

Queensland Local Government

Advocacy Action Plan

APRIL 2018

The Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) is the peak body for local government in Queensland. It is a not-for-profit association set up solely to serve councils and their individual needs. The LGAQ has been advising, supporting and representing councils since 1896, allowing them to improve their operations and strengthen relationships with their communities. The LGAQ does this by connecting councils to people and places that count; supporting their drive to innovate and improve service delivery through smart services and sustainable solutions; and delivering them the means to achieve community, professional and political excellence.



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Foreword

Local councils are the fabric that draws local communities together. No other institution or tier of government is involved in more aspects of community life, from building roads and bridges to caring for the local environment to providing library services and recovering from natural disasters. Increasingly, councils are also playing the primary role in building confidence in their communities and securing opportunities for their regions that deliver jobs and prosperity for their constituents.

Queensland has 579 elected councillors across 77 local councils, who employ more than 40,000 people. Local governments also oversee more than \$108 billion in community assets. Our daily goal is striving to build strong, liveable, connected communities in Australia's most diverse and regionalised state. If local government was listed on the stock exchange, it would be a bigger business in terms of staff numbers and assets under management than the State's top three public companies.

If local councils thrive, Queensland thrives. But to do this consistently they need to develop or help to develop relevant and responsive public policy, services that meet the needs of their residents and reflect the expectations of their communities. With this in mind, the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) has identified improving integrity and accountability, as well as addressing financial sustainability as the two major challenges local councils will continue to face for the remainder of this local government term.

As the peak body for local councils in Queensland, the LGAQ exists to ensure councils - the tier of government closest to the community - can do their jobs better. We are not just another stakeholder. We work with the state and federal governments to drive reforms in planning, economic and community development and environmental management

that improve the well-being of all Queensland's communities, be they based in urban areas, on the coast or in the bush, whether they are resources or agriculture based or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Our relationships with the state and federal governments are based on mutual respect, open and honest dialogue and recognition of our shared responsibilities in serving the people of Queensland.

I urge you to read this document and use it as a reference in your dealings with us. It identifies the goals Queensland's local councils are pursuing as they work to improve the lives of the people and communities they represent.

Mayor Mark Jamieson

President

Local Government Association of Queensland



Queensland local government at a glance



579 Councillors
 40,490 Employees
 245 Occupations



\$108 billion
in assets



\$10 billion
spent annually on services and facilities



\$25 billion
in water and waste water assets



\$9 billion
expenditure on community services



22 million +
Visitors and tourists



1 billion
tonnes hard waste managed



3,000 +
community houses managed



500,000 +
street lights



250 +
swimming pools

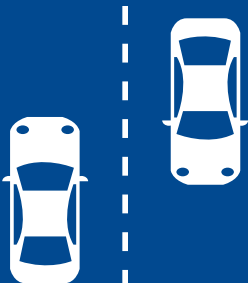


30,000 +
food business licenses, art galleries, festivals

2,800 + bridges



314
water treatment plants



153,000 km +
local roads



53,000 hectares +
parks and playgrounds



76,000 km
water & sewer mains



328
libraries

Local government is about people

Councils are the level of government closest to the community, strong local employers and constant, reliable drivers of regional economies.





What local government seeks

1. The Partners in Government Agreement reaffirmed with a local government budget overview and mechanisms to support whole of government engagement on matters relevant to local government
2. Grant reform that delivers greater certainty and long term planning for councils to better manage their assets and revenue forecasts
3. Contemporary Industrial Award coverage for all local government employees
4. Targeted employment programs to ensure the local government workforce remains capable and productive
5. Implementation of the 2016 local government election review report recommendations in consultation with the LGAQ



⇔ **Local government is open, transparent and accountable**

Councils strive to reflect the values and aspirations of their communities. Integrity, open and transparent government and public accountability must be at the core of everything they do.



What local government seeks

6. Equitable, non-discriminatory rules covering political donations and opposes any moves away from a level playing field. The opportunity for all to participate in the political process is an important principle of Australian democracy
7. Implementation of the majority of the Operation Belcarra recommendations. The LGAQ proposes further 'beyond Belcarra' reforms including the requirement for a councillor with a donation or gift on their register of interest above \$500 to automatically remove themselves from a decision-making meeting
8. Compulsory register of interests for all candidates seeking election (as a condition of nomination) to provide greater public awareness during the election process
9. Overhaul of the councillor complaints process with strong front-end triage system to expeditiously deal with genuine complaints
10. An Electoral Monitor to improve the quality, transparency and accountability of local government election campaigns
11. Implementation of Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) recommendations to make it an offence to publicise complaints in the three months leading up to local government elections
12. Access to government data to support the Better Councils, Better Communities initiative, LG Sherlock and the public release of a pilot of local government performance benchmarking





Local government is financially responsible

Raising just three per cent of the nation's taxes, councils need to be vigilant in their long term financial management. Councils are the provider of last resort for communities and require autonomy to set rates and charges.



What local government seeks

13. A fixed one per cent share of Commonwealth taxation revenue to enable long term financial planning and certainty
14. Retention of legislative provisions to provide local government autonomy to set rates and charges and to enable the delivery of waste management services to the entire community
15. Implementation of the memorandum of understanding with Trade and Investment Queensland to better coordinate trade and investment opportunities for local communities
16. Public access to agricultural data by local government area to assist councils in their economic development role
17. Resolution of the legislative ambiguity and financial risk to councils in relation to the sale of land for overdue rates recovery where unpaid body corporate contributions exceed the value of the sale proceeds



Local government is strong and sustainable, and creates healthy communities

Planning

Council planning decisions reflect how people want their communities to develop. The community's ability to determine the shape, size and liveability of the places in which people live, work and play needs to be protected.



What local government seeks

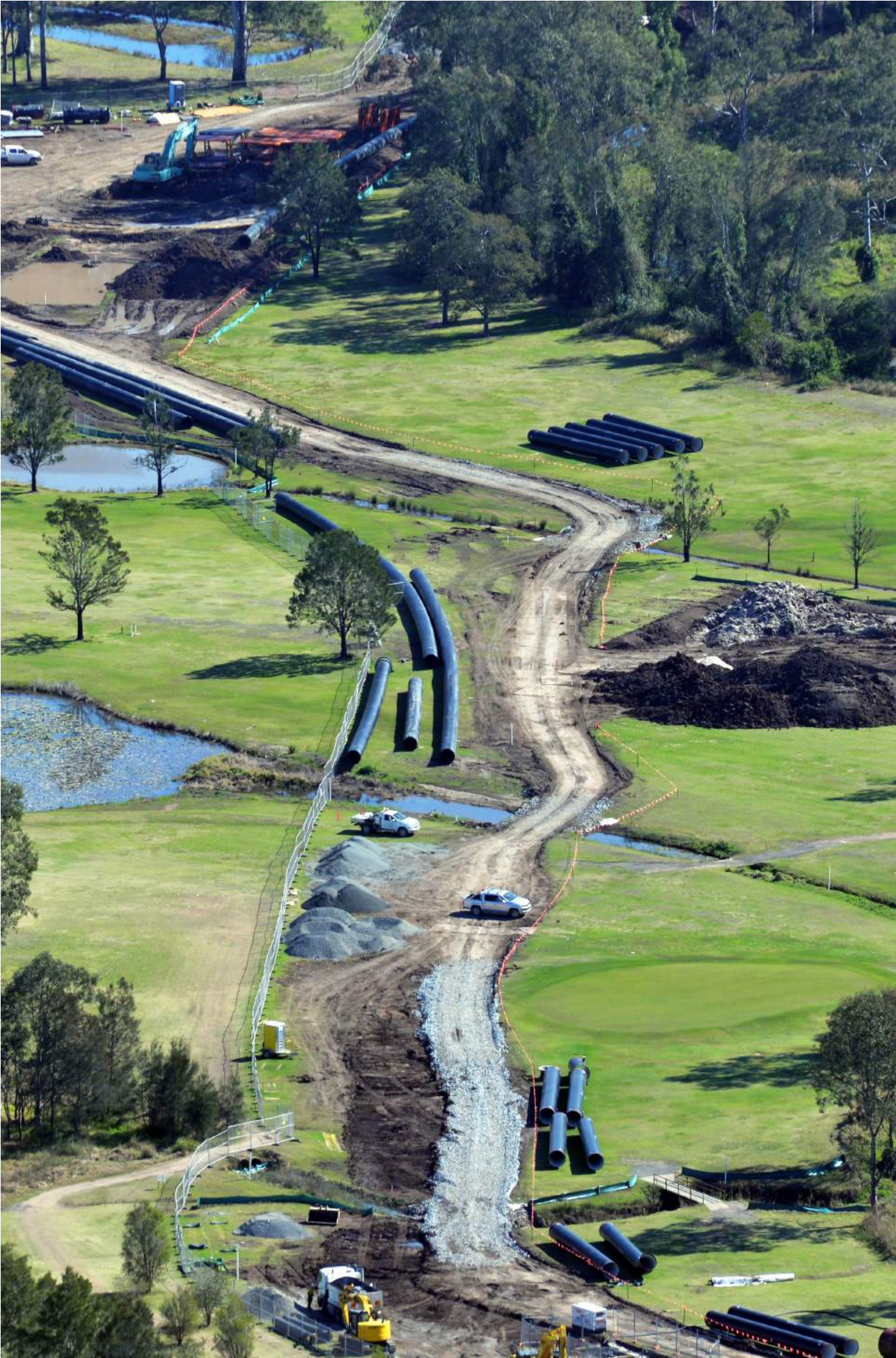
18. Ongoing funding for planning innovation and improvement projects to drive leading practice in strategic land use planning and development assessment
19. A legislative exemption for local government from liability, for advice given or acts done in good faith for managing the risk associated with natural hazards
20. Removal of red tape and inequities related to the Local Government Infrastructure Plan process
21. Equitable arrangements for planning and funding of new infrastructure designations, including in relation to all schools
22. A clear policy position and response to the use of residential properties for short-term accommodation where facilitated by on-line booking platforms
23. Legislation that applies the same public consultation and notification requirements to State planning instruments and Ministerial designations, as currently applied to the preparation of local planning instruments
24. Development of regional infrastructure plans as part of a statutory regional planning program, including State budget reforms to deliver long term infrastructure projects outlined in the State Infrastructure Plan
25. Transfer of assessment manager responsibilities for assessable levee bank development applications from local to State Government
26. Education Queensland support for a partnership approach to access education facilities for community sporting clubs, outside normal school hours
27. An adaptive management approach to the impacts and opportunities of resource projects on regional communities
28. Recognition and meaningful engagement with councils in the assessment and management of resource projects, including financial support for participation in Environmental Impact Statement and Social Impact Assessment processes.
29. All resource projects to have a Social Impact Management Plan, regularly updated to reflect contemporary economic and social conditions
30. Social Impact Assessments and project conditions which ensure that regional communities benefit from the construction and operation of resource projects
31. Introduction of a framework that assesses cumulative impacts of resource projects across communities, with identified impacts addressed in project Social Impact Management Plans

Infrastructure - Water, sewerage and roads

Councils are custodians of the built environment and provide their communities with the basics that go into creating quality places to live: a safe, reliable water supply and a network able to move people and goods around safely and efficiently.

What local government seeks

32. Increased and continued funding for the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP)
33. Inclusion of non-capital infrastructure solutions for funding of water and sewerage services to help deliver better asset management planning
34. A dedicated funding program for water and sewerage services in regional communities
35. Transparent pricing by state government utilities that do not impose unreasonable operating costs on councils
36. Recognition of council road infrastructure in the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, with a new federally funded program to address first and last mile constraints on the local government road network
37. A new Memorandum of Agreement for the Roads and Transport Alliance, with a greater commitment to embed regional transport planning in Regional Roads and Transport Groups
38. Permanent Roads to Recovery and Bridges Renewal Programs
39. Increased funding through the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, with a revised contribution methodology for rural and remote councils
40. A local government focussed Action Plan that aligns with the Safer Roads, Safer Queensland Strategy, including funding arrangements to help councils improve delivery of a safer local road and transport network
41. Continued and increased funding levels for the Federal Blackspot Program
42. An independent review of long distance passenger and freight services for rural and regional Queensland



Environment and public health

Councils are custodians of significant natural assets, protective of the environment and create sustainable communities through waste management, public health initiatives and adapting to climate change.



Luke Marsden
News Corp

What local government seeks

43. \$3 million over two years to fund local government waste infrastructure to support councils to proactively participate in the Container Refund Scheme
44. Ongoing monitoring and review of the impacts on council operations from the introduction of the Container Refund Scheme on 1 July 2018 (including kerbside recycling collections, planning and amenity)
45. Suitable incentives and sustainability measures to improve resource recovery and recycling outcomes across regional Queensland
46. \$5.5 million to fund the removal of bulk metal including legacy car wrecks and white goods in the Torres Strait and other discrete isolated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
47. \$250,000 to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils to develop regional waste solutions that complement the overarching State Waste Management Strategy
48. A commitment that any State waste levy is not imposed on domestic kerbside waste and that funds raised are fully returned to waste related activities
49. New funding for weed and feral animal funding programs including expansion to non-drought declared areas
50. Funding for councils to implement the Biosecurity Act 2014 and draft Biosecurity Strategy including training and guidance materials
51. Continuation of natural resource management funding including a dedicated stream to local government
52. An independent review of the governance arrangements for the implementation of the Great Barrier Reef 2050 Plan to improve accountability and decision-making
53. Commitment to a long-term investment model that reflects the Great Barrier Reef's economic and environmental asset value currently estimated at \$56 billion, including direct investment streams for local government
54. Delivery of climate change data tailored for local government use
55. Expanded Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program to allow all councils to undertake climate change governance assessments
56. Certainty for local government to meet their State-devolved public health responsibilities such as clandestine labs without any liability risks from related compliance activities
57. State-wide management of flying-foxes and funding to support the management of flying-fox colonies
58. Resources and training for the implementation of a new Strategic Framework for Mosquito Management



Local government is representative of all communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils

Councils are the most effective, cost efficient bodies to meet the challenges encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and support closing the gap for first Australians.





What local government seeks

59. Federal and state government investment in housing in discrete Indigenous communities equivalent to the previous 2008-2018 National Partnership Agreement for Remote Indigenous Housing
60. Improved health outcomes for Indigenous communities through alternative service delivery
61. Greater representation of democratically elected Indigenous councillors on boards and committees
62. A strategy and funding to upskill local people in higher skilled roles in Indigenous communities
63. Preferred supplier status for local Indigenous businesses
64. Overarching plan for land tenure reform in Indigenous local governments
65. Funding to develop a digital strategy for indigenous councils to ensure discrete indigenous communities can take advantage of the benefits derived from the digital economy
66. Mutually satisfactory finalisation of the review into Alcohol Management Plans in Indigenous communities



Emergency management

Councils are there for their communities before, during and after the advent of natural disasters. They play an invaluable role in keeping their communities informed and safe during and after these events.

What local government seeks

67. New Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements that provide certainty and do not impose conditions that would leave councils worse off
68. A permanent 40:40:20 (Commonwealth:State:Local Government) mitigation fund
69. Engagement with councils as part of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services review of the State Emergency Service to clarify the role of local government and match councils' financial contribution to the SES with appropriate levels of control
70. Funding to protect and remediate coastal public infrastructure at risk of damage or loss due to coastal hazards (such as storm tide inundation and coastal erosion)





Local government is innovative and connected

Councils hold the key to fostering an entrepreneurial and globally connected community. Councils also play a key role in identifying the opportunities that will lead to a more prosperous future for their communities.

What local government seeks

- 71. Access for all communities to scalable and robust telecommunication infrastructure to allow participation in the digital economy
- 72. Regional digital strategies to assist councils manage regional economic opportunities from the digital economy
- 73. Regulatory reform to encourage innovative local energy solutions such as geothermal and solar power generation, distribution and storage
- 74. A bilateral agreement to leverage existing public infrastructure to realise the benefits of smart technology solutions, for example street lighting
- 75. Financial assistance and technical support for local and regional innovation start-up hubs and accelerators
- 76. Program to support innovative procurement in local government similar to the Small Business Innovation Research pilot program
- 77. Renewal of the First 5 Forever Family Literacy Initiative
- 78. Continuation of the federal government's Mobile Black Spot Program
- 79. Assistance in the development and awareness for the management of data, including strategies to improve the cyber-security of local government assets
- 80. A dedicated fund to assist councils with the operation of their CCTV networks that are utilised by the state and federal government



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