
Communiqué

Premier's Local Government Council Meeting – 9 December 2019

The Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) met in Hobart on 9 December 2019 for its third and final meeting of the year. The Premier, the Hon Will Hodgman MP, chairs the PLGC, which also includes the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Mark Shelton MP, the elected members of the General Management Committee (GMC) of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) including the President, Mayor Christina Holmdahl. The PLGC is supported by members of the PLGC Officials Committee.

The PLGC provides an important forum for the Tasmanian Government and the local government sector to jointly identify, progress and oversee strategic initiatives that will benefit the Tasmanian community.

Over the course of 2019, the PLGC has discussed a range of important topics, including population trends at the local government level, the Local Government Legislation Review and developments in the area of waste management at the local, state and federal level. It will be another important year in 2020 for the State Government and the local government sector as the Local Government Legislation Review commences the drafting phase.

Enhancing council performance reporting

Making council performance information more readily available is a joint priority of the State Government and the local government sector.

The PLGC was presented with a pilot for a Tasmanian council performance reporting website.

The website concept would include financial, infrastructure, planning and development, and capital expenditure information from already collected council data. While these data are publicly available via theLIST, the website will value-add by presenting performance information in a more dynamic and accessible format.

The PLGC agreed that the website presents a range of potential benefits, including increased transparency and accountability and supporting councils' strategic and financial planning processes. The website may also enable the community to learn more about their councils and the factors that drive performance. The PLGC provided its in-principle support for the performance reporting website concept, noting that further consultation will occur with councils prior to finalising a launched product.

Bullying and harassment

The PLGC discussed the importance of reducing bullying and harassment within local government and agreed that bullying and harassment of any person, including councillors, should not be tolerated.

LGAT has been working with the sector to address bullying and harassment in local government. This includes through social media seminars, attended by both elected members and council staff, to address how to best use social media and what practical steps may be taken in the face of bullying and harassment through social media. There are expectations on elected members at all levels of government to demonstrate appropriate civil discourse and to ensure debate occurs in the appropriate forums. Similarly, elected officials have the right to expect community members to engage with them in a respectful manner.

The PLGC noted that LGAT has recently held a Mayors Professional Development session, attended by the Minister for Local Government, to discuss this important issue.

The PLGC also noted that the State Government is taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to bullying. The Government has enacted amendments to the *Criminal Code Act 1924* that criminalise certain serious bullying behaviours including cyber-bullying.

The PLGC agreed that the State Government and the local government sector should continue to work collaboratively on practical initiatives to address bullying and harassment in local government, including supporting resources for elected members.

Strategic labour force planning and skills development

The PLGC discussed the importance of prioritising population planning and regional skills development to ensure all Tasmanians can benefit from the State's strong economic performance.

The State Government's more than \$100 million annual investment in skills and workforce development is managed by Skills Tasmania in the Department of State Growth. This involves collaborating with and supporting local governments with their own initiatives, which includes the *Cradle Coast Authority (CCA) Regional Futures Plan*, the *West Coast Education and Training Committee* and the *Launceston Apprenticeship Pipeline Project*.

The Treasurer, the Hon Peter Gutwein MP attended the PLGC meeting to discuss how the State Government is currently working with other state and territory governments and the Australian Government to develop a National Population and Planning Framework. The Framework will help to understand future skills requirements and how skilled labour can be encouraged beyond our major capital cities, including in Tasmania.

The PLGC discussed how these initiatives and the many other State and local initiatives are ensuring the appropriate supply and demand of skilled labour in regional parts of the State, and contribute to the Strategic Growth Framework, which recognises that all Tasmanians should have the opportunity to participate in and share in the benefits of Tasmania's economic growth.

Other topics

The PLGC discussed action and progress on a range of other matters of importance to the local government sector, including:

- an update on the Local Government Legislation Review and an overview of the next steps in the Review process;
- that the Government has been engaging with LGAT, the Tasmanian Council of Social Services and Aged Care Services Australia to develop policy options on the eligibility of independent living units for a rates exemption under the *Local Government Act 1993*; and
- an update on the State Government's draft *Waste Action Plan*, the Container Refund Scheme and the State-wide Waste Levy.

The PLGC also noted matters in relation to the *State Coastal Policy 1996*, including:

- that the Department of Premier and Cabinet has established a State Planning Interdepartmental Committee (SIPDC) to provide whole-of-government advice to the Tasmanian Government on priority planning and resource management matters, including State Policies; and
- that appropriate next steps for the State Policies, including the *State Coastal Policy 1996*, will be considered by the SPIDC and advice provided to the Government.

Other matters canvassed include State-wide planning and economic development.

Further information on the PLGC is available on the LGD website:

www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local_government/plgc.

PLGC Membership	
Hon Will Hodgman MP	Premier (Chair)
Hon Mark Shelton MP	Minister for Local Government
Cr Christina Holmdahl	President, Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) General Management Committee (GMC), Mayor, West Tamar Council
Cr Anna Reynolds	Lord Mayor, Hobart City Council
Cr Ben Shaw	Vice President, LGAT GMC Mayor, Derwent Valley Council
Cr Annette Rockliff	Mayor, Devonport City Council
Cr Mick Tucker	Mayor, Break O'Day Council
Ald Brendan Blomeley	Alderman, Clarence City Council
Cr Daryl Quilliam	Mayor, Circular Head Council
Cr Geoff Lyons	Councillor, West Tamar Council

