

**DATE:** 01 December 2023

**TO:** Cr Peter Scott, Mayor – Cook Shire Council

**SUBJECT:** LGAQ Policy Executive Update for the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) Meeting – 07 December 2023

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1. ***Policy Executive Meeting Update***
2. ***2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Motions***
3. ***OIA overhaul with new legislation passed, and new CCT members appointed***
4. ***Federal Infrastructure Investment Pipeline review***
5. ***2024 local government election information***
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7. ***Workforce and Industrial Relations***
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## 1. Policy Executive Meeting Update

- The Policy Executive met in Gladstone on Sunday, 15 October.
- Items on the agenda included:
  - **OIA/COI reforms:** The LGAQ updated the PE on the legislation that has been introduced in the Queensland Parliament relating to changes to the councillor complaints system.
  - **Cost shifting launch and campaign:** The PE was taken through the plan to launch the cost-shifting research gathered in 2022-2023 by AEC at annual conference, and how the LGAQ will seek to work with member councils on a two-phase campaign. The first is to generate broad public awareness of the issue; the second phase will target the State Election year with advocacy for greater funding to the sector.
  - **Youth crime action plan:** Following several months of member consultation, the LGAQ provided the PE with its proposed action plan, which contains constructive policy suggestions from members on ways the State Government could tackle this law and order issue at a grassroots level in communities. This plan was subsequently launched on Wednesday, 18 October. You can read it via this [link](#).
  - **2024 State Election campaign planning:** The PE discussed the LGAQ's progress in developing the 2024 State Election campaign and the design refresh of the 'Vote For Local' campaign website, scheduled to go live in early 2024.
  - **Quarries:** The PE received an update on the LGAQ's work in this space including solutions that have been proposed/progressed/rejected, and the development of a communications plan by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to keep councils better informed.
  - **Stock routes:** The PE was updated on stock route management in Queensland and discussed progression of the development of a minimum service delivery agreement with the Department of Resources to support the financial sustainability of councils through supporting the prioritisation of stock route management activities.
  - **Rural and Remote Councils Compact:** The PE received an update on the September policy and legislative committee meeting and progress on roads, housing and financial sustainability.
- The agenda and business papers can be accessed via Congruent [here](#), and the meeting minutes are now available [here](#).
- The next meeting of the Policy Executive will be held on Friday, 8 December. Please contact your Policy Executive representative to raise any items for discussion.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Sarah Vogler – Head of Advocacy*

## 2. 2023 LGAQ Annual Conference Motions

- The 2023 Annual Conference was held in **Gladstone from 16-18 October 2023**.
- 152 motions were listed for debate. In total, 140 resolutions were passed. The Final Outcomes Document can be accessed via Congruent [here](#).
- The LGAQ's Advocacy and Assist teams have begun work to communicate the resolutions with the State and Federal governments and to progress advocacy plans.
- Councils can keep informed about the progress of resolutions via Congruent, [here](#).

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Michelle Hancock – Projects & Planning Coordinator*

### **3. OIA overhaul with new legislation passed, and new CCT members appointed**

- Legislation to overhaul the functions of the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA) and councillor complaint system was passed in State Parliament on November 15. It has now received assent from the Governor.
- Advice from Acting Independent Assessor Bronwyn Blagoev has been provided to all councillors and CEOs on 21 November advising that:
  - councillor conduct complaints received by the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA) will be assessed in accordance with the new legislative requirements from that date. However, importantly, it will also mean that existing complaints will be re-assessed.
  - The outcomes may include that the matter proceeds, or it may be dismissed or withdrawn.
  - This re-assessment has the potential to impact councillors who are currently the subject of complaints and has the capacity to impact councillors who themselves are complainants.
  - Correspondence regarding re-assessment outcomes will only be sent to councillors and complainants with matters in the councillor conduct complaints system (excluding QCAT reviews).
- We thank the State Government for listening to the concerns of the local government sector, agreeing to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into the concerns raised last year, accepting all 40 recommendations from the inquiry, and progressing these changes to ensure they are in place before the March 2024 quadrennial elections.
- Reforms include:
  - introducing a new statutory preliminary assessment process, including a time limitation for the receipt of complaints, notices and information about councillor conduct.
  - introducing an administrative process to declare a person a vexatious 'complainant'.
  - removing requirements for certain details to be published in a local government's councillor conduct register.
  - removing the provision of 'training' from the functions of the OIA.
  - introducing a preliminary assessment process that the IA must undertake to determine how best to deal with a complaint, notice or information about councillor conduct, including a time limitation for accepting the complaint, notice or information.
  - updating natural justice requirements in relation to suspected conduct breaches.
  - redefining a breach of a local government's acceptable requests guidelines as a 'conduct breach' and makes other changes to the conduct definitions.
  - recognising the provision of official departmental advice to councillors.
- The LGAQ lodged a submission to the Parliamentary Committee examining the legislation. Several public hearings were held, including at the LGAQ Annual Conference in Gladstone.
- A link to the Committee's report can be found [here](#).
- This update follows the departure of the former Independent Assessor Kathleen Florian in October this year.
- New appointments, including a new President, have also been recently announced for the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. A list of these appointments is [here](#).

*LGAQ contact for this matter: Nathan Ruhle, Manager - Intergovernmental Relations*

#### **4. Federal Infrastructure Investment Pipeline review**

- The outcomes of the Federal Governments Infrastructure Investment Pipeline review were announced on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November.
- The review recommended the withdrawal of funding from 82 projects, with 50 progressing to having funding withdrawn following the review worth approximately \$11.6 billion.
- In Queensland, \$450m in projects has been impacted, with \$230 million in federal funding being withdrawn from 9 projects.
- Following the review, the 100% or 80:20% funding split is no longer the default for federal grant funding programs, returning to a preference of 50:50% funding split between federal and state/territory/local governments.
- A list of projects impacted by the federal review can be found [here](#).
- A delegation to Canberra took place on 29 November 2023. It was led by Deputy Premier Steven Miles and involved meetings with the Hon. Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, and Local Government, and Assistant Minister for Regional Development Senator Anthony Chisholm.
- Minister King advised there is no budging on the 50:50% funding split for new projects, and indicated councils impacted by cut projects should work with the State to ensure they are investment ready and put them forward in the upcoming budget.
- Minister King insisted the Commonwealth would not be reducing its total contribution to the pipeline but that it now depends on State's increasing their contribution to ensure funding levels are maintained.
- It was advised that the 50:50% funding move would not impact local government specific funding programs, and the only key change to funding guidelines will be for the Black Spot Program (Guidelines deemed outdated and in need of more flexibility to ensure funds are expended).
- Flexibility around funding arrangements is aimed at Tasmania and the Northern Territory due to their funding constraints. Any other applications for special consideration would be a negotiation.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Jarrod Hellmuth, Lead – Roads and Transport*

#### **5. 2024 local government election information**

- The election date for local government quadrennial election is **Saturday, 16 March 2024**.
- The ECQ has information available for election participants on their website. You can also sign-up for their self-service portal – which ensure you receive all the information you need.
- Following is an indicative timetable which will be confirmed when the Notice of Election is issued.
  - Notice of election - Monday 29 January 2024
  - Candidate nominations open - Monday 29 January 2024
  - Close of electoral roll - Monday 5 February 2024
  - Candidate nominations close - Tuesday 12pm 13 February 2024
  - Ballot paper order draw - Wednesday 10am 14 February 2024
  - Postal vote applications close - Monday 7pm 4 March 2024
  - Early voting\* - Monday 4 March to 15 March 2024(\*early voting in rural and remote locations are likely to be less than a full two-week period. Details of dates, times and locations will be available on the ECQ website during the election)

- Election day - Saturday 8am to 6pm 16 March 2024
- Close of return of postal votes - Tuesday 26 March 2024
- Information on the specific electoral expenditure caps for each LGA has also now been published [here](#).
- The latest edition of the ECQ's Countdown newsletter is now available and can be accessed [here](#).

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

## **6. Cost shifting campaign**

- In 2022 and 2023, Queensland councils contributed to a survey and report conducted by AEC seeking to quantify the financial impact of State and Federal government cost-shifting onto Queensland councils and communities.
- Preliminary insights from the survey completed by 75% of Queensland councils show there has been a 378% increase in reported cost-shifting onto councils and their communities over the last 20 years.
- The preliminary insights were revealed at the 2023 Annual Conference as part of a panel discussion featuring LGAQ CEO Alison Smith, mayors, CEOs and councillors, which can be watched by members via [Congruent](#).
- Following the initial insights communicated at Annual Conference, the LGAQ will seek to publicly launch the finalised report at the beginning of 2024, with a view to leverage its results for important advocacy opportunities like the State Budget, Federal Budget and the lead up to the 2024 State Election.
- A [campaign](#) seeking to better inform Queenslanders about the depth and breadth of services provided by councils – and helping them understand the reason behind this – will precede the launch.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Lucy Greene, Lead, Intergovernmental Relations and Samantha Dean, Campaign Planner.*

## **7. Workforce and Industrial Relations**

### Workforce Census 2023

- This year the Workforce Strategy team rolled-out a new invigorated digital census to councils and includes targeted new questions, the final report will be delivered in a digital format and interactive dashboard. The census questionnaire was sent to inboxes in October and due by COB 8 December 2023.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Elle Ackland, Manager, Workforce and Industrial Relations*

### State Wage Case 2023-34

- We can advise of the preliminary decision of the Full Bench of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission is a 5.75% increase to be operative from the 1st of September 2023.
  - The final Determination is expected to be published following hearings scheduled for the 23rd & 24th November.
  - This increase will apply to all Local Government Awards as well as the minimum wage rate for full-time employees which will increase to \$882.80 per week.
  - The LGAQ as the sole registered employer organisation for local government under the Industrial Relations Act made representations on behalf of all members. It should be noted that the anticipated QIRC determination remains consistent with the 5.75% increase set by the Fair Work Commission.

- The above information should be of assistance to council payroll teams to commence calculations for any payroll adjustments for employees covered by Local Government Industry Awards or for those councils whose Certified Agreements increases or allowances are indexed to the State Wage Case determination.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Elle Ackland, Manager, Workforce and Industrial Relations*

Queensland Councils, LGAQ Workforce Strategy 2024-2028

- The LGAQ is pleased to announce a significant new piece of work that is focussing on Workforce, which is Councils' second highest priority based on the LGAQ's Member Loyalty Survey. To support an engaged and active Council workforce and remain competitive, it is imperative Councils look for new ways to capitalise on opportunities. As Councils' peak representative body, our objective is to identify innovative, credible and targeted solutions to attract and retain a high-performing workplace across all the 77 diverse local Councils.
- The Workforce Strategy team is committed to maximising workforce capability across each Council. Councils' most valuable asset are its people, and Councils must be equipped to respond to emerging workforce trends to attract and retain a high performing workforce.
- The Workforce Strategy team has commenced a Council informed review to present workforce solutions in response to identified workforce themes, including those that are influenced indirectly by broader Council and/or statewide issues. The Strategy will propose solutions and policies in response to identified workforce issues, challenges and opportunities for Councils to adopt at their discretion.
- The project is being led by Elle Ackland, Workplace and Industrial Relations, Manager and Danika Jackson, Workforce Strategy, Senior Project Officer. The project consultation and engagement has commenced, seeking input from CEOs and Heads of Corporate/People/HR roles on challenges and solutions that will support Councils as they navigate an emerging 'new normal' in attracting and retaining their workforce.
- The Report will be delivered in May 2024 including a Strategy release event.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Elle Ackland, Manager, Workforce and Industrial Relations*

## **8. Disaster Management**

- On 9 October, the LGAQ responded to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services regarding the Consultation Draft Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill 2023, Marine Rescue Queensland Bill 2023 and the State Emergency Service Bill 2023. The response was based on feedback, advice and recommendations received of member experience during the preparation of the submission, submissions collated earlier this year including the Senate Select Committee – Australia's Disaster Resilience, IGEM Review SEQ Rainfall and Flooding Feb-Mar 2022, Independent Review of Commonwealth Disaster Funding, Alternative Commonwealth Capabilities for Crisis Response Discussion Paper, and reviewing the recommendations collated in the State Emergency Service Review 2020. The LGAQ provided 14 recommendations for changes, which relate predominantly to the State Emergency Service Bill 2023, due to Local Government's strong partnership with the SES. The submission can be found on Congruent, [here](#).
- In the second week of October, the Queensland Police Service wrote to Chairs of the Local Disaster Management Group to provide information on the Disaster Management Reforms and provide assurance that there will be no degradation of service through the transition of emergency service functions from Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to Queensland Police Service.



- The LGAQ represents Queensland councils on the State Bushfire Committee. The Committee met on Wednesday 13 September, to discuss preparedness activities, high risk areas for the bushfire season, future mitigations and risk assessments strategies linking to the Regional and Area Fire Management Groups.
- On 01 November 2023, following consultation and training, the Australia Warning System was launched in Queensland. For flood, cyclone and storm, warnings will be locally lead, supported by State.
- The LGAQ has partnered with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) to offer councils across the state a webinar focussing on Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA); activation, eligibility and other requirements. The recording from Monday 20 November can be accessed via Congruent.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Liz Drumm – Disaster Management Lead*

## **9. Local Energy Partnerships**

- Following advocacy from the LGAQ and member councils, the Premier announced the establishment of the Local Energy Partnerships framework at our Annual Conference in Gladstone.
- The announcement included \$6.1M total to partner with peak and community bodies and industry to improve practice and engagement in the renewable energy sector, explore new technologies and support communities through the energy transformation. This includes \$200,000 for environmental non-government organisations to engage stakeholders on the energy transformation and contribute to enhancing environmental outcomes.
- Establishing the first Community Leader Energy Councils to formalise channels for engagement on the first renewable energy zones (REZ).
- \$1.65M over two years for a Local Council Energy Partnership program to work with councils on energy matters.
- \$1.5M for understanding shared land use implications on top of \$6M to undertake initial Strategic REZ Readiness Assessment of three renewable energy zone regions. This will include opportunities and priorities for renewable development, infrastructure, road, transport, housing and accommodation, workforce, supply chains, biodiversity, waste management, and social infrastructure.
- Improving availability of energy information for each region.
- Working to boost the Office of the Coordinator General's ability to improve coordination and facilitation of the energy transformation.
- Investigating an expanded remit of the GasFields Commission Queensland to promote coexistence of renewable energy developments, resources, agriculture and other industries and provide support for communities with a trusted, independent body for information, education and engagement.
- Investigating additional opportunities for sharing benefits with communities to support the equitable distribution of financial benefits to renewables host communities and explore ways regional households can benefit from renewable energy development.
- Building opportunities for local businesses by mapping supply chains and providing visibility of the opportunity pipeline from renewable energy development.
- The LGAQ will arrange a briefing from the Department of Energy and Public Works on the announcement, with details to come shortly for any interested councils.

*LGAQ Contact: Nathan Ruhle, Manager – Intergovernmental Relations*

## 10. Juvenile Crime in Queensland: Local Government Action Plan

- Many Queensland communities are feeling the impact of juvenile crime. Following a period of member consultation, the LGAQ released [Community suggestions to address juvenile crime in Queensland](#), a nine-point Local Government Action Plan at the 2023 Annual Conference in Gladstone.
- A [press conference and media](#) featuring mayors and councillors highlighting the unique impact of the issue across Queensland accompanied the launch.
- The solutions are informed by youth crime related motions passed in both 2022 and 2023 and aim to represent the concerns of communities, offering the State Government constructive ideas to address these concerns.
- During [consultation](#), the LGAQ also sought stories, case studies and quotes from members to use as part of the campaign following the Plan's launch – to help demonstrate the impact of the issue on communities, as well as the importance of local, place-based solutions.
- Following the launch of the Plan, the LGAQ met with Hon Di Farmer MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice to present and discuss the proposed solutions under the 9 priority areas.
- The LGAQ will continue to advocate for the package of solutions in a 2024 State Election year and continues to seek member stories and voices to utilise as part of its campaign.
- If you are interested in providing feedback or leveraging the campaign as part of local advocacy on the issue, contact Sam Dean on [samantha\\_dean@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:samantha_dean@lgaq.asn.au).

*LGAQ Contacts for this matter: Samantha Dean, Campaign Planner and Ellen Ross, Project Officer – Domestic and Family Violence*

## 11. Regional University Centres/Study Hubs – Applications open!

- The LGAQ has strongly welcomed an announcement from the Federal Government of 20 new regional university study hubs across the nation.
- This has been an LGAQ Annual Conference resolution at the 2021 and 2022 events and has been a key part of our advocacy to improve liveability and address workforce challenges in rural and remote communities.
- Applications are now open to apply to establish a Regional University Study Hub in a regional or remote area of Australia.
- Up to 10 new Hubs will be established in this round, with a further round and another 10 study hubs available again next year.
- Applications for this round will close at **5:00pm (AEDT), 15 December 2023** through the following [portal](#).
- Information on the application process, including FAQs can be found [here](#).
- For further information or assistance on how to apply, please contact Nathan Ruhle on 0411787068 or [Nathan\\_Ruhle@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:Nathan_Ruhle@lgaq.asn.au)
- Link to LGAQ media release – [here](#).

*LGAQ Contact: Nathan Ruhle, Manager – Intergovernmental Relations*

## 12. Natural Resources and Environment Update

### First Nations – Dingo Declaration

- In September 2023 at the National Inaugural First Nations Dingo Forum, 20 First Nations signed the National First Nations' Dingo Declaration (the Declaration). The Declaration notes that signatories:



- Value dingoes as a cultural icon.
  - Do not recognise the term 'wild dog', believing that the term misrepresents the dingo and to 'justify killing'.
  - Advocate for a 'caring for Dingoes on Country model', which sees dingoes recognised in legislation as – a culturally significant and protected native species
- In Queensland, the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* (Qld) recognise dingoes as a native animal, and thus are protected. However, in operation and with respect to the intent of the *Biosecurity Act 2014* (Qld):
  - Dingoes/Wild dogs are only recognised as dingoes in National Parks, and thus are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*;
  - Outside of National Parks, dingoes/wild dogs are defined as restricted matter under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, and thus places a General Biosecurity Obligation on all persons to manage the risk that they present to resulting in a biosecurity event.
- The LGAQ is seeking further advice from the Queensland Government on this matter.

#### **Nature Positive Laws**

- The Australian Government has commenced targeted consultation on the proposed Nature Positive Laws, which includes amongst other things, the introduction of a Nature Positive Bill that will amend the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cwth).
- The LGAQ is organising a range of webinars with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to brief members on the proposed changes.
- Full public consultation will occur early 2024.

#### **LGAQ and NRMQ – Memorandum of Understanding**

- In October 2022, the LGAQ and NRM Regions Queensland (NRMQ), the peak body for Queensland's NRM Groups, entered a Memorandum of Understanding (the MoU) with the purpose to "...formalise the principles of cooperation, information sharing and collaboration between the LGAQ and NRMQ in dealing with NRM issues of mutual interest:".
- Following a member survey, the majority of survey participants are supportive of the LGAQ renewing the MoU with NRMQ, however also sought:
  - Improved communication between local NRM groups and their council;
  - Improved collaboration/participation between local NRM group facilitated planning groups and funding bids and their council; and
  - Improved data sharing opportunities between local NRM groups and their council.
- In October 2023, the LGAQ's Lead – Natural Resources and Environment tabled a paper at the LGAQ's Policy Executive, which sought approval to commence MoU renewal between the NRMQ and the LGAQ. This was approved.

*LGAQ Contact for these matters: Joshua Dyke, Lead – Environment and Natural Resources*

### **13. Rural and Remote Councils Compact**

- The most recent meeting of the Policy and Legislation Committee, which underpins the work of the Rural and Remote Councils Compact, occurred on **Thursday 23 November**.
- Attendees were provided an update on Regional Community Forums from the Office of Rural and Regional Queensland.

- The LGAQ and the Guardians provided an update on the LGAQ Annual Convention held in Gladstone in October.
- Following an update at the September meeting, DAF Director-General Dr Chris Sarra attended to discuss the renewal of sales permits for quarries and native title impacts on that process – with a concerted effort being made to up-scale support for councils through the renewal process.
- On the strategic priority of roads, TIDS funding and impacts on road infrastructure to support the Energy and Jobs Plan were discussed.
- In relation to housing, an update was provided from the recent National Housing Conference and there was also discussion on funding opportunities to progress council housing projects.
- Information from the meeting and a meeting communique will be provided soon, via Congruent.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Nathan Ruhle, Manager - Intergovernmental Relations*

#### **14. Water and Wastewater Update**

##### State releases Queensland Water Strategy

- On 16 October, the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDWM) released the Queensland Water Strategy.
- The project has been developed with input from the Water Engagement Forum stakeholder group of which LGAQ are member.
- LGAQ lodged a submission on behalf of local government with input from Councils across the state, that asked for recognition of the role of local government in delivery safe and secure water for Queensland communities.
- Implementation of the Strategy will provide opportunities for partnership between levels of government and stakeholders and LGAQ will continue to represent members interests in any action planning and reporting on the Strategy.

##### Urban Water Risk Assessment (UWRA) Project progresses

- On 13 June the Queensland Government announced that the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDWM) would undertake an assessment of challenges and opportunities for drinking water and wastewater treatment services.
- Stage 1 of the UWRA is a desktop assessment of risk based on existing research, data and understanding. Consultant group ARUP have been contracted to assist the Department in delivering Stage 1 by December this year.
- LGAQ attended two workshops on 23 and 25 October to explore some of the known risks and priorities for the urban water sector.
- Stage 2 will commence next year with a deeper analysis of risk and filling gaps in existing knowledge.
- You are strongly encouraged to provide any information you may have including strategic documents relating to your water and wastewater business to the department to inform the UWRA or to provide these to LGAQ to ensure that we adequately represent your interests in any future workshops and submissions.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Josephine Raftery, Lead - Water and Wastewater Infrastructure*

## **15. Waste Update**

### *Environmental Protection Act 1994 – Powers and Penalties Independent Review*

- Following the finalisation of the independent review of powers and penalties under the Environmental Protection Act 1994 the Department of Environment and Science is now seeking feedback regarding their proposed response.
- The independent review came up with 18 recommendations for change – to which the department has responded and supported 17 of them, and 1 in principle.
- The LGAQ held an information session with the department for councils on the 12<sup>th</sup> October and has provided a whole-of-sector response.
- Key recommendations include the ask for councils to be able to issue cost recovery notices, the need to consider different environmental compliance regimes regionally and the need for better guidance and standardised material.

### *Regional Waste Management Plans*

- Work is continuing across Queensland to progress regional plans at a regional/ROC level.
- The LGAQ wants to congratulate FNQROC for finalising their plan and working as a region to start implementation. The plan will provide a key advocacy piece for the region and the LGAQ in arguing for improved waste management and better investment from the state government through the Recycling and Jobs Fund and other funding arrangements.

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

## **16. Animal Management – Targeted review of the *Animal Management (Cats & Dogs) Act 2008***

- Following consultation on the discussion paper ‘Strong Dog Laws: Safer Communities’, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has introduced changes to the *Animal Management (Cats & Dogs) Act 2008* into parliament as part of an omnibus bill. The introduced changes reflect all recommendations made in the discussion paper and align well with LGAQ led advocacy.
- If you would like to provide feedback into the whole-of-sector response, please see the LGAQ Congruent article [here](#), for further information.
- Simultaneously, the department has organised for a stakeholder advisory group for the development of community education programmes as outlined in the original discussion paper. The LGAQ is a key member of the advisory group, as are members of the active technical working group which provided input into the current legislative change process.
- The first meeting of the advisory group was held on 16 October 2023, with further information on mode, length and delivery model of the planned campaign yet to be provided.
- Furthermore, the LGAQ has agreed to participate as a local government representative in the industry stakeholder group ‘Dog Attack Taskforce’, organised by Australia Post. This group provides a key opportunity to advocate for further improvements to animal management with likeminded peak bodies.

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

## **17. Department of Resources – 3 short consultations on changes to legislation**

- 3 Consultation papers have been released – all due on 8 December 2023:

#### Improved Regulatory Efficiency

- Proposed amendments to the mandatory condition framework would amend the 1923 Act, P&G Act, GE Act and GGS Act to insert a new mandatory condition **requiring lease holders to pay all relevant local government rates and charges.**
- and other enhancements for Land Release processes - The LGAQ has strongly pushed for more communications with LGAs on what is happening in their regions with land releases, permits that are granted, and when exploration permits are grandfathered into production permits.
- Other additions that support the changes to the small scale mining permits.

#### Coexistence Institutions and CSG-induced subsidence management framework

- With reports having been tabled on the potential consequences of CSG-induced subsidence for farming operations on the Condamine alluvial floodplain, and the Queensland Government response to the GasFields Commission Queensland recommendations on the regulatory review of CSG-induced subsidence, a framework and some legislative changes are being suggested to introduce a risk based management framework for subsidence issues going forward
- These reforms will introduce assessment and management strategies that will be prepared every 3-5 years for a Subsidence Impact Report that will have an annual evaluation and review.
- The framework once introduced may not offer a resolution to subsidence issues that already exist and are having an effect on some land owners already - and feedback may need to be given on the availability of remuneration of costs of appropriate agronomy and irrigation specialist services can be recovered by landholders in the short term.

#### Legislative Enhancements to mining claims.

- Following a moratorium on new claims for 12 months the Department are seeking feedback on improvements to Queensland's small-scale mining regulatory framework.
- The paper includes proposed changes to legislation in relation to several improvements proposed in the discussion paper and provides further information about some of the proposals that require further feedback to inform the legislative amendments.
- Several proposed changes mainly focus on:
  - introducing financial and technical capability requirements for new claims
  - creating work programs for each site and recording of work on the site.
  - The requirement for changes to the work program if significant changes to the site, or the purpose of the site have occurred.
  - The disqualification of a person from having a licence
  - Time limits on any new claims and limits to the number of claims a person can have
  - Structures on claims
- The proposed changes may have far reaching effects on some of the more low-end small-claim mining and potentially have a flow on effect that could have impacts on local housing and support services.

Details and the consultation documents can be found on Congruent, [here](#).

*For any information or to give a verbal submission, please contact Simon Booth – Lead – Infrastructure, Policy & Regional Communities on 0409 274 134 or [simon\\_booth@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:simon_booth@lgaq.asn.au)*

## **18. Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023**

- On 15 November 2023, Hon Scott Stewart, Minister for Resources, introduced the Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 into the Queensland Parliament.
- Specifically, the Bill amends:
  - the *Land Act 1994* and Land Regulation 2020 to reduce administrative complexity and remove regulatory duplication, with the aim being to improve the allocation of tenure by removing the requirement that the chief executive assess the 'most appropriate use' of the land.
  - the *Land Title Act 1994* to reduce administrative burden and risk to the State by reducing the creation of unapproved unallocated State land.
  - the *Place Names Act 1994* to provide clarification and broaden place naming considerations to reflect contemporary technologies and clarify the application of the legislation.
  - the *Recreation Areas Management Act 2006* to enable the renaming by regulation of a recreation area declared under that Act.
  - other legislation to make minor administrative and consequential changes.
- The LGAQ will be making a submission on this Bill and welcomes member feedback to inform its submission. Please email comments to Crystal Baker, Manager Strategic Policy ([crystal\\_baker@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:crystal_baker@lgaq.asn.au)) by **COB Monday 8 January 2024**.
- The LGAQ will also be engaging with the Department of Resources to organise a webinar for councils – with details of this to be confirmed and available on Congruent in due course.
- The closing date for written submissions to the [Transport and Resources Committee](#) is 16 January 2024.

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Crystal Baker – Manager, Strategic Policy*

## **19. Roads off Alignment webinar**

- The LGAQ hosted a webinar for the issue of Roads off Alignment with staff from the Department of Resources on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October.
- The webinar was well attended by both council officers and elected members, and provided a comprehensive overview of the intricacies associated with roads off alignment.
- The Department of Resources provided several valuable insights for our member councils, which were well received.
- A key highlight was the introduction of a new infographic to help councils tackle roads off alignment concerns. The infographic provides low-cost solutions councils are able to implement to resolve these issues.
- The webinar is available to be watched [here](#).
- Any enquiries can be directed to the Department of Resources via: [survey.advice@resources.qld.gov.au](mailto:survey.advice@resources.qld.gov.au)

*LGAQ Contact for this matter: Jarrod Hellmuth, Lead – Roads and Transport*

## **20. Funded Projects Update**

Advocating for funding to help achieve members' priorities is core business for the LGAQ and we strive to be a trusted partner with other levels of government to help develop, manage and deliver outcomes that matter to councils. Currently, the Advocate Funded Projects team has six projects in operation. The table below provides a snapshot of their progress and highlights.



Project Name	Total Funding	Overall Progress	Key Highlights
<a href="#">Domestic and Family Violence Officer</a> 2020 – 2024	\$175K	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful delivery of four virtual masterclass sessions in partnership with WorkHaven for council teams to take part in DFV training.</li> <li>• Preparation for the 16 days of activism against gendered-based violence is underway, including engagement with various councils.</li> <li>• The Project Officer is currently developing an engagement plan in partnership with Premiers, DFV Council and the Champions Network to identify opportunities to utilise the additional funding received for the 23-24 period.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Contact: Ellen Ross (<a href="mailto:ellen_ross@lgaq.asn.au">ellen_ross@lgaq.asn.au</a>)</i></p>
<a href="#">Local Housing Action Plans</a> 2023 - 2024	\$565K	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently 29 LHAPs are entering the drafting stage (out of the 38 LGAQ is contracted by the Department of Housing to complete).</li> <li>• Nominal funding is available to the 38 councils to support the preparation of the LHAPs and/or progress additional research to identify need.</li> <li>• LHAPs for all 38 councils are expected to be completed by early 2024.</li> <li>• Croydon Shire Council has completed their LHAP and the Department of Housing will now reach out to council to progress actions.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Contact: John Zheng (<a href="mailto:john_zheng@lgaq.asn.au">john_zheng@lgaq.asn.au</a>)</i></p>
<a href="#">Queensland Climate Resilient Councils</a> 2016 - 2023	\$3.48M	Awaiting Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The LGAQ has submitted a final report to the Department of Environment and Science outlining the success of the program over the last 8 years in early October. The project is scheduled to end in December 2023.</li> <li>• The LGAQ has submitted a business case to the Department requesting \$16M to extend the program over three years, based on resolution #78 at the LGAQ Annual Conference 2023 as well as Resolution #93 at the LGAQ Annual Conference 2022 ask of \$1.6 million to continue and expand Climate Resilience Alliances state-wide.</li> <li>• To date, the program has engaged 54 councils, delivered 49 F2F briefings, completed 40 governance assessments and delivered a series of online tools, frameworks and resources.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Contact: Emma Schofield (<a href="mailto:emma_schofield@lgaq.asn.au">emma_schofield@lgaq.asn.au</a>)</i></p>
Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program 2020-2026	\$2M per year	Extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On Tuesday 17 October, at the LGAQ Annual Conference 2023 qldwater, LGAQ and the RDMW signed a new Tripartite Grant Agreement securing three further years of support and certainty for the Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program (QWRAP).</li> <li>• The Water Industry Worker (WIW) Program has been extended for a further three years and Simmonds and Bristow have been successful with this tender. The program is open to trade and non-trade employees in the council water sector. EOIs, factsheets and FAQs have been sent to local councils.</li> <li>• There are currently 20 projects funded through QWRAP across 7 QWRAP regions totalling \$882,410 of funding approvals through the bid pool fund.</li> <li>• There was a \$312,188 underspend from 22-23 FY. Allocation of this underspend was approved by PSC on 31 August as below:</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$90K to support three additional statewide research projects (Local Government HR Toolkit \$20K, Online Resources \$60K, and Telecommunications Infrastructure and Water Industry Safety Risks \$10K)</li> <li>○ \$70K to support regional coordinator for nine QWRAP regions. The new grant deed (expected in December) will make a permanent increase to the allocation for nine regional coordinators to reflect this greater need.</li> <li>○ \$152,188 will be rolled over to the 23-24 FY QWRAP bid pool funding allocation.</li> </ul> <p>Key Contact: Jennifer Hartwig (<a href="mailto:Jennifer.hartwig@lgaq.asn.au">Jennifer.hartwig@lgaq.asn.au</a>)</p>
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For any questions about Funded Projects, please contact Megan Forrest, Manager Funded Projects at [megan\\_forrest@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:megan_forrest@lgaq.asn.au).

## 21. LGAQ Submissions Update

### Recent Submissions

- Wind Farm Code and Guideline Review (4 September)
- Draft REZ Roadmap (22 September)
- Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Perpetrator Strategy (22 September)
- Land Valuation Amendment Bill 2023 (22 September)
- Australian Energy Infrastructure Commissioner – Review of community engagement practices (1 October)
- Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 (3 October)
- Queensland Plan Review (6 October)
- Draft ShapingSEQ 2023 Update (9 October)
- National Housing and Homelessness Plan Issues Paper (20 October)
- Victims of Crime Assistance Bill 2023 (27 October)
- Public Records Bill 2023 (27 October)
- Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 (3 November)
- Environmental Protection Act 1994 – Independent Review Government Response (11 November)

### Upcoming Submissions

- Senate Inquiry into the Red Imported Fire Ants (1 December)
- Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Bill 2023 – (8 December)
- Improved Regulatory Efficiency – Consultation paper – Department of Resources – (December 8)
- Coexistence Institutions and CSG-induced subsidence management framework – Consultation paper – Department of Resources – (December 8)
- Legislative Enhancements to mining claims – Consultation paper – Department of Resources – (December 8)
- Draft updated threat abatement plan for predation by feral cats (11 December)
- Agriculture and Fisheries and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (15 December)