial Issues in Local Government**

Sydney – Tuesday 29 November 2016

Whether it is reading council budgets, or working with management plans, councillors have to make many decisions about financial issues in local government. This workshop will help councillors to make informed decisions about those issues.

Contact LGNSW Learning Solutions for a quote to have these workshops delivered locally or in-house at your council.
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