

Minutes
Meeting No. 45
Hobart, 3 December 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 Jarvis Mayor, Dorset 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
Ald Doug Chipman Mayor, Clarence City Council

Officials in attendance:

Local Government

Mr Allan Garcia Chief Executive Officer, LGAT
Mr Robert Dobrzynski General Manager, Launceston City Council
Mr Peter Brooks General Manager, Glenorchy City Council
Ms Sandra Ayton General Manager, Central Coast Council

State Government

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

Mr Phillip Hoysted	Director of Local Government, Local Government Division (LGD), Department of Premier and Cabinet
Mr Greg Brown	Deputy Director, LGD
Ms Bettina Cruise	Assistant Director, LGD
Ms Bridget Dwyer	Policy Analyst, LGD

Apologies

Apologies were received from Katrena Stephenson, Policy Director, LGAT, Kim Evans, Secretary, Department of State Growth, Greg Alomes, Commissioner, Tasmanian Planning Commission and Councillor Graham Bury, Councillor, Kingborough Council.

Welcome

The Premier welcomed members to the final Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) meeting for 2014 and congratulated Mayor Barry Jarvis on becoming the new President of LGAT.

The Premier outlined the Government's commitment to the consultative and collaborative approach developed under the PLGC and how he was keen for this to continue.

The Premier noted the apologies received.

Agenda item

1) Draft Minutes of the PLGC meeting on 6 August 2014

The PLGC accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2014 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2) Matters of Topical Interest

I. Voluntary Amalgamations

The Minister advised that he had written to all mayors to invite them to attend one of three regional meetings in early 2015. The meetings will provide councils with the opportunity to have an open discussion about voluntary amalgamations.

The Premier advised that there will be no forced voluntary amalgamations and that the Government is open to other options and ideas from local government.

LGAT stated it was important, when considering amalgamations, to also look at options for shared services; placement of essential resources and service delivery; and to define a competitive local government sector.

II. Transfer of Forestry Roads

Allan Garcia advised that at the July 2014 LGAT General Meeting, a motion was passed that the Association would seek discussions with the State Government regarding negotiations relating to the handover of Forestry Tasmania roads to the Parks and Wildlife Service.

The key concerns relate to the negative impacts and safety issues that deteriorating roads will have on communities and tourism if no funding is made available for continued maintenance.

LGAT agreed to consolidate members concerns and report back to the PLGC at the first meeting in 2015.

LGD stated it would talk to DPIPWE regarding assessment of existing roads and maintenance priorities, outlining the urgency of the issue.

The Minister advised that there is limited funding and that road maintenance will focus on priority areas.

III. Legal risk and liability associated with managing coastal hazards risk and adapting to climate change

Allan Garcia stated members were concerned about councils' legal liability for actions and decisions taken in relation to managing coastal hazard risk and coastal adaptation to climate change, and how the current Government is planning to address the issue.

The Minister advised that the Government is not considering statutory exemption from liability for councils in the first instance and that a number of initiatives are being progressed to improve information and guidance for councils.

The Premier noted the information and stated DPAC will review the New South Wales model and report on the issue at the next PLGC meeting.

IV. Council Rating Issues

Allan Garcia advised members would like to be able to rate down to the tenancy level under Capital Value and that councils are concerned about delays in the provision of supplementary valuations which is causing a loss in rate revenue. LGAT sought feedback as to whether the Valuer-General would consider a fee-for-service option if councils were prepared to cover the fee.

It was resolved that Phillip Hoysted and Allan Garcia meet with the Valuer-General in early 2015.

Governance of Local Government:

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

The PLGC noted major changes to the code of conduct provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulations 2005* are currently under development with the aim to provide a more efficient and effective process and that a draft version of the Bill has been released for consultation.

The PLGC also noted LGAT will no longer be responsible for the Standards Panel or play a role in the complaint process once the legislation is passed by Parliament. Proposed changes reflect feedback from local government and include individual council panels to be replaced with a single independent panel, a model code of conduct process to be adopted by councils and complaints to undergo an initial review by the panel.

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.

4) Role of Local Government project

Bettina Cruise informed the PLGC that the Working Group Chairs' Committee agreed to extend the developmental phase of the project to ensure the projects delivered are evidence based, innovative and targeted. Consultation on the Strategic Action Plan is scheduled for March 2015, with the aim of bringing the finalised Plan to the May 2015 PLGC meeting for endorsement.

The Working Group Chairs provided a verbal update on progress made by their groups. Updates were noted.

5) State-wide Waste Levy

The Minister advised the PLGC that since the last meeting the Waste Advisory Committee has commissioned a study into the economics of introducing a landfill waste levy in Tasmania, and its impact on the cost of living and that a final report on the study is due soon.

The Minister stated that the Minister for State Growth, Minister for Energy and Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, the Hon. Matthew Groom MP, will consider the outcomes of the study and meeting with the Waste Advisory Council in early 2015.

The Minister further advised that he has some reservations regarding the additional tax aspects of a levy, considering cost of living impacts.

It was resolved an update on the issue will be provided at the next PLGC meeting by LGD.

6) Performance Reporting and Continuous Improvement

Phillip Hoysted advised the PLGC that the LGD and LGAT undertook a review of the Sustainability, Objectives and Indicators (SOI) project. The review found that there is strong support from local government for performance management of councils, but there were a number of opportunities to enhance the current reporting system.

The LGD sought endorsement from the PLGC to develop a new continuous improvement framework in consultation with the local government sector.

Allan Garcia suggested that a working group be established to identify the form and content of the new framework.

It was resolved that a scoping paper be provided by LGD to the next PLGC meeting.

Planning and Environment

7) Forestry (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Act 2014

The Premier noted that the *Forestry (Rebuilding the Forest Industry) Act 2014* was passed by both Houses of Parliament in September 2014 and commenced on 22 October 2014.

Allan Garcia informed the PLGC that under the new legislation the 400,000 hectares of Future Reserve Land is now Future Potential Production Forest and that this land is rateable. However the value of the land will not be known until the Valuer-General does its next valuation, likely in 2015-2016.

Barry Jarvis stated members would appreciate it if the timeframes could be brought forward.

The Minister advised that PLGC Officials should also discuss this matter with the Valuer-General.

It was resolved that Phillip Hoysted and Allan Garcia include this matter in their discussions with the Valuer-General.

8) Presentation of the State-wide Planning Scheme

The presentation on the State-wide Planning Scheme was withdrawn from the agenda.

PLGC Work Plan:

9) PLGC Work Plan

Phillip Hoysted advised that the PLGC work plan will be developed in 2015 following the completion of the Role of Local Government Strategic Action Plan.

Once finalised the new work plan will be provided to the PLGC for endorsement.

10) Other business

No other matters were raised.

Meeting closed.

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
2 ii	<p>LGAT to consolidate members concerns that relate to safety, tourism and access on Forestry roads and report back to the May 2015 PLGC meeting.</p> <p>LGD to discuss the urgent need for the assessment of priority areas to be identified with DPIPWWE.</p>
2 iii	<p>DPAC to review NSW Coastal Policy model and report back to the May 2015 PLGC meeting.</p>
2 iv / 7	<p>LGD and LGAT to meet with the OVG to discuss rating down to the tenancy level and bringing forward of timeframes for valuations of the Future Potential Production Forest land.</p>
5	<p>LGD to seek an update from DPIPWWE on the State-wide Waste levy for the May 2015 PLGC meeting.</p>
6	<p>LGD to provide a scoping paper for the Performance Reporting and Continuous Improvement project at the May 2015 PLGC meeting.</p>

