

DATE: 25 January 2024

TO: Cr Peter Scott, Mayor – Cook Shire Council

SUBJECT: LGAQ Policy Executive Update for the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Meeting – Thursday 01 February 2024

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1. Policy Executive Meeting Update

- The Policy Executive met in Brisbane on Friday, 8 December 2023.
- Items on the agenda included:
 - **Food Act changes – binding the Crown:** The Policy Executive discussed the move by the State to bind the Crown under the Food Act 2006. The PE resolved to write to Health Minister Shannon Fentiman warning against any moves to cost shift onto councils and firmly backing Option 2, ahead of the close of consultation.
 - **State Election campaign:** The Policy Executive was taken through the core policy platform the LGAQ is finalising to campaign on in the lead up to the October 2024 State Election including key asks supported by members at the 2023 Annual Conference.
 - **Federal Infrastructure Investment Pipeline Review:** The Policy Executive was given a briefing on the results of the Federal Infrastructure Investment Pipeline Review and the subsequent delegation of Mayors to Canberra, led by the Deputy Premier.
 - **Community Sentiment Research:** The Policy Executive was updated on the latest community sentiment research and the evaluation of the first phase of the Locals like You campaign launched on behalf of the sector. The research contained insights including that safety and a sense of community are becoming increasingly important, with safety increasing as a genuine concern for residents (up from 45% to 51% of Queenslanders identifying it as the defining issue in community liveability).
 - **Cost shifting report:** The Policy Executive was updated on the cost shifting survey insights and activities shared to date and upcoming advocacy as part of the endorsed two-phased campaign.
 - **Federal Parliamentary delegation:** An overview was provided of the post Annual Conference Canberra Delegation held from Sunday 11 November – Tuesday 13 November 2023 at Parliament House.
 - **Dangerous dogs and biosecurity changes:** The Policy Executive was provided with an overview of a new Bill introduced into State Parliament to bring about changes to animal management laws as well as to implement key amendments to the Biosecurity Act that answer key member asks in this space.
 - **Infrastructure charging research:** The Policy Executive was updated on the 'Improving Queensland's Trunk Infrastructure Funding and Charging Network' research project, started in mid-2023, in response to the ongoing need for reform of Queensland's trunk infrastructure funding and charging framework and the calls of Queensland councils over successive LGAQ Annual Conferences. This project is considering the funding gap for both SEQ and regional councils. A full report will be presented to the PE at its next meeting in February.
 - **Housing policy:** The Policy Executive was briefed on recent and upcoming work relating to housing and growth, including the Housing Availability and Affordability (Planning and Other Legislation) Amendment Bill 2023, the State-led 'Growing Together' community awareness campaign, as well as the proposed Queensland Housing Code and Queensland Housing Plan
- The minutes from this meeting can be accessed via Congruent [here](#).
- The next meeting of the Policy Executive will be held on Friday, 16 February 2024. Please contact your Policy Executive representative to raise any items for discussion.

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

2. 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 ensures 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
- The caretaker period for local government elections commences on the day when the notice of election is published by the ECQ, which is expected to be 29 January 2024.
- **Anyone wanting to nominate as a candidate must have completed the “So you want to be a councillor” training course as part of your nomination. This free, mandatory online training takes approximately 90 minutes to complete and is available on the Department’s website – [here](#).**
- Information on the specific electoral expenditure caps for each LGA can be accessed [here](#).
- The latest edition of the ECQ’s Countdown newsletter can be accessed [here](#).

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

3. Major Policy Decisions during Election Caretaker Period

- The Local Government Department has advised Queensland council CEOs of recent changes to departmental processes that will allow for **consideration/approval of major policy decisions in exceptional circumstances during the upcoming caretaker period** for the 2024 Local Government elections **within 1 business day**.
- The changes recognise the impacts that recent natural disasters, including Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the Christmas/New Year SEQ severe storms, have had on local communities across Queensland and the need for community recovery activities to continue during the caretaker period.
- It’s recognised that decisions relating to disaster recovery activities are in the public interest and exceptional circumstances apply. Other issues may also arise that require action of council in the public interest as provided in section 90B(3) and (4) of the *Local Government Act 2009* and section 92B(3) and (4) of the *City of Brisbane Act*.
- To make an application for approval to make a major policy decision related to disaster recovery during caretaker 2024 the following process should be followed:
 1. Email the Deputy Director General of the Local Government division with your application at DDGLGDMailbox@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au. Please use the template that was emailed to the council CEOs on Tuesday 23 January.
 2. An application can seek multiple approvals at one time as long as there is sufficient information in the application for each approval to allow a decision to be made on a case-by-case basis (i.e. a ‘general approval’ for any/all activities cannot be provided).

3. You will receive a decision about your application as soon as practicable, where possible **within 1 business day**, by return email.
- Applications using this process apply only to decisions that may have to be made during the local government elections caretaker period, which is expected to be from 29 January 2024 to approximately end of March 2024. Prior to 29 January 2024 councils do not require approval to make major policy decisions.
 - There is no specific format required for an email application. However, it's important to ensure that an application includes sufficient information to allow a decision to be made as prescribed in the legislation.
 - Please note that caretaker provisions will apply once the notification of election is published by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, anticipated to be 29 January 2024. It is not necessary to submit an application for exemption until this date.
 - If you have any questions, please contact Ms Louisa Lynch at louisa.lynch@dsdilgp.qld.gov.au or 07 3452 6747.

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

4. State Government Cabinet Reshuffle

- Following the appointment of Steven Miles MP as the 40th Premier of Queensland in December 2023, a new Cabinet was announced including a new Local Government Minister, several Assistant Ministers elevated into Ministry, and portfolio reshuffles.
- Minister for Housing Meaghan Scanlon MP is now also Minister for Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works, in addition to the Housing portfolio.
- Previous Assistant Minister for Local Government Nikki Boyd MP has been elevated into Cabinet as Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services. Ali King MP has been promoted to Assistant Minister for Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works and Bart Mellish MP is now Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services following Mark Bailey's resignation from Cabinet.
- A full list of all new appointments in the Miles Government Ministry can be found [here](#).
- Following the LGAQ's October 2023 Annual Conference, State and Federal Ministers and State Directors-General received correspondence from the LGAQ on 23 November 2023 outlining the resolutions endorsed by Queensland councils relevant to their portfolio.
- Following the Cabinet reshuffle, the LGAQ again sent correspondence to the newly appointed Ministers outlining the 2023 resolutions relevant to their new portfolio. This is but one step of the LGAQ's strategy advocating on behalf of members to secure outcomes for council resolutions.

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Lucy Greene, Lead - Intergovernmental Relations

5. 2024 State Election Campaign

- The LGAQ will use the leadup to the 2024 State Election in October as a major campaign opportunity, calling on all political parties to align their state election commitments to the priorities of Queensland communities.
- In 2023 the LGAQ Policy Executive approved a strategic approach to developing, building and activating the LGAQ's state election campaign on behalf of Queensland councils, with work commencing in three phases to ensure the sector was well positioned from early 2024.
- At the December Policy Executive meeting, the Policy Executive provided feedback on a draft election platform informed by 2023 conference resolutions and high-level issues that have been a key feature for the LGAQ throughout this term. Asks were themed under 8 key themes.

- A soft launch of the platform is planned for early 2024, including a re-launch of campaign website www.voteforlocal.com.au
- Following the 2024 local government elections, a public launch will activate the plan in the broader media and with councils. The LGAQ will be seeking council voices and local examples to profile through mainstream and paid digital media as part of this campaign period.
- As in previous years, the LGAQ will plan to have a scorecard that ranks the responses on each of the key themes and asks – to ensure political accountability and to drive the responses to our sector-wide asks. This scorecard will drive the public-facing rankings on the Vote For Local website.

LGAQ contact for this matter: Nathan Ruhle, Manager - Intergovernmental Relations and Samantha Dean, Manager – Campaigns.

6. Cost shifting campaign

- On Monday 22nd January the LGAQ [launched](#) a landmark piece of research which quantifies the impact of cost shifting onto councils and the communities they serve.
- The [LGAQ's Cost Shifting Report](#) revealed councils are picking up a massive \$360 million tab each year to deliver services that are the responsibility of other levels of government and the private sector.
- Informed by a survey conducted by AEC and completed by 75% of councils, the report found there has been a 378% increase in reported cost shifting onto councils and their communities over the last 20 years.
- Councillors and CEOs were sent an advance copy of the report ahead of its launch, which also features a selection of councils who contributed to the data collection process.
- It shows councils across the state are providing everything from health and morgue services to paying for CCTV, rebroadcasting free-to-air television, operating childcare, running bakeries, supermarkets, post offices and even school buildings, teacher housing and school holiday security officers – all without any extra funding, or adequate levels of funding to take on this service delivery.
- The LGAQ will continue to activate the report and key messaging as part of its [campaign](#) in the lead up to the 2024 State Election.

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Lucy Greene, Lead - Intergovernmental Relations and Samantha Dean, Manager - Campaigns.

7. Workforce and Industrial Relations

- The LGAQ is progressing a significant piece of work focussing on Workforce, which is a key priority for member councils. 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 strategies in response to identified workforce issues, challenges and opportunities for Councils to adopt at their discretion.

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

8. Water and Wastewater Update

National Water Reform 2024 – Productivity Commission inquiry

- The NWI (National Water Initiative) is Australia's blueprint for national water reform, created in 2004 and agreed by all states and territories.
- It provides a framework and principles to underpin the sustainable management of our water resources, to increase the efficiency of Australia's water use, provide investment confidence and greater certainty for the environment, and improve water security for rural and urban
- The *Water Act 2007* (Commonwealth) requires regular assessments to determine the progress of Australian governments towards achieving the objects and outcomes of the NWI. These assessments are currently undertaken every 3 years by the Productivity Commission (PC).
- The PC has commenced the latest enquiry with a call for submissions to identify issues and provide suggestions for ways forward (late December).
- This initial call is to inform their assessment by providing evidence in support of any views on national water policy, such as data, research reports and case studies.
- LGAQ intend to lodge a submission on behalf of local government outlining any outstanding, new, and emerging advocacy and policy positions provided to us by our members since the last inquiry in 2020.
- There will be a further opportunity to provide input to the inquiry when the report on the commission's findings is released in April 2024 at which time LGAQ will be seeking input to a submission from Councils.
- The Commission is to deliver its report to the Australian Government in May 2024.
- Further information on the inquiry and the Commission's consultation process can be found [here](#).

Urban Water Risk Assessment (UWRA) Project progresses

- On 13 June the Queensland Government announced that the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW) would undertake an assessment of challenges and opportunities for drinking water and wastewater treatment services.
- The Results of Phase 1 of the Urban Water Risk Assessment are in, and DRDMW are working through the data to know the problem and start to identify potential solutions.
- Solutions may include (not exclusively), research and innovation, training and capacity building and renewed funding for water and wastewater infrastructure - which aligns well with local government advocacy asks.
- Phase 2 which is about to commence will take a more detailed assessment of the risks and vulnerabilities faced by remote and regional councils in delivering safe and secure water services to their communities.
- While the initial phase involved a desktop analysis using existing data and information on water service providers, Phase 2 is likely to include direct engagement with Councils to ground truth the findings of Phase 1 and ensure that the proposed solutions are fit for purpose and outcomes are achievable.
- LGAQ attended a workshop on 8 January to explore some of the potential solutions to address the risks identified in the initial assessment.
- 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

9. Regional Telecommunications Review and Universal Service Arrangements

2024 Regional Telecommunications Review

- The Federal Government has published the [Terms of Reference](#) for, and commenced, the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Review.
- The Regional Telecommunications Review is undertaken every 3 years to examine the adequacy of regional telecommunications and the existing and future telecommunication needs in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia.
- The Minister for Communications, the Hon Michelle Rowland MP, has announced the appointment of the 2024 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review Committee (the Committee), led by the Hon Alannah MacTiernan, as Chair. Mr Ian Kelly, the Hon Fiona Nash, Dr Jessa Rogers and Ms Kristy Sparrow have also been appointed to the Committee.
- The Committee will soon announce its public consultation schedule. Consultation is expected to commence in April 2024, with the Committee's final report due to the Federal Government by 31 December 2024.
- The LGAQ will continue to keep members updated as the Review progresses and seek member feedback through the public consultation period, once confirmed, to inform a submission to this Review.

Universal Service Arrangements Review

- The Federal Government is currently examining universal service arrangements (including Universal Service Obligation (USO)), in light of changes in available technologies and consumer preferences over recent years.
- The USO is the nationwide, long-standing regulatory requirement on Telstra, as the statutory primary universal service provider, to supply fixed voice services and payphones to people nationally on reasonable request.
- Telstra provides the majority of USO services over the National Broadband Network (NBN) using NBN Co's fixed line technology, however it continues to deliver USO voice services over copper and other legacy networks in regional and remote areas.
- The original USO was put in place before widespread use of mobile phones – and does not cover mobile telephony.
- The Federal Government released the [Better delivery of universal services: Discussion paper](#) on 30 October 2023, and is currently calling for submissions and feedback on the Discussion paper by 5pm, 1 March 2024.
- The LGAQ will be making a submission on the Discussion paper, to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, and welcomes member feedback to inform this submission.
- If your council would like to provide feedback to the LGAQ, please email Crystal Baker, Manager – Strategic Policy via: crystal_baker@lgaq.asn.au by **COB 20 February 2024**.

LGAQ Contact for these matters: Crystal Baker – Manager, Strategic Policy

10. Juvenile Crime in Queensland: Local Government Action Plan

- The LGAQ is continuing to advocate for funding and informed, place-based policy solutions to help Queensland communities 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.
- On 12 October 2023 the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee was established to conduct an inquiry to examine ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support for victims of crime.
- On 10 January 2024, the LGAQ made a submission the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee on behalf of members, focussing on [Community suggestions to address juvenile crime in Queensland](#), a nine-point Local Government Action Plan. A copy of the submission is available [here](#).
- On 18 January, the LGAQ held a meeting with Police Minister Mark Ryan to discuss some of the initiatives contained within the plan.
- 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.

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

11. 2023 Community Sentiment Survey

- A fresh round of community sentiment research commissioned by the LGAQ on behalf of members has revealed Queenslanders continue to view their local council as the most approachable and community focused level of government.
- Over two thirds of Queenslanders say their local council provides vital services every day of the year as they prepare to cast their vote in the upcoming March local government elections.
- The research sampled over 1000 Queenslanders across a range of demographics and locations, and benchmarked results against those returned in 2022.
- It found 77 per cent of Queenslanders view local government as having strong local community connections and saw them rate local government as the hardest working level of government in comparison to State and Federal governments.
- The 2023 update found increased awareness of council responsibilities across many roles, showing residents continue to view local government responsibilities like the upkeep of roads, footpaths and green spaces as crucial to their daily lives.
- The research highlights can be downloaded by members via [Congruent](#).

LGAQ Contact for this matter: Samantha Dean, Campaign Planner

12. Natural Resources and Environment Update

Nature Positive Reforms

- The Australian Government has commenced targeted consultation on the proposed Nature Positive Reforms, 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 attended a confidential briefing session in December 2023. Proposed changes presented at the session included a number of amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, including the establishment of an Independent Environment Protection Agency and the development of a number of National Environmental Standards. [Further information on the proposed changes can be found here.](#)
- In January 2024, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water released [draft policy papers associated with the Nature Positive Reforms](#). The LGAQ is collecting feedback from members on the draft policy papers ahead of an initial submission on the Nature Positive Reforms in March 2024.
- Full public consultation on the Nature Positive Bill will occur mid-2024.

Yellow crazy ant

- Following Whitsunday Regional Council's 2023 Resolution at the LGAQ Annual Conference, the LGAQ has gained support from Biosecurity Queensland, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to collaborate in the delivery of a cost benefit analysis of managing the Whitsunday yellow crazy ant (YCA) infestation utilising a new modelling program – Biosecurity Commons.
- Outcomes from the analysis will assist the LGAQ in calling for the Queensland Government to increase funding to Whitsunday Regional Council to eradicate the Whitsunday YCA infestation.
- Additionally, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has agreed to collaborate with the LGAQ and Whitsunday Regional Council on the development of a tramp ant hygiene declaration form. The form would be used by individuals when moving goods and materials to declare that they are not moving transporting tramp ants from one location to another (similar to weed hygiene declarations).

Queensland Jellyfish Management Plan

- Engagement with the Queensland Government has resulted in a level of interest to support the development of a Queensland Jellyfish Management Plan; however, further information is required to advance this advocacy request, including:
 - Mapping of current stakeholder service delivery
 - Formalising a broad management intent.
- The LGAQ has released a member survey to all Queensland coastal councils exploring current jellyfish resourcing allocations and partnerships. Responses to the survey are due 2 February 2024, with survey outcomes to be used to progress advocacy.

Queensland Feral Pest Initiative – Round 8a – Feral pig coordinators

- Through the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative (QFPI), funding is available for eligible organisations, including ROCs, to employ one or more, up to a maximum of four, feral pig management coordinators to support the initiation and delivery of effective feral pig management for both private and public land managers.
- The closing date for applications is 29 February 2024, [with Grant Guidelines available here.](#)

Reduction in Land Protection Fund payments for councils

- In late December 2023, the Department for Agriculture and Fisheries committed to a review of the Invasive Plants and Animals Co-investment Model (2014) in 2024. The Co-investment Model provides a framework for how the Land Protection Fund (On-ground and Research Components)

is allocated across Queensland and supports local governments meet their obligations under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.

- The review will also include an investigation into the Wild Dog Barrier Fence, On-ground and Research components of the Land Protection Fund and propose changes to the calculation methodology if required.
- The Department for Agriculture and Fisheries will send notification to Queensland councils on the review in early 2024.

Navua sedge

- On 22 December 2023, the LGAQ received a response from the Hon. Mark Furner MP, Queensland Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities on *2023 Annual Conference Resolution #75 – Listing navua sedge as a restricted species under the Biosecurity Act 2014*. The response noted:
 - Local governments have the ability to utilise Local Law provisions under the Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) to manage navua sedge (Local Law 3 – Community and Environmental Management).
 - Funding for the management of navua sedge on land managed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) sits with the DTMR.
 - A number of research projects for navua sedge are currently being delivered by Biosecurity Queensland, including:
 - biological and chemical approaches to ‘on-farm’ management navua sedge – due for completion in 2024;
 - weed biological control of navua sedge – due for completion in 2024; and
 - impact and management of navua sedge - due for completion in 2025.
- The LGAQ is liaising with Biosecurity Queensland to deliver a navua sedge information forum for interested councils in early 2024.
- The LGAQ will table concerns from members on the management of navua sedge on DTMR land at the next State Lands Pest Management Committee meeting.

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

13. Waste Update

Regional Waste Management Plans

- Following the finalisation of the final RWMP, the Department of Environment and Science is now setting up the implementation framework to allow regions to progress individual projects. Simultaneously, the final funding proposals for implementation officers as well as behaviour change officers, as discussed during the previous FNQ Waste working group meeting, are being considered by the Minister.
- The LGAQ is continuing to advocate for timely implementation of key actions, including clarity for regional implementation of the GROW FOGO program, as well as a statewide roll out of the state-led behaviour change campaign. Both will be dependent on the above implementation and behaviour change officers to be in place regionally.

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

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Draft Guideline & Climate Change Authority report

- The Department of Environment and Science is currently consulting on the ‘Draft Greenhouse Gas Emissions Guidelines’, which aim to provide decision makers with certainty on how to assess new

and expanded Environmentally Relevant Activities in regard to their greenhouse gas emissions. The LGAQ will provide a whole-of-sector response. If you would like to provide feedback, please refer to the Congruent article [here](#), noting the due date of 28 February 2024.

- Local government is impacted by the guideline both as an assessor of devolved ERAs, and as operators of environmental activities, especially landfills. It is expected that the guidelines will impact on new and expanded applications for landfills (including applications for new cells) and will include new requirements for greenhouse gas emission estimates.
- Separately, the Federal Government has received the 2023 National Greenhouse and Energy reporting legislation (NGER) review by the Climate Change Authority. While local governments are exempt from NGER reporting, the report recommends expanding the remit of the legislation to publicly owned landfills, if possible. As the Federal Government has committed to respond to the review in the first half of the 2023, the LGAQ is working with the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) to oppose this recommendation.

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

14. 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.
- On 12 December 2023, the LGAQ appeared before the State Development and Regional Industries Committee to discuss our submission. The committee has until March to provide a recommendation back to parliament.
- While the Bill progresses key local government asks, further changes to animal management are necessary. The LGAQ will continue to advocate to continue the work of the Animal Management Taskforce and Technical Working Group.

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

15. Review of the *Food Act 2006*

- The Department of Health, to give effect to recommendations of the 2019 Queensland Audit Office report 'Managing consumer food safety in Queensland – Report 17: 2018-19' has reviewed the *Food Act 2006*. In August 2023, the Department, in collaboration with the LGAQ, held consultation sessions for the proposed changes across the state. This consultation explicitly excluded the proposal to 'Bind the Crown' – meaning the inclusion of all state-owned food businesses with current food safety programs.
- In December 2023, the Department of Health published a further discussion paper dedicated to the 'Binding the Crown' proposal. Following consultation with the LGAQ membership, and the LGAQ policy executive, the LGAQ provided a clear recommendation to the State Government that local government is unable to take on the additional responsibilities. This is due to a number of factors, but includes:
 - Different food safety standards in state-owned businesses would require intensive transition periods.
 - Councils do not have the necessary enforcement powers to properly investigate and prosecute the State.
 - All councils face difficulties engaging sufficiently qualified Environmental Health Officers. Furthering the remit of their work would not be able to be covered by the existing workforce.

- Most state-owned businesses engage third party providers for food safety matters. Shifting this responsibility to local government has severe cost implications that cannot be borne by the community.
- Councils currently implement changes to food safety programs due to national standard updates, as well as anticipated state legislative changes. Additional pressure is not acceptable currently.

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

16. Disaster Management

- Since mid-December the LGAQ's Council 2 Council (C2C) support program has provided much-needed relief and support to the vital recovery work of councils whose communities have been severely impacted by the monsoonal low that followed TC Jasper in FNQ, and the Christmas night and New Year's Eve storms that impacted parts of SEQ.
- The way fellow councils can help is with anything from switchboard operators, yellow plant, trucks and operators to disaster management personnel. The unique nature of the C2C program is how it helps to identify the people in specialist roles who are needed and can be deployed fast to hit the ground running, or to provide support remotely.
- Each week the LGAQ has been working with councils to deploy new waves of C2C officers to: City of Gold Coast, Scenic Rim, Douglas, Cairns and Wujal Wujal Of the severely impacted councils, Logan was the only not to request support.
- In turn, C2C support has come from:
Gladstone, Livingstone, Mackay, Cairns, Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Ipswich, Central Highlands, Tablelands, Redlands and Western Downs, Gold Coast, Moreton Bay, Lockyer Valley Regional Council.
- LGAQ Contact for this matter: Liz Drumm – Disaster Management Lead *LGAQ Contact for this matter: Liz Drumm – Disaster Management Lead*

17. Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023

- The LGAQ made a submission on the Bill to the [Transport and Resources Committee](#) on the *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023* on 16 January 2024, following consultation with members and a webinar with the Department of Resources. A copy of the LGAQ submission is available [here](#).
- Overall, the Bill represents an important step forward in modernising the State Government's legislative framework across a number of critical priorities for Queensland councils expressed through recent LGAQ Annual Conference resolutions including:
 - streamlining of existing processes for local government trustees under the Land Act (including for the transfer of State Government reserves), and
 - mandating the payment of applicable local government rates and charges as a condition of an existing and future resource authority.
- 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.
- the *Petroleum Act 1923*, *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*, *Geothermal Energy Act 2010*, and the *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009* to mandate the payment of applicable local government rates and charges as a condition of a resource authority.
- other legislation to make minor administrative and consequential changes.
- The LGAQ will continue working with the Department of Resources and Queensland councils to support the successful implementation of these reforms.

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

18. 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
Domestic and Family Violence Officer 2020 – 2024	\$175K	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful delivery of four virtual masterclass sessions in partnership with WorkHaven for council teams to take part in DFV training. • Preparation for the 16 days of activism against gendered-based violence is underway, including engagement with various councils. • 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. <p><i>Key Contact: Ellen Ross (ellen_ross@lgaq.asn.au)</i></p>
Local Housing Action Plans 2023 - 2024	\$565K	On Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently 29 LHAPs are entering the drafting stage (out of the 38 LGAQ is contracted by the Department of Housing to complete). • Nominal funding is available to the 38 councils to support the preparation of the LHAPs and/or progress additional research to identify need. • LHAPs for all 38 councils are expected to be completed by early 2024. • Croydon Shire Council has completed their LHAP and the Department of Housing will now reach out to council to progress actions. <p><i>Key Contact: John Zheng (john_zheng@lgaq.asn.au)</i></p>
Queensland Climate	\$3.48M	Awaiting Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGAQ has submitted a final report to the Department of Environment and Science outlining the success of the

Resilient Councils 2016 - 2023			<p>program over the last 8 years in early October. The project is scheduled to end in December 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. <p><i>Key Contact: Emma Schofield</i> (emma_schofield@lgaq.asn.au)</p>
Queensland Water Regional Alliance Program 2020-2026	\$2M per year	Extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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). 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. There are currently 17 projects funded through QWRAP across 7 QWRAP regions totalling \$812,325 of funding approvals through the bid pool fund. There was a \$312,188 underspend from 22-23 FY. Allocation of this underspend was approved by PSC on 31 August as below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$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) \$70K to support regional coordinator for nine QWRAP regions. LGAQ will continue advocating for a permanent increase to the allocation for nine regional coordinators to reflect this greater need. \$152,188 will be rolled over to the 23-24 FY QWRAP bid pool funding allocation. <p><i>Key Contact: Jennifer Hartwig</i> (Jennifer_hartwig@lgaq.asn.au)</p>

For any questions about Funded Projects, please contact Megan Forrest, Manager Funded Projects at megan_forrest@lgaq.asn.au.

19. LGAQ Submissions Update

Recent Submissions

- 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)*
- *Food Safety Act – Binding the Crown (4 January)*
- *Youth Justice Reform in Queensland (10 January)*
- *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 (16 January)*
- *2024/25 Federal Budget Submission (25 January)*
- *Senate Inquiry into Red Imported Fire Ants (29 January)*

Upcoming Submissions

- *First Nations Clean Energy Strategy Consultation Paper (9 February)*
- *Draft Greenhouse Gas Emission Guideline (29 February)*
- *Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill 2023 – State Emergency Service Bill 2023 – Marine Rescue Queensland Bill 2023 (31 January)*
- *National Water Reform 2024 – Productivity Commission inquiry (2 February)*
- *Draft non-transport Utility Management and Design Manual (DTMR) (8 February)*
- *Better delivery of universal services: Discussion paper (1 March)*