

Minutes
Meeting No. 44
Launceston, 6 August 2014

PARTICIPANTS

State Government

Will Hodgman MP, Chair Premier
Peter Gutwein MP Minister for Planning and Local Government

Local Government Association of Tasmania

Cr Barry Easterher Mayor, West Tamar Council; President, Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT)
Cr Darryl Quilliam Mayor, Circular Head Council; Vice President, LGAT
Cr Jan Bonde Mayor, Central Coast Council
Ald Albert van Zetten Mayor, Launceston City Council
Cr Deirdre Flint Mayor, Central Highlands Council
Cr Barry Jarvis Mayor, Dorset Council

Officials in attendance:

Local Government

Mr Allan Garcia Chief Executive Officer, LGAT
Dr Katrena Stephenson Policy Director, LGAT
Mr Robert Dobrzynski General Manager, Launceston City Council
Mr Peter Brooks General Manager, Glenorchy City Council

State Government

Mr Michael Stevens Deputy Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet
Mr Kim Evans Secretary, Department of State Growth
Mr James Pirie Adviser, Office of the Premier
Mr Tony McCall Adviser, Office of the Minister for Planning and Local Government

Mr Greg Alomes	Commissioner, Tasmanian Planning Commission
Mr Phillip Hoysted	Director of Local Government, Local Government Division (LGD), Department of Premier and Cabinet
Ms Bridget Dwyer	Policy Analyst, LGD

Apologies

Apologies were received from Sandra Ayton, General Manager, Central Coast Council and Councillor Graham Bury, Mayor, Kingborough Council.

Welcome

The Premier welcomed members to the first Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) meeting for 2014.

The Premier outlined the Government's commitment to the consultative and collaborative approach developed under the PLGC and acknowledged that local and State Government can achieve much by working together.

The Premier advised that the Government is committed to the delivery of its election promises, and its focus on the generation of investment and job growth in the State. Further, the Premier stated the Government wants to cut costs, streamline approval processes, drive efficiencies, improve service delivery, balance the budget and for the PLGC to focus on local government's role in driving the economic reform agenda.

The Minister for Planning and Local Government advised that he was looking forward to a consultative working relationship with the PLGC.

The Premier noted that apologies had been received from Sandra Ayton, General Manager, Central Coast Council and Mayor Graham Bury, Kingborough Council.

Agenda item

1) Planning Reform – Ministerial Update

The Minister for Planning and Local Government provided PLGC members with an update on State Government Planning Reforms.

The Minister informed members that the State Government is working on a single state-wide planning scheme that will be faster, cheaper and simpler. The Minister advised that a Planning Reform Taskforce has been established to progress the scheme and that local government, as a key stakeholder, will be consulted at various stages of the schemes development.

The Minister advised the Government aims to have the single planning scheme up and running by the middle of 2015 and was clear that it was the

Government's intention that the new scheme would not interfere with development currently underway or approved. The Minister also advised that a communications strategy would be released in the near future.

The Premier requested that Mr Greg Alomes, Tasmanian Planning Commission, provide a presentation at the December PLGC meeting on the state-wide planning scheme.

2) Draft Minutes of the PLGC meeting on 10 December 2013

The PLGC accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2013 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3) Matters of Topical Interest

I. Presentation – Department of State Growth

Mr Kim Evans, Department of State Growth, presented to the PLGC on the establishment of the new Department. Mr Evans advised the Department was established on 1 July 2014 and that its key purpose is to create jobs, growth and opportunity for Tasmanians.

II. Pensioner Rates Remission Scheme

Mr Allan Garcia, LGAT, outlined the sectors concerns regarding cuts to not only pensioner rates, but also water and sewerage remissions. Mr Garcia stated that any efforts by the State Government to make 'utility owners' increase concessions as a potential trade-off would be perceived as a cost-shift, and therefore strongly opposed.

The Minister advised that there will be no changes to the Pensioner Rates Remission Scheme in 2014-15 and that the future of the scheme beyond 2014-15 will be considered as part of the next budget cycle.

III. State-wide Waste Levy

Mr Allan Garcia, LGAT, informed the PLGC that the local government sector is supportive of a waste levy and stated that spending on waste needs to be more strategic, allowing for work on compliance, innovation and efficiencies within the system to be implemented.

The Premier advised that the Minister for State Growth, Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage was currently considering the implementation of a waste levy.

The Premier advised the PLGC that local governments' support for the implementation of a levy was noted and will be a matter for further discussion.

Governance of Local Government:

4) Local Government Amendment (Code of Conduct) Bill 2014

The PLGC noted the proposed amendments to the code of conduct provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* are currently under development with the aim to provide a more efficient and effective process.

The Minister sought feedback from the PLGC regarding the amendment to remove the requirement that a candidate for the office of mayor or deputy mayor have a minimum 12 months experience as a councillor and as to whether or not an appeals mechanism is required. Mr Garcia indicated that an additional appeals mechanism could prove costly and counter productive.

Members confirmed they were broadly comfortable with the changes.

The Premier noted that amendments to the code of conduct provisions were proceeding and will be considered by Cabinet shortly.

5) Role of Local Government project

The Premier acknowledged the significant body of work the LGD and LGAT has undertaken on the Role of Local Government project (RoLG) to date.

Mr Garcia outlined the project history and stated the RoLG project is a collaborative project that has been supported and endorsed by local government.

Mayor Barry Jarvis stated he was concerned that no local government elected members were on any of the PLGC Working Groups.

Mr Garcia stated that project work is being undertaken at the officer level and once the draft strategy has been completed it will be provided to elected members for review.

Mr Phillip Hoysted, LGD, advised members that a draft strategic plan will be finalised by December 2014 and the final document completed in 2015. At both stages of development local government, including elected members, will be consulted.

The PLGC endorsed the Local Government Role Assessment Final Report and the terms of reference for the Collaboration, Economic Development, Legislation and Governance Working Groups.

6) Disability Action Plan

Mr Phillip Hoysted, LGD, advised that DPAC is preparing a Disability Action Plan 2014-17 and sought agreement to the recommendation that the LGD work closely with LGAT to provide recommendations to local government on disability strategies.

The PLGC endorsed the recommendation.

7) Councillor Allowances

The Minister sought the PLGC's position as to whether a full review of councillor allowances is needed, or whether current arrangements should be allowed to continue.

The PLGC agreed not to proceed with a review and that it was up to individual councils to decide on whether or not to implement a freeze on any further indexation of councillor allowances.

Planning and Environment

8) Forestry (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Bill 2014

The Premier noted that the Forestry (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Bill 2014 is currently with the Legislative Council and is expected to be debated in the first sitting week in August.

Mr Allan Garcia, LGAT, informed the PLGC that local governments expectation is that if land is rateable local government will receive rates. The Minister confirmed the Government's position was in-line with local government's expectations.

The Premier noted the information.

2014-2015 PLGC Work Plan:

9) 2014 – 15 PLGC Work Plan

Mr Phillip Hoysted, LGD, advised that the 2014-15 PLGC work plan will be developed in September following the confirmation of the PLGC working groups' terms of reference and that the new work plan may be provided for PLGC endorsement at the next meeting of the PLGC

10) Other business

The Premier acknowledged the contribution that Mayor Barry Easter has made to the PLGC and congratulated Barry for his outstanding contribution to local government.

Mayor Barry Easter thanked the PLGC and stated that working for local government had been a great experience and privilege.

Meeting closed.

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1	Mr Greg Alomes, Tasmanian Planning Commission, provide a presentation at the December PLGC meeting on the state-wide planning scheme
9	LGD to prepare a 2014-2015 PLGC work plan and present to the December PLGC meeting.