



EPLGA BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

From the meeting held at Wudinna on Friday 6th December 2013

Assets Management & Long Term Financial Planning Project

There has been further work on Assets Management & Long Term Financial Planning after a CEO's meeting in Adelaide at the time of the LGA AGM. It is planned to have an independent qualified person(s) undertake an audit of each individual Council's status in relation to Asset Management and Long Term Financial Planning.

Mining Round Table

The Round Table addressed how the impact of the increased mining interest on the Eyre Peninsula would affect local communities. The Forum provided an opportunity for local Councils to discuss the increased pressure on meeting community demands and expectations for local infrastructure and services. Councils also highlighted the need to understand how their regions will be affected in terms of population growth, housing demand and allotment of residential land.

An afternoon session was facilitated by Ms Wendy Campana, CEO LGA and addressed the S.A. Centre for Economic Studies (SACES) Report's recommendations and formed the next steps post the Round Table.

The SACES Report Recommendations highlighted:

1. the State Government together with the Local Government Association of SA (LGA) should consider establishing an "Eyre Peninsula Mining and Community Development Taskforce" to:
 - provide a single and strengthened forum for information sharing as to the development of mine sites, infrastructure demand and community impacts;
 - to assist councils in preparatory planning for housing and support services;and
 - to provide a focus to all State agencies activity (e.g., education, health, police) as a result of mining proceeding and thereby provide support to the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association (EPLGA) and Regional Development Australia (RDA) as they address local issues.
2. the "Eyre Peninsula Mining and Community Development Taskforce" would thereby play a similar role as the Olympic Dam Taskforce, enabling a single body to take a regional perspective in developing industry, on environmental matters and regional infrastructure and emerging issues that require joint local council/State government decision (i.e., "user pays" principle for road access; maintenance of local roads, etc.). Such a body could also draw in planning assistance from State agencies where land use planning, re-zoning is necessary at a council level; and
3. representation is a matter for the State government but could include membership of the LGA (1), membership from the EPLGA (3), membership of the Whyalla and Eyre RDA (1) consideration be given to a representative from the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) (1).

The Round Table delegates agreed to the above recommendations, however further work is needed to address the membership requirements, objectives of the Taskforce and its Terms of Reference. The EPLGA Board also endorsed these recommendations. It is proposed that the LGA will prepare a strategy paper to outline the next steps needed to continue to progress the recommendations, including timeframes and proposed objectives.

EPLGA Board Charter Review:

Mellor Olson lawyers prepared a draft charter which has been discussed by the EP CEO's Group and individual member Councils with amendments being made. The amended draft charter was endorsed by the EPLGA Board with the following further amendments:-

“The Board shall elect, from the elected member Board Members of different Constituent Councils, at the February meeting following the Local Government periodical elections:

- 1.1.1 President, who shall be the chairperson of the Board;
- 1.1.2 Deputy President, who shall be the deputy chairperson of the Board.”

(deleting the officers term of appointment from two years to making it every four years)

And deleted the clause stating a Board Member cannot be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

It is also important to note that each Constituent Council will now appoint its representative and proxy to the EPLGA Board from which the President & Deputy President will be elected. The President will have a deliberative vote to ensure compliance with the Local Government Act 1999. The Senior & Junior Vice President positions have been deleted from the charter. In the past the President & the two Vice Presidents have formed the Executive Committee of the EPLGA Board. This Committee will be established in line with the current Local Government Act with terms of reference etc. in the near future. The new charter will come into effect from the date of publishing in the SA Government Gazette.

EP Grain Growers - Rail Fund

\$400k was made available for application from the above fund. Mixed messages have been received on this from Local Government & community members. Initially it was thought the entire amount was to be put back into research and development for the grain industry and then there was talk of it being available for other purposes such as route assessments for heavy vehicles.

It was resolved that individual Councils need to apply if they wish for funding from the fund.

Native Vegetation SEB Offset

The Native Vegetation Council (NVC) has proposed significant changes to the Significant Environmental Benefits metrics formula which will endeavour to:

- Deliver greater clarity for applicants with a new consistent approach to native vegetation assessment, applicable to all clearance applications and within all NRM regions across the State

- Use a realistic calculation of the payment to the Native Vegetation Fund in lieu of an on-ground SEB offset, which reflects the true cost of restoration and management to achieve a biodiversity gain.

Following on from the SAROC 7 July 2013 presentation and the concerns voiced, the NVC undertook to revise its engagement and consultation process and timing. The EPLGA is committed to the “Consultation Process”, but will also be indicating its concerns over the potential economic impact of the proposed changes on development activities within our respective communities or regions and more importantly the possible economic well being of the State.

All Councils are encouraged to be represented at the consultation meeting once we know the date, time & location in February 2014.

Use of Council Resources in Emergency Response

The issue of Councils providing resources to emergency response operations (in particular bushfires) has been long and vexed, and has seen a number of attempted resolutions including the introduction of an MOU. Recently the development of a volunteer policy was proposed (that is Council staff becoming official CFS volunteers and taking emergency service leave to fight bushfires); however the CFS has declined to accept it on the basis that they do not have the resources to support such arrangements.

The requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (WHS Act) are that a person conducting a business unit (PCBU) must provide a “reasonably practicable” safe work place and safe work systems. To achieve this in the emergency response context a Council must:

1. have a clear emergency response plan;
2. have clear duties and tasks associated with an emergency;
3. ensure all employees expected to perform emergency tasks are trained;
4. ensure a risk assessment for each of these tasks is undertaken; and
5. identify any clothing/equipment/procedure that will minimise the risk (unlikely we can eliminate).

SAFECOM and the LGA have combined to secure a funding package from the State Government that will allow the development of a Local Government Support Program for participation in emergencies that will address the above issues.

The LGA Asset Mutual Scheme has advised on the basis that if plant and equipment is provided by Council to support an emergency response operation within an agreed framework, then any resultant damage will be covered by the scheme. Likewise the LGA Worker’s Compensation Scheme will cover any injury sustained by a Council worker during the course of participating in an emergency. Further work is required on fully establishing the framework around how the above is to be implemented. As such the three lower EP Councils have been willing partners in the pilot program being currently ran.

Public Health Act

The Public Health Act (2011) (the Act) came into full operation on the 16 June 2013. A key feature of the Act is the requirement for Councils to develop a Regional Public Health Plan which will provide a strategic focus for public health activities within the region. Further, the Act facilitates more flexible administrative arrangements to address both traditional and new public health challenges.

The Act recognises Local Government’s role as:

- public health authorities for their areas;

- preserving, protecting and promoting public health within their areas;
- cooperating with other authorities involved in the administration of the Act;
- ensuring that adequate sanitation measures are in place in their areas;
- identifying risks to public health within their areas;
- assessing activities and development to determine and respond to public health impacts;
- providing or supporting activities within their areas to preserve, protect or promote public health; and
- providing or supporting the provision of immunisation programs for the protection of public health.

The EPLGA Councils resolved to work together in preparing a regional plan to ensure compliance with the new act.

Rural Roads Speed Limit Review

The EPLGA responded to the Minister and forwarded its response to the LGA to assist in the preparation of the LGA submission to the Minister and Department on this matter.

Zone Emergency Management Committee (ZEMC)

In an effort to assist all EP Councils with their emergency planning the ZEMC has called for registrations of interest from companies for the provision of Risk Assessment Software and Consultancy Services for the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and member Councils.

Following on from work undertaken by the ZEMC it is now in partnership with the EPLGA looking to acquire risk assessment software and engage an experienced consultant to work with member Councils to undertake emergency planning risk assessments for the region.

The intent is to populate a risk assessment with risks identified by the ZEMC and to work with each of the member Councils to complete a comprehensive risk assessment for their Council area and identify, list and assess local risk treatment strategies. The software must also have the capacity to roll the assessment up into a master document for the region.

Road Data Capture Tool

Currently to assist the region in developing a prioritised road strategy that is fair to all Councils a template has been developed to capture all the road data. This is step 1 in the overall road project prioritisation process.

Step 2 is to assess the 'Fit for Purpose' status of the road. Then to link the attached template to the database. Each Council would then be able to enter their thoughts on the status of as many of the roads as they want within the database. The fit for purpose assessment refers to the 'standards; previously defined by the LGA, and also to the previously defined list of areas where the road may not be performing to the standard a Council wants. The main purpose of this process is to understand where Council believes the road is inadequate

Step 3 is the last step and is for the EPLGA to apply a prioritisation process to the information submitted by Councils. This should be against a set of regional assessment criteria. (i.e. in the past we have used the Regional Goals to do this).

Annual Report

As a matter of record, Schedule 2, clause 28 of the Act requires the Association to furnish an annual report to the Constituent Councils. The annual report was adopted.

EPLGA Subscription Review

The EPLGA Charter gives power to the EPLGA to raise revenue through subscriptions or levies from Constituent Councils.

It was difficult to actually know what the basis was for the current subscriptions. It was believed they were originally formulated from a base and then population. However in the past the subscriptions have been raised by a percentage and no amendments have been made to the base or population due to changing circumstance.

Using the same methodology of a base attributed to the Council classification (Grants Commission) and an amount per head of population (as estimated by the Grants Commission) a subscription model was developed discussion.

The reason for the review of subscriptions is to ensure all Councils are treated fairly and equitably in the calculation of subscriptions. The EPLGA also needs to have solid evidence on how it raises the subscriptions. The EPLGA Board adopted the new model unanimously.

State Election Strategy

At the September 2013 SAROC meeting, the Eyre Peninsula and Central Region LGA's tabled a discussion paper outlining a combined State Election campaign. The object of the campaign is to gain commitment by all parties and candidates for three strategic policy issues that are at the core of many symptomatic issues that continue to frustrate regional areas:

- 1. strengthening regional investment (decentralising funding and investment);*
- 2. growing regional centres (decentralising population); and*
- 3. reconnecting Government with regional communities (decentralising public service).*

The regional Executive Officers are now working on developing specific key Election messages on behalf of their region, with the aim of influencing policy and Election commitments, hence this report.

The Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association Board indicated that our regional priority specific election issues include:-

- * Impacts of mining on local government
- * Infrastructure (including implementing & the funding of the Integrated Transport & Land Use Strategy, rail, ports, airports etc.)
- * Power & Water
- * Regional Development of Australia future funding & structure

These priorities do not stop individual Councils from promoting local issues of importance to them.

Other Issues Discussed for further action includes:

Management and development of Social Media by Councils

Watching brief on the Councils of the Future Report due to be released 12 December 2013

Local Government Grants Commission Funding Methodology Review

RDA Whyalla & Eyre Peninsula – Organisational Review

NEXT MEETINGS

Sunday 23rd February 2014 2pmat Tumby Bay

Friday 27th June 2014 at Wudinna

Friday 5th September at Cleve

Friday 7th December at Wudinna

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