

NEWSLETTER

June 2011



ONE SYSTEM UPDATE.

Seven of our members have this year engaged Sustainable Risk Pty Ltd to assess their progress in implementing “One System,” the Worker’s Compensation Scheme’s model for improving work safety in Councils.

A number of key issues were identified during the consultancy including:

- Need for further staff training
- Need for clarification about strategic direction from Workers Comp Scheme
- Need for assistance in developing templates, checklists and the like to assist in procedures and policy implementation
- Need for KPI reports to form a gap analysis for Councils
- Need for assistance in interpreting the original documentation and adapting for policy/procedure writing.

The CEOs met with Wendy Campana and representatives of the LGWCS to advance these issues, along with several others.

A working group of Ian Burfitt, Trevor Smart and Rod Pearson will work with Wendy Campana and Gary Okely (LGWCS) to assess the gaps from KPI audits, assess Councils Plan and to then work towards a regional planning approach.

The One System implementation has been a significant resourcing issue for Councils. While the ultimate goal to maximise worker safety is unquestioned by Councils, proving far more challenging is to achieve whole-of-work-culture understanding of One System.

STARR REPORT CHALLENGES EP COUNCILS.

Recently, Councils will have been forwarded copies of the report by Trevor and Sandie Starr titled “Managing for the Future in Eyre Peninsula.”

The report highlights the difficulties in resourcing strategic and financial planning/ governance requirements, internal control requirements, and HR requirements. It also identifies a number of areas where Councils should seek opportunities to share resources and to partner with eg the LGA to assist in ensuring compliance regimes are far more stringent. The value of this report is significant and reinforce many of the benefits sought from our HR/OHS project this year, the marketing project being currently shaped by CPR Pty Ltd, plus current research being circulated by the LGA.

Tony Irvine, CEO District Council of Tumby Bay, has drafted some suggested recommendations as a response to the report. These will be considered by our CEOs at a full-day forum in September 2011.

With increased governance requirements, it is no secret that Council resources are stretched in most cases. The delivery model that has been on Eyre Peninsula for over a century is unlikely to serve as well for the next Century and requires urgent review. A thorough investigation of the Starr Report is an ideal opportunity to seek ways of operating far more efficiently.



OUT AT LAST!

Almost three years after the regional planning day, Councils have received their copy of the Eyre and Western Region Plan for consultation.

Donna Ferretti and Mick Petrovski (Department of Planning and Local Govt) presented the draft Plan to members at the June 24th Board meeting. This began the 8 weeks consultation period during which time Councils are encouraged to provide written feedback. Already members have highlighted that much information is already outdated, especially bearing in mind the 2006 census figures partly informed the Plan.

Like the “30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide,” this will be the premier planning document for our region so needs to reflect regional priorities. Our water planning, our strategic population planning, economic planning and the RDA roadmap are just some of the areas where likely changes to the Eyre and Western Plan might be identified.

Donna Ferretti has offered to again consult with us at the end of the formal feedback period.

THE “OTHER” WATER PLAN FLOATED.

Almost three years after the launch of the SAWater “Long Term Plan for Eyre Peninsula,” the State Government’s Demand and Supply Statement (DSS) for the region has been released

The Department for Water publication is meant to take a broader view to our water security and to include waterproofing for the region to 2050. This includes ensuring our economic security.

One of the issues long identified with the SAWater Plan has been the lack of “new” water for economic expansion, outside SAWater’s “brief.” However, while

the DSS claims to allow for economic expansion, there is little evidence of that in the fine-print. Much of the new water identified as an integral part of our security in the DSS document is expected to come from private desalination plants constructed by mining companies as well as water reuse funded by local government.

The state government has also modelled demand statements assuming a negligible population growth for the region, until 2050. Meanwhile, the April 15th meeting to review the SAWater Long term Plan has again failed to hear the announcement of the preferred site for the desalination plant promised for EP. Minister Maywald's media release on December 2008, told us that we would have full knowledge of the desalination site by November 2009. While rainfalls over the last two years have created immediate relief, we still need to have the site identified and be "project ready" to allow build time in future crisis water situations. District Council of Ceduna has called for clarification of much information in regard to the SAWater Plan for EP with a number of supplementary questions tabled in relation to the DSS. These will be taken up with Minister for Water, Mr Paul Caica. While the immediate pressure has been relieved on our underground supplies and the River Murray, neither of our water plans seem to give us long term security should further drought years be imminent.

BOARD MEETING SEPT 2ND, TUMBY BAY.

PRESENTERS to include BP re their seismic surveys in Ceduna sub basin, Great Australian Bight (GAB.)

GREEN GRID PRESENTATION

Commissioner for Renewables SA, Tim O'Loughlin, presented to our Board on the value of the Premier's green grid proposal for Eyre Peninsula.

In a plan that has potential to tap another 10,000MW of wind capacity, Mr O'Loughlin outlined the value to the state of the wind power and the commitment to the energy source by the state government. Our state capacity leads Australia and Eyre Peninsula's natural wind is very attractive to developers with typical wind speed averages in excess of 8mps. Premier Rann remains strongly committed to further wind capacity. While explaining the many benefits of wind as a component of our electricity generation, Mr O'Loughlin touched on its intermittent nature requiring base load supplementation as part of a whole solution. Recent media accounts that the state government is not going to assist in funding the transmission line were also explained. Transmission upgrade is central to EP's future as a power generator and it seems that it will be most likely that any upgrades will be funded

from federal funds. The only other option would see the industry absorb the cost.

The state government is also extremely disappointed that the ERD Court ruled in favour of the South East farmer opposing the construction of the Allendale East wind farm near his dairy.

This comes hard on the heels of significant caution globally from the medical profession who seek greater scrutiny of potential health impacts for some residents living within proximity to turbines.

The Senate Inquiry into the impacts of windfarm in rural communities has now released its recommendations and these include:

- Noise standards to include low frequency noise and vibrations at households
- Calls for set back distances to be used
- As a priority, further research into possible health impacts on some residents.

While many EP landholders are very keen to share in the economic benefits from wind farms, the challenges to the industry's viability are growing. Many Councils in the mid North are dealing with significant issues from their residents resulting from wind expansion and Renewables SA is providing funding for a Windfarm Liaison Officer for the region to try to work through some of the issues. Issues mostly centre around landuse planning, noise issues and suspected health impacts..

Our draft Eyre and Western Planning Strategy is an ideal place for us to start thinking about local planning for windfarms so that we can try to avoid the negative impacts being felt elsewhere.

NEW YEARS EVE DRY ZONES.

Superintendent Brad Flaherty (SAPOL) addressed the June Board meeting highlighting strategies for dealing with public safety on New Year's Eve.

Following the tragedy of last year's gathering at Streaky Bay, Supt Flaherty asked Councils to consider implementation of a blanket dry zone in townships across the region. Starting at 9pm on New Year's Eve and concluding at 8.00am the following morning, the strategy would be aimed at preventing the infrastructure damage and public nuisance factors that have been evident in recent years.

The recent JJJ music event hosted by Tumby Bay was seen as a most successful event, mostly due to strong risk management planning, dry zone implementation and strong co-operation between agencies, resulting in a well ordered, family friendly gathering. Tumby Bay Council was a lead agency. Supt Flaherty suggested that dry zones have had a positive impact on public amenity where implemented. Due to the speed at which gatherings are now organised via social media, it can lead no time for agencies to respond. Hence, the consideration of dry zones in seaside townships where gathering is likely to be more attractive.

Councils are now being asked to give SAPOL their feedback in relation to the proposal.