

DATE Monday, 4 April 2022

TO: Cr Peter Scott, Mayor – Cook Shire Council

SUBJECT LGAQ Policy Executive Update for the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting Thursday 7th April 2022

Key Activities Summary

1. ***Policy Executive meeting update***
2. ***Upcoming Federal Election Advocacy and Budget update***
3. ***Housing Advocacy and Campaign Update***
4. ***Inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA)***
5. ***Crime and Corruption Commission Inquiry***
6. ***Advocacy Action Plan and conference motions***
7. ***2022 ROC Assembly***
8. ***Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan – draft released***
9. ***Regional Telecommunications Review***
10. ***Waste Update***
11. ***Rural & Remote Councils Compact***
12. ***Goondiwindi Regional Council v Tait***
13. ***Water/Wastewater Update***
14. ***Natural Resources and Environment Update***
15. ***Covid – Workforce Update***
16. ***Industrial Relations Act Review***
17. ***Queensland Energy Plan***
18. ***LGAQ Submissions Update***

1. Policy Executive meeting update

- The first Policy Executive meeting for 2022 was held on Friday 11 February 2022 at LG House in Brisbane.
- Items discussed by the PE at this first meeting included:
 - Housing Advocacy Plan – as part of the overall LGAQ Housing Campaign
 - Advocacy Action Plan – 2022 AAP will guide LGAQ's Advocacy agenda over the coming 12 months
 - State Budget submission
 - Recycling and Jobs Fund
 - There were also presentations providing analysis on the upcoming Federal Election campaign and from Paul Bell regarding the recent QLGGC FAGs methodology review.
- Minutes from the December 2021 PE meeting can be found on Congruent [here](#)
- Minutes from the February 2022 PE meeting can be found on Congruent [here](#)
- The next PE meeting for 2022 is scheduled for Friday 22 April 2022, if you have any issues to raise as a Policy Executive level, please contact your district 10 representative Cr Peter Scott.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Cory Heathwood, Head of Advocacy

2. Upcoming Federal Election Advocacy and Budget update

- The LGAQ Federal Budget Submission focusing on the themes of liveability and sustainability can be found on [Congruent here](#).
- The Treasurer presented the Federal Budget on Tuesday the 29th of March. Some highlights:
 - FA Grants have shrunk from 0.6% of Federal tax revenue to 0.55%.
 - LRCIP has been extended, however the funding has been halved
 - Digital connectivity - \$1.3 bn in mobile blackspot funding and funding for NBN fixed wireless upgrades.

The LGAQ provided a summary to members. You can find that on [Congruent here](#).

- The 14th May 2022 is still shaping as the most likely date for the Federal Election. 33 days are required between the issue of the writ and polling day – which would mean the latest it would normally be able to be called is the 17th of April – however, this is Easter Sunday, so if the 21st is to be the date it is more likely to be a longer campaign called on the 9th of April.
- The LGAQ's Federal Election campaign collateral is available on [Congruent](#)
- We are meeting with Federal Ministers and Shadow Ministers consistently in the lead up to the election to continue advocating for more liveable and sustainable local communities.
- ALGA released their election asks, with their focus of 'Don't leave local communities behind' – you can [find their election priorities here](#). The LGAQ's campaign dovetails with ALGA's campaign to amplify the voices of local government.
- The LGAQs Federal Election campaign will be launched in the coming week.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Nicole Lessio – Lead Intergovernmental Relations

3. Housing Advocacy and Campaign Update

Local Government Housing Advocacy Plan and Local Housing Needs Survey

- In mid-March 2022, the LGAQ released a six-point [Local Government Housing Advocacy Plan](#) calling on State and Federal governments to commit to the following initial actions, in order to begin to address the housing crisis in Queensland:

1. Convene a National Housing Summit and prepare a new National Housing Strategy in partnership with all levels of government, as well as industry and community groups.
 2. Quadruple the capital investment in social housing in Queensland by allocating a further \$4.8 billion over 4 years to increase social housing supply in areas of need.
 3. Extend the First Home Owners' Grant to be available for the purchase of any new dwelling, any existing dwelling and for the renovation and refurbishment of existing housing stock.
 4. Unlock abandoned, unused and empty properties in Queensland to increase existing housing supply.
 5. Commit to Closing the Gap and reduce overcrowding in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities by allocating \$100 million per year for 5 years to increase housing supply.
 6. Invest \$200 million over four years to assist council to develop and implement innovative housing partnerships (where a council seeks to do so).
- Importantly, the initial six-point Local Government Housing Advocacy Plan is the first step in comprehensively considering and defining sector wide local government priority advocacy asks to address housing supply, diversity and affordability challenges across Queensland's regions.
 - The Plan includes the immediate, clearly defined housing advocacy priorities identified in the outcomes and strong feedback during the debate on housing resolutions at the LGAQ Annual Conference held in October 2021.
 - It also recognises the significant work underway across Queensland councils including the release of the WQAC Housing Solutions Study in late 2021 and seeks an ongoing dialogue with State and Federal Governments to develop a range of other housing solutions through for example, a National Housing Summit and National Housing Strategy.
 - The preparation of the Local Government Housing Advocacy Plan was originally supported by the LGAQ Policy Executive in August 2021, and the six-point plan was endorsed by the LGAQ Policy Executive in February 2022.
 - To further define the top local housing needs across Queensland's regions and inform the expansion and refinement of the six-point Local Government Housing Advocacy Plan, the LGAQ also distributed a Local Housing Needs Survey to councils in January 2022.
 - The LGAQ greatly appreciates council feedback received to date and is currently analysing survey results. Councils still wanting to input to the Local Housing Needs Survey can continue to do so via this link [here](#) on Congruent.

LGAQ Housing Campaign and peak bodies call for National Housing Summit

- On 17 March 2022, ten peak bodies in Queensland joined LGAQ's call for a National Housing Summit in a jointly signed letter to both the Federal Minister and Shadow Minister for Housing. This was supported by a media release available on [Congruent here](#).
- The ten peak bodies included Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, Infrastructure Association of Queensland, Queensland Resources Council, Queensland Farmers' Federation, the RACQ, Growcom, Waste Recycling Industry Association Queensland, QShelter, St Vincent de Paul Society and Urban Development Institute of Australia.
- Minister Michael Sukkar responded by saying that affordability issues were mainly being caused by lack of supply from councils and state governments. He stated: *"State governments and local councils need to step up and increase the supply of housing to put downward pressure on house prices and rentals," he said. "We strongly encourage states to rethink their prohibitive taxes and regulatory bottle necks."*
- The LGAQ [responded](#) that, instead of heeding the call for a National Summit, Housing Minister Michael Sukkar has instead chosen to respond with political finger pointing.

“This response is bitterly disappointing to the LGAQ... If the Federal Government feels it has no role to play in finding a solution to this crisis, then it really begs the question as to why we need a Federal Housing Minister.”

- The LGAQ Housing Campaign is gaining attention and the LGAQ is optimistic that with continued advocacy, and that of the ten other peak bodies, an announcement regarding a National Housing Summit may feature during the Federal election.

Federal Budget Announcements and Opposition Commitments – Housing

- On 29 March 2022, the Treasurer presented the Federal Budget – see Item 2 above.
- In relation to housing, the Federal Budget did not address Queensland councils’ calls for increased funding for housing in remote and discrete First Nations communities or for increased funding for social housing. However, the Federal Budget did include the following announcements more broadly:
 - The Government will increase the number of guarantees under the Home Guarantee Scheme to 50,000 per year for 3 years from 2022-23, including:
 - Up to 35,000 places per year for first home buyers under the First Home Guarantee (formerly the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme)
 - Increasing the Family Home Guarantee to 5,000 places per year to 30 June 2025
 - A new Regional Home Guarantee with up to 10,000 places per year to 30 June 2025.
 - The Government will increase the Government guaranteed liability cap of the National Housing and Finance Investment Corporation (NHFIC) by \$2.0 billion to \$5.5 billion to enable NHFIC to support increased loans through the Affordable Housing Aggregator, which increases support for affordable housing.
 - The increase in NHFIC’s lending capacity, is expected to support around 10,000 more affordable dwellings delivered by community housing providers nationwide.
 - In 2022-23, the Australian Government is providing an estimated \$1.6 billion under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, with \$342 million of this allocated to Queensland for the 2022-23 financial year. Funding will be provided to the State Government to support access to affordable safe and sustainable housing in local communities, which includes preventing and addressing homelessness.
- The Federal Opposition has also outlined the following housing related commitments in the lead up to the 2022 Federal election:
 - A proposed \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) to build 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties in its first five years, including:
 - 20,000 social housing properties – 4,000 of which will be allocated for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness.
 - 10,000 affordable homes for the frontline workers like police, nurses and cleaners who kept us safe during the pandemic.
 - A proposal to use a portion of investment returns from the HAFF to fund acute housing needs on an ongoing basis with the following expected in the first five years:
 - \$200 million for the repair, maintenance and improvements of housing in remote First Nations communities,
 - \$100 million for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness, and
 - \$30 million to build more housing and fund specialist services for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk homelessness.

- A proposed Regional First Home Buyer Support Scheme supporting 10,000 first home buyers a year in regional Australia to buy a home with a deposit as low as 5%, through a government guarantee of up to 15% of the purchase price saving first home buyers up to \$32,000 in mortgage insurance. Existing houses, townhouses and units will be part of the scheme, along with house and land packages, off-the-plan apartments and land with a contract to build. The proposed scheme would commence in January 2023 and is expected to cost \$12.1 million to the end of 2024-25.
- More information about the Federal Opposition's housing policies is available online [here](#).

LGAQ Lead Contacts for these matters: Crystal Baker, Lead - Planning & Development and Samantha Dean, Campaign Planner

4. Inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA)

- Thanks to those councillors, mayors and CEOs who assisted the LGAQ in making a submission to the current Parliamentary Inquiry into the Office of Independent Assessor (OIA), being undertaken by the State Development and Regional Industries Parliamentary Committee (the Committee).
- A copy of the LGAQ's submission to the Committee can be found [here](#).
- A total of 59 submissions were lodged with the Committee, with a full link to those submissions available [here](#).
- The LGAQ's submission includes 18 recommendations for change – with a focus on:
 - More timely decisions and investigations
 - More matters being dismissed as being frivolous or vexatious
 - Anonymous complaints being rejected
 - Greater transparency through annual reporting
 - Reviewing the Code of Conduct to ensure it does not impugn the constitutional right of an elected member to freedom of political expression
 - Greater freedom to deal with social media trolls
 - Increased oversight and review of the system.
- As background, following correspondence from the LGAQ to the Deputy Premier Steven Miles MP, the Committee resolved to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on the functions of the Independent Assessor and the performance of those functions, in particular:
 - whether the performance by the Independent Assessor of the Independent Assessor's functions is consistent with the intent of the local government complaints system;
 - whether the powers and resources of the Independent Assessor are being applied in accordance with the public interest; and
 - any amendments to the Local Government Act 2009 or changes to the functions, structures, or procedures of the Independent Assessor that the committee considers desirable for the more effective operation of the Independent Assessor and/or the local government complaints system.
- The Deputy Premier's correspondence to the Committee, which includes the LGAQ correspondence can be found [here](#).
- LGAQ CEO Alison Smith appeared before the Committee on 6 December 2021 to provide background information on the concerns of the local government sector.
- The LGAQ also appeared on behalf of the local government sector at the public hearing on 22 March 2022, which was the last hearing held in the Inquiry.
- The Committee will now consider all of the evidence and feedback provided and report to the Parliament. There is no date set for this report as yet.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Sarah Vogler – External Relations Director

5. Crime and Corruption Commission Inquiry

- The announcement of a Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC), to be headed by Tony Fitzgerald AC QC, is a critical step in restoring confidence in this important institution.
- The LGAQ has thanked the State Government for implementing this key recommendation from the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee (PCCC) Inquiry, into the failed prosecutions of seven former Logan City Councillors following a lengthy Inquiry – LGAQ media release [here](#).
- Prior to the announcement of that Commission of Inquiry, the LGAQ welcomed the resignation of Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) Chair, Alan MacSporran QC.
- This resignation came on the back of the 20 January withdrawal of charges laid by the CCC against former Moreton Bay Regional Council Mayor Allan Sutherland.
- Following the withdrawal of fraud charges against the seven former Logan councillors, the LGAQ called for an Inquiry, compensation and a public apology for those impacted, as well as changes to the CCC to ensure it never happens again.
- The Crime and Corruption Commission Inquiry headed by Tony Fitzgerald commenced on 7 February 2022 and is expected to report back to government by 9 August 2022. The Terms of Reference are available [here](#).
- The LGAQ has made a submission to the Inquiry on behalf of the local government sector, which was due on 1 April, 2022.
- At this stage it is unknown whether there will be any public hearings.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Sarah Vogler, External Relations Director

6. Advocacy Action Plan and conference motions

- The Advocacy Action Plan (AAP) is now available on [Congruent](#)
- It has been printed and distributed, so you should have your copy. Please contact Nicole Lessio if you are yet to receive it.
- You can use this AAP to continue to build awareness and understanding of your own advocacy efforts, and to help support your council's independent advocacy on issues of importance to your community.
- A listing of the resolutions can be found on [Congruent here](#)
- The annual conference final outcomes document is [located here](#)

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Nicole Lessio – Lead Intergovernmental Relations

7. 2022 ROC Assembly

- The 2022 ROC Assembly was held in Townsville on 17 and 18 March 2022.
- Every ROC from across the State was represented at the Assembly.
- The two-day session was ROC-led, based on feedback received directly from ROC's discussions and priorities.
- Across both days ROCs had the opportunity to share their ROC Federal election priorities and advocacy strategies to the Assembly,
- Various sessions included:
 - Waste,
 - QWRAP,

- Digital connectivity,
- Housing,
- Financial sustainability workshop and
- Guest speakers from both sides of politics.
- Day 1 of the Assembly concluded with a site visit to the Townsville Port Authority to see multi-level advocacy in action.
- A survey has been sent to attendees for their feedback
- Thank you to Townsville City Council as the hosting Council and NQ ROC as the hosting ROC.
- The 2023 session will be taking place in Toowoomba.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Georgia Stafford, Lead - Intergovernmental Relations

8. Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan – draft released

- The Department of Resources has released the draft Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan, a 30-year vision for our resources industry to be ‘a resilient, responsible, and sustainable resources industry that grows and transforms’.
- The draft plan was released on 24 November and consultation closed on 11 February 2022.
- The release of the plan coincided with a moratorium on mining claims – the Department is seeking feedback on this issue as a parallel process to the QRIDP and feedback can be submitted to their webpage on the management of small-claims mining. Details can be found on LGAQ congruent - [here](#).
- The final plan will be released mid-year. You can contact Simon Booth, Lead - Infrastructure, Policy, Regional Development on 0409 274 134 or at simon_booth@lgaq.asn.au to discuss the plan and the LGAQ response.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Simon Booth, Lead - Infrastructure, Policy, Regional Development

9. Regional Telecommunications Review

- On Monday 13 December 2021, the Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee provided its Final Report, “2021 Regional Telecommunications Review: A step change in demand” to the Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie.
- The Final Report was tabled in Parliament and is now available at www.rtic.gov.au
- The Federal Government tabled its formal response, indicating which recommendations will be adopted, on 30 March. It can be found [here](#).
- The primary mechanism for regional projects announced will be the "Connecting Regional Australia" (CRA) initiative - \$811.8M over 5 years to target six main streams as priorities:
 1. expanding open access mobile coverage, including on major transport routes and to adjacent residences, businesses and tourist hotspots
 2. targeted investment to address specific needs, such as improving voice, broadband, mobile, business and backhaul services where required
 3. improving the resilience of infrastructure
 4. emerging technology trials
 5. improving Indigenous connectivity
 6. improving affordability.
- The response included the recommendation for an enquiry to be conducted by the ACCC on:
 - a) access to towers and associated passive and active infrastructure provided by telecommunications and other infrastructure providers in regional, rural, remote and

- peri-urban areas within Australia, that can be used in the supply of mobile telecommunications and other radiocommunications services; and
- b) the feasibility of temporary mobile roaming services to be provided during natural disasters and other such emergencies.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Simon Booth, Lead - Infrastructure, Policy, Regional Development

10. Waste Update

Regional Waste Management Plans

- On 12th November, Minister Scanlon provided a waste management update to Mayors and CEO's of regional waste levy councils on the waste levy and regional waste planning. Of particular interest was the importance the Minister placed on regional partnerships and collaboration and the need to develop Regional Waste Management Plans (regional plans) across Queensland.
- The Department of Environment and Science (DES) has offered up to \$300k for each ROC/CoM to **fully fund** the development of regional plans across Queensland.
- Following on from the completion and launch of the CoMSEQ Waste Plan in November 2021, the LGAQ has continued conversations with a number of ROCs to progress the development of their own regional plan.
- The State Government is supportive of a collaborative approach towards the development of regional plans and is looking towards ROCs across Queensland to play an integral role in both their development and ownership. Regional plans are expected to lead to the identification of key infrastructure and investment opportunities to drive the resource recovery sector.
- The LGAQ is working closely with DES and has offered project management support to ROCs to manage the burden and processes to develop their own fit for purpose plans.
- Infrastructure needs highlighted through the regional planning process is expected to link back to the allocation of funds from the \$1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund.

Queensland Organic Waste Strategy

- In March 2022, DES launched the *Queensland Organic Waste Strategy* to divert food organics (FO) and garden organics (GO) from landfill. The Strategy is supported by a detailed Implementation Plan www.qld.gov.au/foodwastechallenge
- A number of 'organics trials' are continuing – Townsville, Lockyer Valley, Ipswich and Rockhampton, with a purpose of understanding appropriate 'fit for purpose' organic programs. Some early impressive results have been reported by councils.

Future of waste levy advance payments

- On the 11 December 2021, the State Government announced a \$2.1 billion package for improved waste and resource recovery operations in the state that incorporates waste levy advance payments and a \$1 billion Recycling and Jobs Fund.
- Minister Scanlon announced the continuation of the 105% waste levy advance payments for 2022/23 (until June 2023).
- With this announcement, Minister Scanlon also committed to a phased, sustainable transition in funding that reduces the payments over the next 8-10 years for SEQ and the seven (7) largest regional councils with the remaining regional Queensland waste levy councils retaining 100% of the waste levy advance payments.
- **Non-waste levy councils will remain as non-waste levy councils.**

Waste Forum - postponement

- As mentioned previously, the LGAQ Waste Forum has been moved to **4-6 July**. A revised program will be developed and will be made available to councils and industry groups in mid/late May 2022.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Robert Ferguson, Lead – Public Health and Waste

11. Rural & Remote Councils Compact

- The second meeting of the Rural and Remote Councils Compact Policy and Legislation Committee was held on 17 February and featured an update on roads issues raised through the Compact last year as well as a discussion on housing needs as a key strategic priority. The Communique can be found [here](#).
- Feedback was sought from rural and remote councils through an LGAQ housing survey, which was released on 17 January and closed on 31 January 2022. This assisted the Compact Guardians in advocating about the housing crisis across rural and remote communities.
- Key housing issues discussed and progressed included:
 - A pilot project to assist councils in the preparation and development of Local Housing Action Plans across the 45 rural and remote councils;
 - Unlocking state land tenure;
 - The cost of housing finance;
 - Lending practices and 'postcode discrimination'; and
 - Extending the first home owners grant to the purchase of existing dwellings.
- As was outlined last year, the Guardians have identified the key strategic priorities of roads, housing and financial sustainability to raise with the State Government through the first year of the Compact.
- Last year's first Policy and Legislation Committee meeting focused on roads, and has led to some important work on action items including:
 - Road Maintenance Performance Contracts (RMPCs);
 - Procurement Policy;
 - First and last mile;
 - Roads off alignment; and
 - Road safety in rural areas.
- Given the significant investment from the State Government in the budget and the Annual Conference endorsement of a housing summit, the housing workshop was an important opportunity to continue the momentum on housing advocacy – which is still a major issue across many local communities.
- A copy of the Rural and Remote Councils Compact is [online](#).

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Nathan Ruhle, Lead – Intergovernmental Relations

12. Goondiwindi Regional Council v Tait

- The LGAQ's law reform proposal for the Civil Liabilities Act was lodged with the State Government in March 2021.
- Following a meeting with the Attorney-General on 13 September, the LGAQ met with representatives from Crown Law and the Attorney-General's office to further discuss the issue.
- The LGAQ and DTMR have established a working group to consider RMPC contract conditions. The working group - made up of representatives from seven councils, DTMR and LGAQ met in November 2021 and again in December 2021.
- Discussions were collaborative and productive and the LGAQ sees this as an important avenue to work through operational issues identified by councils. The LGAQ will seek further legal advice if necessary.

- The most recent working group meeting was held on 16 February 2022.
- The working group is awaiting TMR legal review on solutions identified prior to rescheduling the next meeting.

LGAQ Lead Contacts for this matter: Robert Chow, Lead – Transport and Logistics and Alison Smith, Chief Executive Officer

13. Water/Wastewater Update

QWRAP project update – funding round 5

- QWRAP is an industry-led initiative to investigate regional collaboration on water and sewerage services in regional Queensland. The Program is a collaboration between the LGAQ, QldWater, the Queensland Government, and 57 participating councils.
- After successful LGAQ advocacy, in December 2021, Minister Butcher announced permanent funding of QWRAP of \$2 million/annum from FY 2022 onwards. The governance arrangements are currently being discussed by the strategic leadership (LGAQ, QldWater and RDMW).
- There are currently six established QWRAP regions, out of which 4 have formed Water Alliances. QWRAP also supports several technical and emerging regions. This expands coverage of QWRAP to all of Queensland outside of the Cape York first nations councils and Southeast Queensland.
- FNQROC is a key QWRAP region and have been approved for a funding amount of \$118,520(excl. GST) from the current round of funding for several key initiatives, the most recent one being the extension of successful Regional Sewer Relining-Program Coordinator project.
- As part of the national and state budget submissions, LGAQ asked both level of government to provide adequate funding for water infrastructure, especially in regional and remote Queensland.

Queensland Great Artesian Basin Advisory Council (QGABAC) Update

- The LGAQ has nominated (and supported the extension of) Cr Ian Todd from Balonne to be the Local Government (LG) representative for the upcoming 4-year term of QGABAC. Cr Todd assumed the LG representative role towards the end of the last term of QGABAC with the LGAQ providing administrative support.
- The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (RDMW) is currently assessing nominations and will advise on the outcomes in due course.
- The Great Artesian Basin (GAB) story maps as now available online. It explains the hydrology of the basin and the impact of open bores and includes interactive timeline to tell the story of the GAB.

LGAQ Lead Contact for this matter: Rudi Pretzler, Policy Officer – Waste and Public Health

14. Natural Resources and Environment Update

LGAQ Natural Resource Management Forums 2022

- The LGAQ is running a series of Natural Resource Management (NRM) forums across the state between March and May this year, with each forum tailored to the issues and needs of the region in which it is held.
- These forums are an opportunity for elected members and council officers to discuss a range of issues, showcase local NRM work, share knowledge, and network and build relationships.
- One of the forums will be hosted by Hinchinbrook Shire Council on 17 May in Ingham and will feature presentations from Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Tablelands Regional Council,

Cassowary Coast Regional Council, and Burdekin Shire Council, in addition to speakers from State Government and industry.

- The programs have been released and are available on [Congruent](#). Registrations are open [here](#).

Translating Biodiversity Conservation Research into Local Action

- In late 2020, the LGAQ was successful in receiving funding from the Department of Environment and Science to deliver the 'Translating Biodiversity Conservation Research into Local Action' project through the State Government's Climate Adaptation Sector Adaptation Plan Plus funding program.
- The project objectives were to:
 - Develop a methodology for the consistent and high-quality interpretation of high-level climate change adaptation guidance into locally relevant planning and management decisions;
 - Develop guidance material on the application of the methodology for local practitioners; and
 - Promote the awareness and use of the method and guidance material.
- The LGAQ engaged the CSIRO to deliver the project along with project partners including Scenic Rim Regional Council, City of Gold Coast Council, Healthy Land and Water and the Department of Environment and Science.
- The methodology has now been finalised and can be used by all councils statewide to help bring climate-ready thinking into biodiversity conservation activities that are within councils' sphere of influence. The methodology can be accessed on [Congruent](#).

Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

- The Department of Resources introduced the *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022* to Parliament on 17 March 2022. The Bill includes amendments to:
 - The *Stock Route Management Act 2002* to improve recovery of costs local governments incur managing and administering the stock route network, and to overall simplify processes for stock route management; and
 - The *Stock Route Management Regulation 2003* to take into account new stock route decision-making and mapping provisions under the Act.
- The LGAQ made a submission to the Transport and Resources Committee on 1 April 2022, incorporating council feedback. The LGAQ has been seeking reform of the stock route network for several decades and is overall supportive of the proposed changes.
- The public hearing is set for Friday 8 April 2022. More information is available on the Transport and Resources Committee website [here](#).

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Jacqui Hurwood, Policy Officer – Environment and Building

15. Covid – Workforce Update

- As expected, Councils are experiencing an increase in the direct impacts of COVID through staff contracting COVID or being identified as close contacts of people with COVID.
- The LGAQ is convening regular catch-ups with council HR staff to address emerging concerns and share strategies and tactics for dealing with COVID related issues. Most councils have embraced a "living with COVID" mantra which includes removing or phasing out any form of pandemic leave.

The LGAQ continues to encourage councils against any reference to pandemic leave and COVID references in EB agreements.

- Note: At this time, no Queensland Council has a policy of mandated vaccinations for all staff.

LGAQ Lead Contacts for this matter: Tony Goode and Suzanne Naughton

16. Industrial Relations Act Review

- The report on the five-year review of the Queensland Industrial Relations Act 2016 has been considered by the State Government. The review report made 40 recommendations with the Queensland Government accepting 36 recommendations and undertaking further consideration in relation to the remaining four (4). The Review Report may be accessed on the Office of Industrial Relations' (OIR) website at www.oir.qld.gov.au/industrial-relations.
- The OIR is currently finalising an Industrial Relations Amendment Bill.
- The LGAQ has raised a serious concern with the implementation of one of the recommendations, pointing out a significant unintended consequence for councils if the recommendation regarding sexual harassment is implemented as prescribed. The LGAQ has suggested an alternative option for achieving the desired outcome for the state without imposing significant additional administrative and operational burdens on councils.
- The LGAQ is currently involved in ongoing discussions with the state on this matter.

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Tony Goode, Workforce Strategy Executive

17. Queensland Energy Plan

- The Ministerial Energy Council met on the 10/03/2022 for a workshop to discuss the key issues, points of divergence, energy plan priorities and focus areas which were identified during the department's consultations across Queensland.
- The points the LGAQ raised were:
 - Product stewardship (land fill challenges) and recycling opportunities for renewables (PV, wind blades, turbines, batteries etc.)
 - Talking to communities about the transformation and diversification of local economies to decarbonisation
 - Importance of local government leadership engagement with detailed conversations around the future of their regions
 - Mapping out suitable land to avoid land use conflicts
 - Working more with local communities on education and consultation
 - Local Government retaining autonomy over rates and charges
 - Capacity building programs for small businesses
 - The establishment of a Transition Authority independent of government
 - A program that will support councils in the local establishment of Hydrogen projects
- The Energy Plan is planned to be delivered on in September/October 2022.
- The Department of Energy and Public Works is planning to deliver several regional round tables very shortly.
- The LGAQ will continue to contribute to advocate on behalf of its members at future ministerial meetings.

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Paul Cranch, Lead - Trade and Investment

18. LGAQ Submissions Update

Recent Submissions

- *Federal Budget Submission (28 January)*
- *Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan (11 February)*
- *Review of the Industrial Relations Act Amendment Bill (25 February)*
- *QBCC Governance Review (14 March)*
- *National Housing and Homelessness Agreement Review (18 March)*
- *State Budget Submission (18 March)*
- *National Biosecurity Strategy Consultation Draft (28 March)*
- *Submission to Senate Enquiry into Australia's General Aviation Industry (28 March)*
- *Commission of Inquiry relating to the Crime and Corruption Commission (1 April)*
- *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 (1 April)*

Upcoming Submissions

- *Inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts (7 April)*
- *Review of Queensland's Cultural Heritage Acts – Options Paper (8 April)*
- *Building and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 (13 April)*
- *South East Queensland Rainfall and Flooding Event February-March 2022 Review (22 April)*
- *Consultation Paper: Proposed Regulation to Mandate eConveyancing (6 May)*