

**PREMIER'S
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COUNCIL**

Thursday 9 May 2019, 11.00 am – 1.00 pm
Launceston City Town Hall Reception Room

Meeting Minutes

PLGC Members	
Hon Will Hodgman MP	Premier (Chair)
Hon Peter Gutwein MP	Minister for Local Government
Ald Doug Chipman	President, Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) General Management Committee (GMC) Mayor, Clarence City Council
Ald Anna Reynolds	Lord Mayor, Hobart City Council
Cr Daryl Quilliam	Vice President, LGAT GMC Mayor, Circular Head Council
Cr Jan Bonde	Mayor, Central Coast Council (Cr Bonde will serve as proxy in Steve Martin's position until LGAT GMC elections in 2019)
Cr Christina Holmdahl	Mayor, West Tamar Council
Cr Tony Bisdee	Southern Midlands Council
Cr Mick Tucker	Mayor, Break O'Day Council
Ald Heather Chong	Deputy Mayor, Clarence City Council
PLGC Officials	
Andrew Paul	General Manager, Clarence City Council
Sandra Ayton	General Manager, Central Coast Council
Martin Gill	General Manager, Meander Valley Council
Dr Katrena Stephenson	Chief Executive Officer, LGAT
Dion Lester	Policy Director, LGAT
Mel Gray	A/g Deputy Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC)
Alex Tay	Director of Local Government, Local Government Division (LGD), DPAC

Secretariat	
Luke Murphy-Gregory	A/g Assistant Director, LGD, DPAC
Mitchell Cook	Policy and Project Officer, LGD, DPAC
Guests	
Ilise Bourke	Project Director, LGD, DPAC
Dean Burgess	Director, Economic Policy Branch, Treasury
Kirstan Long	Principal Policy Analyst, Office of the Secretary, Treasury
Wes Ford	Deputy Secretary EPA Tasmania
Dr John Whittington	Secretary, DPIPW
Rick Dunn	Senior Adviser to Minister Gutwein

Welcome

The Premier welcomed participants to the first Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) meeting for 2019. The Premier opened the meeting by acknowledging that Tasmania is at a critical time where State and local government collaboration is more important than ever. Population trends in particular are a key focus for both State and local governments, given the clearly different challenges and opportunities confronting different parts of the State. Sensible planning reform and delivering services to support where people are moving to live and work is crucial for maximising Tasmania's economic and social potential.

The PLGC welcomed guests attending the meeting to speak to agenda items. There was one change to the PLGC Officials membership; Mel Gray who is currently acting Deputy Secretary in the Department of Premier and Cabinet has replaced David Nicholson as Chair of the PLGC Officials Committee.

While there were no changes to the PLGC membership, the Premier noted that this would be the last PLGC meeting for some members given the approaching LGAT elections. The Premier and Minister thanked Mayor Doug Chipman for his contributions as President of LGAT and acknowledged the effective role he has played in representing the local government sector.

The contributions of mayors Mick Tucker, Daryl Quilliam, Jan Bonde, Councillor and former Mayor Tony Bisdee, and Alderman Heather Chong were also acknowledged. The Premier wished those well who were seeking re-election to the General Management Committee.

The PLGC also acknowledged that it was Andrew Paul's last PLGC meeting, and thanked him for his valued contributions throughout his role as General Manager of Clarence City Council since 2003, to the local government sector more broadly, and as an Official supporting the PLGC.

Agenda Item 1: Minutes – PLGC meeting 10 December 2018

The PLGC endorsed the minutes of the 10 December 2018 PLGC meeting as a true and accurate record. PLGC noted the eight actions arising from the meeting, three of which were addressed through PLGC agenda items.

Agenda Item 2: Local Government Legislation Review

The PLGC noted the progress and current status of the local government legislation review. The Minister spoke to the PLGC about how the Review had proven to be a collaborative effort, with local government working with the State Government through representation on the Review's Reference Group and Steering Committee.

Ilise Bourke, the Project Director for the Review, and Alex Tay presented to PLGC on the success of the Review's consultation process, the key issues raised during consultation, and the reform themes emerging from the Reference Group discussions. The PLGC noted and discussed the various themes, which included potential electoral reforms, red-tape reduction, and increasing community engagement, transparency and accountability in the local government sector.

LGAT raised concerns that a principles-based approach to legislation creates risk for local government in terms of potentially reduced parliamentary checks and balances. PLGC noted this issue would be worked through during the drafting phase of the Review.

The PLGC noted that the Reference Group deliberations are almost complete and the next stage in the Review process will involve the release of a Reform Directions Paper for public consultation in mid-2019.

Agenda Item 3: Population growth trends

The PLGC noted the prominence of population change as an issue both in Tasmania and nationally. Tracking key demographic trends is crucial for informing future strategies to deal with predicted population growth and decline, and forms part of the backdrop to the ongoing discussion on the viability and sustainability of Tasmanian councils.

The PLGC noted the various pieces of work being undertaken within Government that highlight population change. This includes the *2019 Population projections* prepared by the Department of Treasury and Finance, and the *Population Trends in Local Government Areas from 1993 – 2017* paper prepared by DPAC. The PLGC noted that both pieces of work identify the same trends; population growth concentrated in major metropolitan centres, with neutral or declining populations in smaller rural communities.

PLGC also noted the continued national focus on population challenges and opportunities, including the discussions had at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) December 2018 meeting. LGAT highlighted the broader prominence of population, with a population roundtable held by the University of Tasmania's Institute for the Study of Social Change in April 2019, and the population symposium being held on 12 June 2019 by Regional Development Australia (RDA) Tasmania.

The Minister noted that there is positivity and opportunity that comes with population change, in addition to the challenges, and that the 2019-20 State Budget presents an opportunity to continue responding to these matters.

The PLGC agreed that the meeting Communique should be adjusted to reflect the State Government's and LGAT's strong commitment to working collaboratively to maximise population related opportunities, including attracting investment and jobs for sustainable growth in both urban and regional areas.

Agenda Item 4: Amalgamations, strategic shared services and 21st century councils

The PLGC discussed the current status of voluntary amalgamations and shared services initiatives across Tasmanian councils.

Dr Stephenson updated the PLGC on LGAT's undertaking to establish the evidence base for the key features of sustainable 21st century Tasmanian councils. Dr Stephenson advised that further workshopping had been undertaken at the LGAT March General Meeting with general managers and mayors, and that the next step is to broaden consultation on the paper to the community and other stakeholders. This may involve designing a toolkit to assist councils in having conversations about this matter with their communities.

The PLGC agreed that the title of this standing item would be changed to omit 'Amalgamations' and insert 'Structural reform'.

Agenda Item 5: Director of Local Government report

The PLGC noted the Director's report. The report included the Director's observations in regard to the post 2018 State-wide election period, an update on the implementation of the Code of Conduct changes, and an update on key priorities being progressed in other jurisdictions.

Mr Tay spoke about the issues experienced by King Island Council which resulted in the Mayor and General Manager leaving the Council soon after the 2018 elections. The Council has engaged an experienced local government professional to support it given the significant changes it has experienced. This measure is providing valuable support to the acting General Manager and councillors. The PLGC noted that this type of assistance could be used in comparable situations where a council finds itself with limited local government experience at a point in time.

The PLGC discussed the developments in other jurisdictions including the move by New South Wales to introduce mandatory webcasting of council meetings and capability training for councils and candidates in some jurisdictions.

Agenda Item 6: Dog management issues

The purpose of the Dog management issues agenda item was for PLGC to note a range of issues associated with dog management and the operation of the *Dog Control Act 2000* more broadly, and to discuss potential legislative amendments for addressing these issues.

LGAT expressed support for legislative amendments provided that changes to the way dog exercise areas are managed in respect to greyhounds is a decision of individual councils, rather than an imposition by the State Government. LGAT requested that potential amendments also consider the cost to councils.

The PLGC discussed the current methods councils employ with regard to educating dog owners about responsible dog ownership, and whether educational materials are provided to owners when they register their dogs. LGAT undertook to provide the Local Government Division with examples of what councils do in regard to responsible dog ownership education.

Agenda Item 7: Charitable rates exemptions

The PLGC noted the recent developments in respect to the application of charitable rates exemptions.

The Minister explained that the Tasmanian Government is currently reviewing submissions from LGAT, TasCOSS and the Aged Care Services Australia on this matter, and intends to take a careful, considered approach. This is necessary to ensure a fair way of dealing with this complex issue. PLGC noted that there is some inconsistency in how the charitable rates provision is applied across councils which is also conflated with policy choices made by individual councils to provide rate relief to some organisations that legally they are not obliged to.

Mr Chipman updated PLGC on LGAT's work in respect to the charitable rates exemption matter, which includes establishing a steering committee. The local government sector intends to develop a legislative proposal and provide that proposal to the Government.

PLGC agreed that charitable rates exemptions should also be on the agenda for the next PLGC meeting to enable both levels of government to report on progress in relation to this matter.

Agenda Item 8: Coastal erosion

Dr John Whittington attended the meeting to speak to the item.

The PLGC noted that there are ongoing discussions between LGAT, DPIPWE and DPAC in respect to finalising an agreed set of principles that clarify the management of coastal erosion occurring on Crown land.

LGAT raised that there is also a need to agree on a decision making framework for the management of coastal erosion more broadly, and LGAT would like to see the State Government work with councils to develop a clearer policy on when intervention should or should not occur, where coastal erosion impacts public and private property. The PLGC also noted that the 1996 State Coastal Policy is not fit for purpose to deal with this issue.

Dr Whittington explained that DPIPW is willing to continue to work with LGAT, both in respect to finalising the coastal erosion management principles on Crown Land and discussing the possibility of working with LGAT on a framework to manage coastal erosion based on those principles, more broadly.

PLGC agreed to put Coastal erosion on the next PLGC agenda to report progress on the matter.

Agenda Item 9: Waste management

The PLGC discussed a range of waste management issues of significance to all levels of government, including the price of recycling, national waste management developments, and the release of a draft Tasmanian Waste Action Plan for public consultation.

LGAT advocated for the need for a consistent and definitive policy and regulatory setting across the State in respect to waste management to guarantee investment in this area. LGAT informed PLGC that it is pursuing a jointly funded project with DPIPW to look at the governance of waste management in the State, with a view to supporting the case for a State-wide waste management arrangement.

The PLGC agreed to invite the Minister for the Environment to the next PLGC meeting to speak to the waste management items.

Agenda Item 10: Camping facilities and competitive neutrality

The PLGC noted the Camping facilities and competitive neutrality paper.

Agenda Item 11: Accessible playspaces

The PLGC noted the Accessible playspaces paper and the PLGC Officials meeting outcome on accessible playspaces.

Agenda Item 12: Statewide planning

The PLGC noted the Statewide planning paper.

Agenda Item 13: Economic development snapshot

The PLGC noted the Economic development snapshot paper and the Summary of Key Economic Indicators snapshot.

Agenda Item 14: Communique approval

The PLGC discussed the draft communique and agreed that the LGAT CEO and Director of Local Government would prepare a final version for approval prior to publication, taking account of changes agreed to during the meeting.

Agenda Item 15: Other business and meeting close

LGAT asked that the next PLGC agenda include an update on cat management.

The PLGC noted the next PLGC meeting and the number of meetings is yet to be decided. The PLGC will confirm if two or three meetings are preferred in 2019.

The Premier commended all PLGC members for their contributions during the meeting.

Meeting closed 1:00 pm

Actions

Agenda Item	Actions From PLGC Meeting on 9 May 2019	Who	When	Complete
4	Change the title of the 'Amalgamations, strategic shared services and 21st century councils' standing item to ' <u>Structural reform</u> , strategic shared services and 21st century councils'.	Secretariat	Next PLGC	Complete
6	Provide the Local Government Division with examples of what councils do in regard to responsible dog ownership education.	LGAT	ASAP	Complete
7	Report on charitable rates exemptions at the next PLGC.	LGD	Next PLGC	
8	Report on the Coastal erosion matter at the next PLGC.	LGAT and DPIPWE	Next PLGC	
9	Invite the Minister for Environment to report on waste management at the next PLGC.	Secretariat	ASAP	Complete
-	Report on cat management at the next PLGC agenda.	DPIPWE	Next PLGC	

