

Local Government 117th Annual Conference



Local Government 117th Annual Conference
Cairns Convention Centre
21st to 24th October 2013

In Summary:

The most important time of the conference was spent discussing the *State Gov's proposed infrastructure changes*. These discussions took place in the SEQ Councils forum and on Wednesday when what were the priority concerns for south East Queensland councils. If these proposed changes go ahead as now written there will be rate increases, debt increases and reduced services for Queensland Councils which all impact on the people of Queensland, who are the ones who will be paying !

I spoke to many Mayors and Councillors from throughout Queensland as well as officers on many issues, concerns, aspects of councils and importantly community. From these informal discussions I feel I have grown as a Councillor as many points were covered in these talks – issues from the past and present, what worked and what didn't work, new and old procedures, structures, efficiencies etc. Speaking to some, was like tapping into a valuable resource and I appreciated their time. I felt more informed, inspired and totally energised to continue with future, stronger commitment to our great community and our needs.

While there in Cairns, I wore my tee shirts so it was very easy to promote the Redlands...they knew we were there!

Briefing on the conference :-



"Keep Queensland Beautiful Awards"

Local Government 117th Annual Conference

This week I attended the Local Government conference with Councillor Julie Talty as representatives from Redland's City Council.

The conference was held over four days.

On **Monday** there was the usual signing in and welcoming and that night Julie and I attended the "Keep Queensland Beautiful" Awards. We were very proud to accept the awards for "**Young Legends Award**" and "Environmental Innovators and Protection Award". Congratulations to all concerned.



Jeff Seeney

Tuesday – Hon Jeff Seeney MP Deputy Premier of Queensland gave the Official Opening and discussed future planning for Queensland.



Cr Margaret de Wit president of LGAQ

Cr Margaret de Wit president of LGAQ gave her address mentioning many aspects of local government but also expressing concern about proposed changes to infrastructure changes and the projected affect on the financial sustainability of councils.



Speaker from London

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell Chair UK Local Government Association gave a keynote address : “ Shared Services in the London Boroughs”

The Hon David Crisafulli MP Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience gave an address on the State Governments Updates.



Mayors' Panel

Greg Hallum PSM Chief Executive Officer LGAQ introduced various Mayors from the Mayors Panel who all spoke on "Providing Value for Money Queensland style" and what they are doing in their areas and regions.

Cr Tom Tate, Mayor, Gold Coast City Council

Cr Jenny Whitney, Mayor, Whitsunday Regional Council

Cr Deirdre Comerford, Mayor, Mackay Regional Council

Cr Wayne Butcher, Mayor Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council



During lunch Julie and I walked around the exhibitors...we had a very lengthy talks with representatives on the need of RV sites in Redlands.



Voting



Slash or die

After lunch there was a keynote address : “Slash or die: The Necessity for Fiscal responsibility in Australia Local governments” by Dr Neil Norton-Knowles, MA (Econ), LLB (ANU), D Phil (Oxford)

And the second Key note speaker was Gary Pert CEO, Collingwood Football Club “Group Decision Making”

In the afternoon there were smaller Council forums

- Rural and Remote Councils
- **South East Queensland Councils**
- Coastal Councils
- Resource Regions Councils

I attended the South East Queensland Councils with Mayor Alan Sutherland, Mayor Pam Parker, Mayor Paul Pisasale, Councillor Peter Matic (Bne)...on the panel. Mayor John Brent and other councillors from Beaudesert, Cr. Adrian Raedel from Moreton Council and other councillors from our SEQ region attended. We were to discuss what our ten priorities for SE Qld would be but most of the conversation was about the affect of the proposed infrastructure charges on local councils. It was reassuring to hear Mayor Pam Parker discuss her concerns as well as others....I also commented on the need to ensure communities were aware of these proposed changes on their rates....as in the increases they would cause.

Please read pevious and future posts that contain further details of these concerns as these changes will affect all Queenslanders.

Wednesday was opened with an address by the Hon Premier Campbell Newman MP...he focussed on the upcoming Queensland Plan. (Sorry he disappeared off the stage so quickly when I was expected Q&A I didn't get a photo opportunity)

We then commenced on the motions. These are the concerns put by councils to the Local Gov. Assoc. If passed, the LGA then take them to the State Gov. as the issues of concerns for Qld Councils.

There were 82 motions divided into:-

- Association Matters
- Finance and Administration
- Planning and Development
- Environment and Health
- Infrastructure, Economics and Regional Development
- Community Development and social Policy
- Governance

Many of the motions are specific to a Council or Region such as the Disaster management for Severe Cyclone events and others for the Aboriginal and Island Councils, rural road funding etc.

The main motions of importance for myself was the one put up by Brisbane and Cassowary Coast Regional council because they were both concerning these **proposed infrastructure charge changes..yes in red and bold I am saying**

warning

warning

warning

to Qld communities if these changes are implemented.

Both motions expressed serious concerns about the reform options specifically reducing Councils development approval conditioning powers on major roads, drainage systems, parks and pathways and reducing infrastructure charges revenue. Local councils are asking that any changes do not impact on the financial viability of local governments and take into account the impact of the proposed reforms on smaller and regional local councils. Councils such as Redlands being labelled high growth councils will also be more seriously affected.

The State Gov has not provided any evidence of a council deliberately charging/exploiting developers with their present charges so how can these changes be justified !

The Local Government supports reforms for infrastructure charging mechanisms for new development that do not shift the cost burden onto local councils and communities and these changes do.

To be blunt..wake up Queensland if these changes go through the decrease in revenue for local councils would equate to

- additional costs of \$212-00 per rateable property per year if the State Gov reduces the current max. cap by an arbitrary 25% or
- \$409-00 per rateable property per year if the state Gov reduces the max. capped charge to reflect the actual planned charge using the State Gov's proposed 'essential infrastructure' list.

This is the most important motion as without financial sustainability for local councils what else matters as councils will be in such financial strife, rates increased, debt increased and services reduced...not a bright future so please communities of Qld speak up, be heard, ask questions!!!

Motion 24

Planning approvals – Development Assessment – Development of a State Wide Policy for Wind Farms.

Queensland is the only state in Australia without state wide policy position and assessment requirements relating to wind farm developments.

Carried

Motion 25

That the Local Gov Assoc. Call on the Queensland Gov. Agencies responsible for infrastructure planning and delivery to coordinate with land use planning initiatives undertaken by State and Local Gov. To ensure more coordinated planning and delivery.

Carried

Motion 28

Waste Management - That the Local Gov. Assoc call on the Commonwealth and State Gov. To assist Local Gov. In developing a strategic plan for centralised waste management on a regional bases.

Carried.

Reason why waste is of interest to me is it is fast becoming the new "gold". The expense involved in handling our cities waste is increasing every year and we must manage waste more effectively and the answer probably is a regional approach. Waste is a huge expense to local councils. Redland's main tip at Birkdale is now a Transfer Station as it had reached capacity at the end of 2010 so we now transfer waste to Brisbane. With the amount of waste being transferred increasing so are our costs. Other SEQ Councils will and are experiencing rising costs and reduced sufficient space with landfills reaching capacity in the coming years so a regional approach is the most logical and efficient.

Motion 29

Waste management – That the Local Gov Assoc. Commission a study to investigate the commercially viable and environmentally sustainable conversion of waste to energy schemes in light of the increasing costs associated with waste disposal and the many alternatives and schemes which have been proposed over the last 15-20 years with regard to the conversion of waste to energy.

Carried

Really this is again the only logical and efficient way forward.

Motion 30

Pest management – That the Local Gov Assoc lobby the State Gov. To have flying foxes residing on State controlled land that are causing issues to local communities managed by the relevant State Gov Department.

Carried

Motion 32

Pest management - That the Local Gov Assoc. of Qld call on the State Gov to legislate in order to provide additional powers to:

1. Remove flying fox colonies from urban areas (including the capacity to control flying foxes populations to acceptable numbers) and
2. Enable the provision of the buffer zones around vulnerable communities.

Carried – though the State Gov has been clear that there is no intention to allow Local Gov. to have the powers to control flying fox populations.

Motion 36

Smoking in Public Places – additional power to Councils to ban smoking in Public Places

Carried

Motion 42

Road Traffic management – simplified Traffic Control measures for Community events.

Carried

This will enable events to incur lower costs and remain viable, as community events may stop occurring due to the very high cost of traffic control measures that are required under the current regulation.

Motion 43

Resource Sector Impacts – royalties for the Region – increasing funding commitment

The Royalties for the Region program has been designed to ensure that regional communities receive real, long term royalty benefits through investment in infrastructure projects and aims to help communities better manage the impacts of resource sector development whilst remaining liveable and sustainable into the future.

Carried

This was of interest to me as Redlands has the sand mining changes on Stradbroke and perhaps a new huge expansion of the Barro quarry. I asked before I went to Cairns does Redlands “fit” into the “resource sector” to apply for this funding but am yet to receive a reply.

Motion 47

Extreme Hoarding – State Gov. commitment to Funding Whole-of-Government Response and Development of Resource kit.

This motion is requesting assistance to address extreme cases of compulsive hoarding and domestic squalor.

Carried.

Redlands does have some cases of houses in residential areas that at present Council does not have the power to request owners to clean up. This is upsetting to neighbours not only for their health but also the value of their homes.

Motion 48

Concerned Disability services - asking the state Gov. for proactive and transparent preparations and communication for the introduction of NDIS in Queensland.

carried

Motion 51

Concerned Local councils having the ability to conduct their own elections.

carried

Motion 59

Alternative energy supplies – Installation of Reticulated LPG Gas Bulk Tanks in New Housing estates.

Carried

Pest Management of wild dogs and cats is an extremely costly concern to many rural Councils and there was discussion about requesting the state Gov. to contribute more funding towards this management.

Carried

Another motion was concerning Weed Management – Declaration of giant Rats Tail Grass as a Weed of national significance.

Carried

Some motions about Central Qld resource sector impacts.

carried

Abandoned vehicles – streamlining methods for dealing with Vehicles abandoned on roads.

carried

Those motions carried will now be discussed as priority concerns with the State Gov. I enjoyed and learnt from listening to the other Councillors discussing their views and concerns. Local Gov really is the voice of the people. Councillors aren't in the "ivory towers" we are in the community so it's satisfying to listen to these councillors being the voice of their communities at the conference. The importance of having a Local Gov. Assoc cannot be underestimated either as these are the people that stand up for Local Councillors. Enter into discussions with the State Gov., whatever party is in power and hopefully make them listen to what Local Councils are saying.

On the Thursday morning there were more individual forums which discussed specific issues for regions.

I am grateful I had the opportunity to attend as I have learnt from the conference, I spoke up and represented Redlands and all these skills will assist me to better represent you....my goal.

Warm regards

Wendy Boglary

Councillor for Division 1

Ormiston/Wellington Point