

About

the Local Government
Association of NSW
and the Shires
Association of NSW

Introduction

The Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW represent 152 general purpose councils and 14 special purpose councils.

The Associations represent the views of their members by:

- Presenting councils' views to government.
- Promoting Local Government to the community.
- Providing specialist advice and services.

Brief History of the Associations

The Local Government Association was established in 1883 and the Shires Association in 1908. In 1922 the Associations established a common secretariat but in all other ways continued as separate organisations and maintained separate accounts.

In the late 1960s staff numbers began to increase to provide additional services to members, and in May 1981 it was agreed that the Associations would operate from a joint budget. This process continues today.

Our Vision

- To be recognised as the voice of Local Government in NSW.

Our Mission

- Provide leadership to and advocacy for Local Government, for the benefit of local communities.
- Deliver outstanding services to members.
- Anticipate the needs and desires of Local Government in leading sustainable communities.

Our Structure

The two Associations are registered industrial organisations of employers. Each Association is headed by an elected Executive Committee which is chaired by a President and meets bi-monthly, much like a Board of Directors. Both Associations have annual conferences where members are able to vote on issues affecting Local Government. There is also a Joint Executive which makes recommendations regarding administrative matters which impact upon both Associations.

The Executive members of the Local Government Association are elected by members at their annual conferences. The Shires Association comprises nine divisions across the state; each division has one elected representative on the Executive.

A joint secretariat represents both Associations and comprises about 60 staff members who implement Executive and conference decisions, provide support for policies and carry out specialist member services.

The secretariat has four divisions:

- Office of the Secretary General
- Policy and Research
- Workplace Solutions
- Corporate Services

Councils in NSW

Councils range in size, population, structure and in the services they provide. A council can be made up of a group of suburbs, a town or a rural area.

Councils operate within the legislative framework laid down by the State Government. Their powers and responsibilities derive mainly from the Local Government Act 1993.

Councils work for their communities by:

- **Providing** a wide range of services and facilities, and giving support to many others.
- **Protecting** the community, making sure their environment is safe and clean.
- **Preventing** things that would harm the community, such as disease, noise and pollution.
- **Planning** for the future of the community.
- **Representing** the needs and desires of local communities to other governments and other organisations.

Residents and other ratepayers elect their councillors every four years. There are around 1500 councillors in NSW.

Councils meet regularly to discuss issues and make decisions on behalf of the local community. The leader of the elected council is the mayor. Four councils have lord mayors.

50,000 people work for local councils in NSW. A general manager is responsible for a wide range of administrative, technical and professional staff such as engineers, planners, librarians, child care workers and health inspectors.

Representing Councils' Views to State and Federal Governments

Policy Development for Local Government

The Policy and Research Division develops well researched, proactive and integrated policies utilising ecologically sustainable development principles where possible, in consultation with councils. They are then advocated on councils' behalf to State and Federal Governments and to other stakeholder groups.

The Associations assist councils in community governance and encourage improved service provision through targeted programs and projects, involving specialist teams in the following areas:

Social policy, covering;

- Council community welfare, cultural, health, and recreation facilities, services and activities.
- Social justice of other council functions.
- Social policies of other spheres of government that councils seek to influence.
- Participation in governance (e.g. for women, Aboriginal peoples and young people).

Environment, including;

- Ecologically sustainable development
- Biodiversity
- Natural resource management
- Waste management
- Water and sewerage management
- Climate change mitigation
- Adaptation and sustainable purchasing

Finance, infrastructure and planning, including;

- Local Government finances
- Planning & planning reform
- Roads and transport
- Asset management
- Economic development and tourism

The division is also involved with the provision of legal advice; a project to help reduce water loss; and various other special projects.

The Strengthening Local Government Task Force project management team was established following the Independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of Local Government in NSW, which was completed in May 2006. This team is managing Local Government's response to the inquiry.

Standing committees, with membership from the two Association Executives and other stakeholder groups, meet regularly to set policy directions. These policies are developed and debated by the two Executive Committees and at the annual conferences of both Associations.

Submissions and reports are prepared by policy officers in response to initiatives by State and Federal Governments. Research papers are also prepared on topics of special importance.

Advice to Councils

A key function of the Policy and Research Division is the provision of up to date information and advice to councils. The Associations protect the interests of Local Government by actively monitoring legislative and other developments in government to ensure they do not adversely affect councils. We also assist councils by advising on current developments in government and council management.

Providing Specialist Services to Councils

Workplace Solutions

The Workplace Solutions Division provides specialist industrial relations services, training and development support, advice in managing employment related matters and on-site assistance in the recruitment and performance management of senior, managerial and specialist staff.

The Industrial Relations Unit represents councils in Award and industrial disputes and anti-discrimination matters, as well as providing advice and information on all employment-related issues.

Local Government Employment Solutions provides a recruitment, performance management and employment consultancy to Local Government throughout NSW. It also provides counselling and other support services including comparative remuneration data, exit interviewing, organisational structure analysis and relationship management.

Local Government Learning Solutions coordinates seminars, workshops and forums on issues of current interest. Skilled trainers provide professional learning and development opportunities for councillors and staff. Workshops are scheduled in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, as well as at councils' own premises.

Managing the Corporate Operations

Corporate Services maintains the efficient corporate operation of the Associations.

Financing the Associations

The annual budget of the Associations is about \$8 million. The principal source of revenue (about 40 per cent) is membership subscriptions, which are levied on a sliding scale.

Other major sources of income include government grants for special programs, insurance and purchasing commissions, dividends from the Associations' investment portfolio and activities operated on a cost recovery basis such as training and seminars, conferences and executive recruitment.

Local Government Procurement

Local Government Procurement is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Associations, established to provide a fully integrated procurement service to councils and associated organisations in NSW.

Local Government Procurement represents the needs of councils with suppliers as well as providing extensive procurement, tendering and contract management support. Councils can utilise LGP to conduct tenders on their behalf, on a fee for service basis, reducing their risk and ensuring that the process follows best practice principles.

Local Online Communications & Linkages

Like Local Government Procurement, LOC&L is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Associations focused on working with councils in their online service delivery activities, including:

- Improve the capability of councils to deliver online services to their communities.
- Establish a network of partners who can deliver content, services and solutions to councils.
- Support and further develop the Local-e program.
- Undertake programs and projects on a state-wide basis.
- Provide advice and guidance on online services issues.

Promoting Local Government to the Community and the Media

The Communications Unit, within the Office of the Secretary General, produces media releases, publications aimed at the community, and technical and reference materials to publicise the views of Local Government.

The Events team organises the Associations' annual conferences and meetings.

Awards for council achievements and public events and activities like Local Government Week enhance the public profile of councils in their communities.

Benefits for Our Members

- Information and advice about current developments in government.
- Monitoring of legislative and other developments to ensure they do not adversely affect the interests of Local Government.
- Promotion of policies developed at conferences and in expert forums to governments, government agencies and a wide range of industry and business organisations.
- General information to inform the public about the range and functions of councils.
- Information and advice about employment-related matters.
- Information and advice about council management and legal matters.
- Representation in industrial disputes and award matters.
- Networking and professional development opportunities for councillors.
- Access to high-quality, cost-effective training programs delivered by presenters who know Local Government.
- Technical, promotional and reference publications.
- Training, seminars and specialised workshops and forums on issues of current interest.
- Executive selection and management services.
- Access to discounts and special purchasing schemes.

Local Government
Association of NSW



Shires Association
of NSW

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February 2007

printed on 100% recycled paper