



Excellence in Environment Awards Winners

The LGSA is pleased to announce the winners of the 2011 Excellence in Environment Awards.

Accommodation is at a premium to attend the LGSA Tourism Conference 2012.

Start planning now and book your accommodation early, as Gunnedah is experiencing high mid week occupancy due to the mining industry.

Contaminated Site Short Courses 2012

Registrations are now open for the 2012 series of three day courses covering all aspects of contaminated site assessment, remediation and management.

Local Government Association of NSW and the Shires Association of NSW

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The Australian Government has announced a study on Local Government infrastructure to identify new sources of financing for local infrastructure and ensure that existing funding streams are utilised in the most efficient and effective manner. Further details are to be advised in due course.

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Local Government Learning Solutions have a suite of leadership and enhancing performance programs that will enhance your leadership skills.

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The Springboard program has been developed to assist women in non-management positions develop skills and knowledge to empower them to reach greater career goals.

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Local Government Learning Solutions is offering a selection of public staff programs and events scheduled for Sydney, Coffs Harbour, Griffith and Albury in February 2012.

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The latest issue of the *Land and Environment Court Reporter* was distributed this week and is available on the LGSA website.

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The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has established the Local Planning Panel to increase Local Government involvement in plan making and improve the flexible delivery of the Standard Instrument (SI) LEP program to councils.

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An Issues Paper will be released in early December as the next step in the review of the NSW planning system. The public will be invited to make submissions by Friday 17 February 2012.

Item 15: Update on Strategic Regional Land Use Plans

Public exhibition of the draft Upper Hunter and New England North West plans is expected to take place early in 2012.

Roads and Transport

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More than 300 representatives of councils from across Australia met at the National Local Roads and Transport Congress in Mount Gambier, South Australia from Wednesday 16 - Friday 18 November.

Item 17: Audit of Speed Zones – Top 100 roads for review

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) have provided an update on the progress of the Audit of Speed Zones in NSW.

Water

Item 18: Murray-Darling Basin Plan – Draft Plan Released

On Monday 28 November 2011, the Murray–Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) released the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan for public consultation. The Draft Basin Plan proposes reductions of 2,750 GL in the level of surface water diversion (as of 2009) in order to provide more water to the environment.

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Conferences and Events

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General Interest

Item 3: Accommodation is at a premium to attend the LGSA Tourism Conference 2012.

Start planning now and book your accommodation early, as Gunnedah is experiencing high mid week occupancy due to the mining industry.

The LGSA Tourism Conference is back for its eighth year. The Conference will be held from Monday 12 to Wednesday 14 March at the Gunnedah Town Hall, hosted by Gunnedah Shire Council.

The theme of the Conference is '*Check in or Check out! Does your service meet your visitors' expectations?*', and is presented in partnership with Destination New South Wales, the Tourism Industry Council, industry partners and sponsors.

This year's sponsors will include Destination NSW as Partner, Countrylink, The Caravan and Camping Industry Association, Aurora Research, and the Australian Hotels Association, with sponsorship opportunities still available at this time.

The keynote address by Penny Burke, Director, Author, Speaker and Brand Advertiser will feature '**Perception is Reality – it's not about you, it's about your customers!**' Penny, creator of the 'Not Happy Jan...' advertisement for Yellow Pages, will inspire and amuse you and kick off an informative two days of insights and information about the reality of customer service and perceptions.

The MC will be Mandy Nolan, a well regarded comedian, speaker, author and coach, who entertained us at the Welcome Reception at the Tourism Conference in Lismore.

Registration and the Conference program will be available in December.



LGSA Tourism Conference
Monday 12 – Wednesday 14
March 2012

Host
Gunnedah Shire Council

Website
www.tourismconference.lgsa.org.au

Further Information
Jann Hing
LGSA Events Coordinator
02 9242 4031
events@lgsa.org.au

Accommodation
Gunnedah Visitors Information
Centre
1800 562 527

Ref: R11/0010 JH

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Environment

Item 5: Excellence in Environment Awards Winners

The LGSA is pleased to announce the winners of the 2011 Excellence in Environment Awards.

The Awards were presented at a ceremony at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, on Tuesday 29 November.

Winners in each category were as follows:

Communication, Education & Empowerment

- **Winner A Division** - Cowra Shire Council: Energise Central NSW
- **Winner B Division** - Woollahra Municipal Council: 2010 Woollahra Environmental Schools Sculpture Prize
- **Highly Commended B Division** - Great Lakes Council: Great Lakes Sustainable Business Program
- **Winner C Division & Overall Category Winner** - Bankstown City Council: Recycle Right! Contamination Reduction Campaign
- **Highly Commended C Division** - City of Canada Bay: Operation Green Bottle
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Lake Macquarie City Council: Lake Macquarie Council's 10:10 Challenge

Online information

<http://www.lgsa-plus.net.au/www/html/4002-award-winners.asp?intSiteID=2>

Media Release

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/4073-29th-november-2011-local-government-excellence-in-environment-awards-biggest-year-yet.asp?intSiteID=1>

Photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/lgsaenvironment/sets/72157628201295197/with/6423135797/>

Ref: R98/0021 RV

Community Sharps Management Award

- **Winner C Division & Overall Category Winner** - Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC): Safe Sharps
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Willoughby City Council: Community Sharps Management Programme
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Holroyd City Council: Get Smart about Community Sharps

Energy Saving & Climate Change Adaptation / Mitigation

- **Winner A Division** - Cootamundra Shire Council: Small Town - Big Solar
- **Winner C Division & Overall Category Winner** - Willoughby City Council: Carbon Reduction Strategy
- **Highly Commended C Division** - HCCREMS: Regional Planning for Collaborative Climate Action

Natural Environment Policies, Planning and Decision Making

- **Winner A Division** - Palerang Council: Water resources mapping
- **Highly Commended A Division** - Cowra Shire Council: Aboriginal Consultation Policy
- **Winner B Division & Joint Overall Category Winner** - Albury City Council: Biodiversity Certification of Albury LEP2010
- **Highly Commended B Division** - Great Lakes Council: Adoption and implementation of the Wallis Lake Wetlands Strategy
- **Winner C Division & Joint Overall Category Winner** - Wagga Wagga City Council: Biodiversity Certification Of The Wagga Wagga Local Environmental Plan
- **Highly Commended C Division** - North Sydney Council: North Sydney Urban Forest Strategy
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Wollongong City Council in partnership with Kiama Municipal Council and Shellharbour City Council: Biodiversity Beyond Boundaries

Natural Environment Protection & Enhancement: On-Ground Works

- **Winner A Division** - Inverell Shire Council: Bridge to Bridge Project
- **Winner B Division** - Regional partnership between Uralla, Walcha, Guyra, Armidale Dumaresq Shire Councils and managed by Southern New England Landcare: High Country Urban Biodiversity project
- **Highly Commended B Division** - Greater Taree City Council: Cattai Wetlands - a Hidden Gem in our Valley
- **Winner C Division & Overall Category Winner** - Tweed and Byron Shire Councils: Tweed Byron Bush Futures Project: Improving Urban and Peri-Urban Bushland Sustainability in Tweed and Byron Shires
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Shoalhaven City Council: Coexistence of threatened species and routine maintenance activities
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Shellharbour City Council : Building Backyard Biodiversity - Blackbutt to Croom Urban Biodiversity Corridor
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Sutherland Shire Council: Taren Point Shorebird Reserve

Roadside Environmental Management Award

- **Winner A Division** - Cooma-Monaro Shire Council: Cooma-Monaro Shire Council Native Roadside Vegetation GIS Layer
- **Winner B Division & Overall Category Winner** - Mid-Western Regional Council: Roadside Corridor Management Project
- **Winner C Division** - HCCREMS: Regional Roadside Vegetation Marker Scheme

Waste Avoidance

- **Winner A Division** - Strathfield Municipal Council: Resource Recovery Project
- **Winner B Division** - Woollahra Council : Kitchen to Compost
- **Winner C Divisions & Overall Category Winner** - Penrith City Council: Organic Recycling Collection and Composting Service
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Wyong Shire Council - Alternative recycling options for the Wyong Shire Community
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Wollongong City Council: Trial On-Call Household Cleanup Service
- **Highly Commended C Division** - The Hills Shire Council: Avoiding The Garbo

Water Conservation

- **Winner A Division** - Tumut Shire Council: Tumut Shire Council Reclaiming Water
- **Winner B Division & Overall Category Winner** - Eurobodalla Shire Council: Eurobodalla WaterSmart Business Program
- **Highly Commended C Division** - North Sydney Council: Stormwater Reuse in North Sydney
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Wollongong City Council: No drips no drops: 50% reduction in water consumption at Council's Administration Building
- **Joint Winner C Division** - Willoughby City Council: Chatswood Integrated Flood Mitigation And Stormwater Reuse Scheme
- **Joint Winner C Division** - Submitted on behalf of the 75 Regional Councils that participated in the program: Water Loss Management Program

Sustainable Procurement

- **Winner B Division & Overall Category Winner** - Lismore City Council
- **Winner C Division** - Penrith City Council

Local Sustainability

- **Winner C Division & Overall Category Winner** - Willoughby City Council: A Sustainable Willoughby
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Lake Macquarie City Council: The City of Lake Macquarie Environmental Sustainability Action Plan 2011-2018
- **Highly Commended C Division** - Bankstown City Council: Bankstown Environmental Action Plan 2010-2014

Louise Petchell Memorial Award for Individual Sustainability

- **Winner** - Elisa Idris, Kogarah City Council
- **Highly Commended** - Chris Munro, Woollahra Municipal Council

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Environment

Item 6: Contaminated Site Short Courses 2012

Registrations are now open for the 2012 series of three day courses covering all aspects of contaminated site assessment, remediation and management.

The University of Technology Sydney has developed six stand alone short courses with the support of the Office of Environment and Heritage (EPA).

Course Features

- Presenters include contaminated site practitioners, regulators and academic specialists.
- Site visits, case study analysis and workshop sessions ensure the courses remain practical, relevant and up to date.
- Courses recognised for continuing professional development by EIANZ, Engineers Australia and EHA.
- Courses can contribute to UTS Master of Science program.

Module A: Ground Rules for Contaminated Sites 8 – 10 February

Module B: Effective Contaminated Site Assessment 28 – 30 March

Module C: Demystifying Contaminants 30 May – 1 June

Module D: Contaminants and Toxicity 18 – 20 July

Module E: Risk Based Site Assessment 19 – 21 September

Module F: Remediation Principles and Closure 7 – 9 November

The LGSA has negotiated a discounted rate for Local Government attendees. Courses are restricted to 23 participants.

Key Details

Module A: Ground Rules for Contaminated Sites Early bird registration closes 16 January, \$1050.00 (incl GST)

Online information

www.science.uts.edu.au/courses/csarm.html

Further information

[UTS Science Short Courses](#)

Contact

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Ref: R90/0897 RV

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Finance

Item 7: ATO Advice on Changes to GST Regime

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) reminds councils about the recent changes to the regime for the determination of GST applicability to Australian taxes, charges and fees including Local Government rates, charges and fees.

The ATO advises councils that amendments to Division 81 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* mean that from 1 July 2011, government entities must self assess whether their taxes, fees or charges are exempt from GST. Items listed in the current Treasurer's determination would continue to be exempt from GST until 30 June 2012.

Please note that for charges or fees that are not included in the current Treasurer's determination changes in GST status apply from 1 July 2011 (no grandfathering provision).

The ATO advises that it was developing support information to assist Australian Government agencies to self-assess the GST treatment of their taxes, fees and charges. This information had recently been updated and could be found on the ATO website at www.ato.gov.au/division81.

As previously advised, the LGSA, on behalf of NSW councils, will apply for a class ruling by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) on the GST treatment of council taxes (i.e. rates), charges and fees.

Background

The Commonwealth, with the *Tax Laws Amendment (2011 Measures No.2) Bill (Cwth) 2011*, made changes to the regime for the determination of GST applicability to Australian taxes, charges and fees, including Local Government taxes (i.e. rates), charges and fees, as provided for in division 81 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act (Cwth) 1999*.

The new regime changes the past model where exempt council rates, charges and fees were listed in a Treasury determination (*A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) (Exempt Taxes, Fees and Charges) Determination 2011 (no. 2)*) and thus easily identifiable, to a model where each council is required to undertake a self assessment as to whether their rates, charges and fees are subject to GST based on broad legislative principles. The legislation took effect from 1 July 2011. The existing Treasury determination (and the taxes, fees and charges covered by it) is grandfathered until 30 June 2012.

There are a number of potential issues for Local Government with this new regime including:

- Resources for implementing a council-internal GST self assessment process and level of guidance provided by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).
- Uncertainty as to the treatment of certain charges and fees under the new regime; in particular domestic waste and trade waste charges and development contributions (which are currently exempt from GST under the determination).
- Implication of potential inconsistencies among councils of the treatment of certain rates, charges or fees.
- Liability associated with incorrect determinations of GST applicability.

The class ruling applied for by the LGSA is to provide certainty for, and avoid inconsistencies among councils in, the GST treatment of taxes, charges and fees. It would also alleviate legal and resourcing concerns associated with GST self assessment by individual councils.

ATO online support
www.ato.gov.au/division81

Contact

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Ref: R11/0013 SM

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Finance

Item 8: Commonwealth infrastructure financing study

The Australian Government has announced a study on Local Government infrastructure to identify new sources of financing for local infrastructure and ensure that existing funding streams are utilised in the most efficient and effective manner. Further details are to be advised in due course.

Contact

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Ref: R90/1270-05 SM

At the first meeting of the Local Government Ministers Forum held on Thursday 17 November 2011 in Canberra, the Australian Government Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Simon Crean MP, announced a study on Local Government infrastructure financing.

The terms of reference for the study include:

- The effectiveness and efficiency of local infrastructure prioritisation and funding.
- The identification of the sources of capital for future local infrastructure needs.
- The identification of the opportunities, best practice models and principles for the regional prioritisation and financing of Local Government infrastructure.

The review is to report back in March 2012. Ernst & Young have been appointed to undertake the review.

The LGSA is awaiting further details about how councils can participate in the review.

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Learning

Item 9: In-house Training Services – Leadership programs

Local Government Learning Solutions have a suite of leadership and enhancing performance programs that will enhance your leadership skills.

Councils can gain significant savings by having public training workshops customised to their individual needs and supplied in house. Not only can we tailor the content of each individual workshop, we can also mix and match topics from different workshops or design new topic content to meet your specific requirements.

Online information

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/153-in-house-training-services.asp>

Contact

Judy Archer
02 9242 4180
learning@lgsa.org.au

Ref: I98/0012 DR

Here are some of the leadership skills programs which could be conducted in-house on your premises:

MasterClass – Executive Development Program

This two day development program is designed specifically for general managers, directors and senior managers. It will expose you to concepts which will help you meet the enormous challenges facing the industry today.

Revisiting Change Management

Middle/senior managers will explore nine change management models on this workshop and find ways to handle overt and covert resistance.

Revisiting Leadership

In this practical workshop, middle and senior managers will revisit many models of leadership and will be introduced to some new ones which can be applied immediately.

Leading and Managing Effectively

This four day program (delivered in modules of two days) is aimed at experienced leaders and covers issues such as handling difficult staff, motivation, coaching, delegating and managing priorities.

Developing High Performance Teams

This is a practical workshop which can be a team leader's program, an employees' program, or a particular team which may not be working as productively as you would like.

Leadership Skills for Aspiring Women

For women who wish to pursue supervisory responsibilities and want to develop skills in leadership.

The Manager as Coach

A key leadership skill is coaching and every 'leader' needs to develop skills in this area.

Outdoor Leadership

A highly practical one or two day program to introduce rangers and outdoor team leaders to their leadership responsibilities.

Pathways to Leadership

If you have identified some up and coming leaders amongst your employees, or some newly appointed leaders, then this one or two day program will assist them to understand the concepts of leadership that will ease their step up into a higher role.

Performance Management

A practical one day workshop aimed at introducing leaders to the major concepts of managing performance.

The Supervisor Series

Module topics include understanding the supervisor's roles, delegation, understanding team roles, giving feedback, and maintaining performance.

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Learning

Item 10: Springboard 2012 workshops – a personal development program for women

The Springboard program has been developed to assist women in non-management positions develop skills and knowledge to empower them to reach greater career goals.

Registrations are now open for the first 2012 Springboard program in Sydney.

Springboard aims to:

- Empower women in non-management positions to set and achieve personal goals.
- Establish what you want from life.
- Focus on your priorities.
- Acquire ideas, skills and confidence needed to reach your potential and goals.
- Position attendees to make positive decisions about work and personal options, and to take action.

The course includes sessions on time management, assertiveness, dealing with change, conflict resolution, problem solving, goal setting, stress management, networking, communication and action planning.

The Program consists of four workshops over four months. Each workshop has a high profile woman as a guest speaker. Local Government Learning Solutions coordinates a mentoring strategy in conjunction with the Program and delivers a half-day program for mentors. The participants also network with women from other councils.

2012 Program dates

Participants attend all four workshops over four months and their mentors attend the half-day workshop:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Wednesday 22 February | Half Day Mentor's Workshop |
| • Thursday 23 February | Day One |
| • Thursday 29 March | Day Two |
| • Thursday 3 May | Day Three |
| • Thursday 24 May | Day Four |

Cost

\$1,210 inc. GST for 4 workshops for participants and a half-day workshop for mentors.

Registrations

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/152-courses-for-staff.asp>

Contact

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Ref: I98/0012 DR

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Learning

Item 11: Learning Solutions Staff Public Workshops in NSW metropolitan and regional areas – February 2012

Local Government Learning Solutions is offering a selection of public staff programs and events scheduled for Sydney, Coffs Harbour, Griffith and Albury in February 2012.

Attending one of Learning Solutions' public workshops gives attendees the opportunity to network with other councils while enjoying the very best of Local Government learning.

Courses include:

Making Consultative Committees More Effective

Thursday 2 February – Sydney

Drug and Alcohol Awareness for Supervisors

Wednesday 15 February – Griffith

Training Small Groups

Thursday 16 February – Sydney

Selection Skills for Local Government Managers

Friday 17 February – Coffs Harbour

Writing Powerful Proposals and Funding Applications

Wednesday 22 February – Sydney

Workforce Planning

Thursday 23 February – Sydney

Report Writing

Thursday 23 February - Sydney

English Grammar and Punctuation

Tuesday 28 February – Sydney

Handling Difficult People

Tuesday 28 February – Albury

Registrations

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/421-public-staff-course-registration-form.asp?intSiteID=1>

Cost

\$550 pp inc. GST

Contact

Jennifer Fanning
Learning Solutions
02 9242 4181
learning@lgsa.org.au

Ref: I98/0012 DR

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Legal

Item 12: Land and Environment Court Reporter

The latest issue of the *Land and Environment Court Reporter* was distributed this week and is available on the LGSA website.

The issue looks at case studies taken from November 2011. Contents include:

- Hurstville City Council v Dong Zing Group Pty Ltd [2011] NSWLEC 1287.
- Motto Farm Pty Ltd v Port Stephens Council [2011] NSWLEC 1293.
- Alexander v Yass Valley Council [2011] NSWLEC 148.
- Meriton Apartments Pty Ltd v Council of the City of Sydney [2011] NSWLEC 1294.
- Liverpool City Council v Main Homes Pty Ltd [2011] NSWLEC 174.

Land and Environment Court Reporter

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/344-land--environment-court-reporter.asp?intSiteID=1>

LGSA contact

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Ref: R90/0490

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Planning

Item 13: Standard Instrument LEP Survey

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has established the Local Planning Panel to increase Local Government involvement in plan making and improve the flexible delivery of the Standard Instrument (SI) LEP program to councils.

To assist their work, the Panel is requesting councils to fill in a survey on the SI LEP program by Friday, 16 December. The survey has recently been sent to all NSW councils on the Standard Instrument LEP program. The LGSA encourages councils to complete this survey as it will provide invaluable feedback to the Panel on what the key issues to address.

The Panel is an advisory body that makes recommendations to the Director General of Department of Planning and Infrastructure on the SI LEP program. Applications from councils to vary the Template will come before the Panel starting next year. The Panel will consider these requests and may make a recommendation to the Director General on the matters that may lead to a new policy position or an amendment to the *Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006*, where appropriate.

The Terms of Reference, Operational Procedures and meeting schedule are located on the Local Planning Panel website (see fact box).

The membership of the Panel was announced in September and is as follows:

- Tony McNamara, Independent Chair (Director, Canada Bay City Council).
- Melissa Watkins, Deputy Chair (Director, Dubbo City Council).
- Glennys James, Member (Director, Blacktown City Council).
- Tom Gellibrand, Member (Deputy Director General, DP&I).
- Neil Selmon, Member (Director, DP&I).

Alternate members are:

- Chris Chapman, (Director, Coffs Harbour City Council).
- David Green, (Manager, Wollongong City Council).
- Carina Gregory, (Manager, Hurstville City Council).
- Catherine Van Laeren, (Group Manager, Mid Western Regional Council).
- Neil McGaffin, (Executive Director, DP&I).

Survey

Friday, 16 December

Online information

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/LocalPlanning/LocalPlanningPanel/tabid/513/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Email

localplanningpanel@planning.nsw.gov.au

Contact

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02 9242 4094

Ref: R90/0502 JD

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Planning

Item 14: NSW Planning System Review – Issues paper to be released soon

An Issues Paper will be released in early December as the next step in the review of the NSW planning system. The public will be invited to make submissions by Friday 17 February 2012.

The Planning Review Panel has noted on its website that the Issues Paper is a preliminary phase of the planning review process and that more detailed suggestions for change will be considered in more depth after the closing of submissions to the Issues Paper.

The Panel will then provide a Green Paper to the NSW Government by the end of April 2012.

Nearly 2000 people have attended public forums run by the Co-chairs of the Planning Review Panel - Messrs Tim Moore and Ron Dyer - in 44 regional and metropolitan locations to provide input on the NSW Planning System Review.

The ten-week listening tour of NSW concluded in Penrith on 18 November. The Review Panel has also held more than 60 stakeholder consultation meetings around the State and nearly 20 meetings with Members of Parliament. The results of these forums and meetings can be found on the Panel's website.

The LGSA's initial submission to the review can be found on the LGSA's website. A number of councils have also made submissions and these can be found on the Planning Review Panel's website.

Community Forum Notes

<http://www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Consultation/CommunityForumNotes/tabid/95/Default.aspx>

Stakeholder Meeting Notes

<http://www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Consultation/StakeholderMeetingNotes/tabid/91/Default.aspx>

NSW Planning Review Panel submissions received

<http://www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Submissions/SubmissionsReceived/tabid/105/Default.aspx>

LGSA Submission

http://www.lgsa.org.au/resources/documents/DRAFT_SUBMISSION_REGARDING_Preliminary_Comments_on_Review_of_NSW_Planning_System.pdf

News items on planning issues

<http://planningnetwork.lgsa.org.au>

Ref: R04/0066 JP

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Planning

Item 15: Update on Strategic Regional Land Use Plans

Public exhibition of the draft Upper Hunter and New England North West plans is expected to take place early in 2012.

Information and updates on the NSW Government's strategic regional land use plans is now available on a new dedicated page on the Department of Planning and Infrastructure's website.

In the first half of 2012, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure will also commence work on strategic regional land use plans for the Central West and Southern Highlands.

Since May 2011, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure has been preparing draft Strategic Regional Land Use Plans for the Upper Hunter (including Gloucester) and New England North West regions (including Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains) as part of the Government's Strategic Regional Land Use Policy.

The Department's consultation in this process has included regional forums with industry and council representatives, presentations to stakeholder conferences and information sessions with community groups.

A Stakeholder Reference Group was also established, to work with NSW Government agencies in the drafting process, consisting of the following industry and stakeholder bodies:

- NSW Association of Mining Related Councils.
- Total Environment Centre.
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council.
- NSW Minerals Council.
- Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association.
- NSW Farmers Association.
- Construction Forestry Mining Energy Union.
- Nature Conservation Council of NSW.
- NSW Irrigators Council.
- Hunter Valley Wine Industry Association.
- Namoi Catchment Management Authority.
- Thoroughbred Breeders of the Hunter Valley.

The group has met five times since June 2011 and will be participating in a one-day facilitated workshop with NSW State agencies in mid-December. The LGSA has recently been invited to participate on the Stakeholder Reference Group to represent Local Government alongside the NSW Association of Mining Related Councils.

Department of Planning and Infrastructure website:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/StrategicPlanning/StrategicRegionalLandUse/tabid/495/language/en-AU/Default.aspx>

News items on planning issues

<http://planningnetwork.lgsa.org.au>

Ref: R11/0033 JP

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Roads and Transport

Item 16: ALGA Roads & Transport Congress Communiqué

More than 300 representatives of councils from across Australia met at the National Local Roads and Transport Congress in Mount Gambier, South Australia from Wednesday 16 - Friday 18 November.

Elected representatives and other Local Government officials from across Australia united at the Congress to pass a resolution calling on the Federal Government to continue the Roads to Recovery program on a permanent basis and increase funding to recognise a massive shortfall in local roads expenditure.

The resolution was the culmination of the two-day Roads Congress, which marked the start of a new national campaign to secure ongoing federal funding to assist councils to maintain local roads and address an estimated annual funding shortfall of \$1.2 billion.

To reinforce the theme *Better Roads are Safer Roads*, the Roads Congress was addressed by a host of road safety experts, academics and federal politicians, including the Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure and Transport, Catherine King; Leader of the Nationals, Warren Truss; and Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Water, Senator Barnaby Joyce.

In addition, the *Roads to Recovery Booklet* was launched at the Congress. The booklet contains some examples of the more than 34,000 Roads to Recovery projects that have been funded since the commencement of the program in 2001, a breakdown of how the funds have been used and analysis of the outcomes.

The booklet has been prepared for use by Councillors when talking to local Federal Members of Parliament and the public to highlight the achievements of Local Government. ALGA will be mailing copies of the booklet to all councils.

Online information

Roads Congress Communiqué, click [here](#)

Roads Congress speakers & presentations, click [here](#).

Roads to Recovery Booklet, click [here](#).

Ref: R92/0048 RC

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Roads and Transport

Item 17: Audit of Speed Zones – Top 100 roads for review

Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) have provided an update on the progress of the Audit of Speed Zones in NSW.

The NSW Government made a commitment as part of its 100 Day Action Plan to make changes to speed zoning in NSW. The audit of speed zones is aimed at achieving a balance between ensuring the right speed limit for the road conditions, and not having an excessive number of speed limit changes.

Safer Roads NSW website
www.saferroads.nsw.com.au

Roads and Maritime Services website
<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/>

Ref: R90/1244 RC

The Safer Roads NSW website was launched on 19 July 2011. The website allows motorists to nominate the roads where they feel speed limits and speed limit signs need to be reviewed without putting safety at risk. Submissions received through the website will be reviewed and considered as part of the speed zone review process. The website also offers the option for the public to subscribe to an email update service to advise them of any changes to permanent speed limits in their nominated area.

Submissions received so far through the above process from 19 July to mid October 2011 were assessed by the Centre for Road Safety to determine the initial top 100 roads for speed zone review.

On Monday, 22 November 2011 these top 100 roads were announced by the Minister for Roads and Ports. His media release can be viewed at www.rms.nsw.gov.au (click on the Roads tab followed by the Media Release – Ministerial releases link).

The Centre for Road Safety and Roads and Maritime Services are now planning the speed zone reviews arising from this. The speed zone reviews will be completed by end March 2012 with the findings made available in April 2012. The top 100 roads can be viewed by going to www.rms.nsw.gov.au and clicking on the Roads tab then following the Safer Roads NSW website link.

Speed zone practitioners from Roads and Maritime Services will be undertaking the speed zone reviews in accordance with the revised NSW Speed Zoning Guidelines. The revised Guidelines provide an opportunity for councils to participate in speed zone reviews in their local area as outlined below:

- Council will be notified when a speed zone review is being conducted in their area and be provided with a copy of the crash analysis report.
- A council representative(s) will be invited to attend a site inspection with the speed zone practitioner responsible for undertaking the review.
- Council will be advised of the outcome of the speed zone review.

Should you wish to find out more about the top 100 roads for review in your Local Government area, please contact your respective Road Safety and Traffic Management representative from Roads and Maritime Services in your region.

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Water

Item 18: Murray-Darling Basin Plan – Draft Plan Released

On Monday 28 November 2011, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) released the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan for public consultation. The Draft Basin Plan proposes reductions of 2,750 GL in the level of surface water diversion (as of 2009) in order to provide more water to the environment.

The release date triggers the formal consultation period of 20 weeks under the *Water Act (Cwth) 2007*. The closing date for submissions is Monday 16 April 2012.

Submissions due
Monday 16 April 2012

Online information
<http://www.mdba.gov.au/draft-basin-plan>

Ref: R90/1056-12 SM

Content

The Draft Basin Plan contains a number of documents, some of which are not yet available including:

- The proposed Basin Plan - a draft for consultation.
- Plain English summary including explanatory notes.
- Delivering a Healthy Working Basin - about the draft Basin Plan.
- The draft Basin Plan - catchment by catchment.
- Environmental Watering Plan - what's in it and how will it work?
- Environmentally sustainable level of take for surface water: methods and outcomes.
- Socioeconomic analysis and the draft Basin Plan.
- Science review.
- A series of factsheets discussing topics such as hydrological modelling and the Basin Plan implementation process.

Reductions in water diversions

At the basin scale, the Draft Basin Plan suggests that an additional 2,750 GL per year need to be made available for the environment (based on 2009 baseline surface diversions). This compares to proposed reductions in surface water diversion in last year's Guide of between 3,000 GL and 4,000 GL per year.

According to the MDBA, almost 1.300 GL (nearly half) had already been recovered, leaving less than 1,500 GL to go, and a further 400 GL could be recovered through identified future investments in water saving infrastructure leaving an even smaller gap of about 1,000 GL.

This remaining volume is to be recovered over a period of seven years until 2019 allowing time for transition and focus on investment in water saving infrastructure and improvements in water use efficiencies. In 2015, MDBA is to undertake a review of the plan with a view to find potential further efficiencies including in environmental water delivery.

Socio-economic impacts

The Draft Basin Plan and its supporting documents appear to include a more comprehensive socio-economic impact analysis of both farm impact and flow on impacts down to a local scale that would inform adjustment assistance.

The analysis recognises that there could be significant localised impacts in more vulnerable areas that have a higher dependency on (irrigated) agriculture.

Town water supplies

Town water supplies have not been specifically guaranteed or excluded from the sustainable diversion limits. The LGSA will continue to call on the MDBA to include such a guarantee.

MDBA Consultation

The MDBA advises that from Monday 5 to Friday 16 December 2011, it would hold open public meetings in some areas where there is likely to be more water recovery needed including:

- St George (7 December).
- Murray Bridge (9 December).
- Shepparton (13 December).
- Griffith (15 December).
- Deniliquin (16 December).

Alongside the public meetings, the MDBA is to also hold smaller meetings with community and representative groups in those and other towns (where requested). Further public meetings are to be held after 26 January 2012 (Australia Day).

LGSA Response

Over the coming weeks, the LGSA will review the draft plan thoroughly and ensure members are fully engaged in the preparation of the LGSA's response. We will also closely review regional impacts and proposed measures to address them.

The LGSA encourages councils to advise us on any issue they have on the Draft Basin Plan or on the MDBA consultation.

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In the News

Item 19: Media from the LGSA

View the latest media releases distributed by the LGSA

Local Government Excellence in Environment Awards' Biggest Year Yet

29 November 2011

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/4073-29th-november-2011-local-government-excellence-in-environment-awards-biggest-year-yet.asp?intSiteID=1>

More than 49 councils across 12 categories were recognised for their environment and sustainability achievements at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney today.

View media releases from the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)

ALGA welcomes new Carbon Farming Initiative methodology

1 December 2011

<http://www.alga.asn.au/newsroom/media/2011/20111201.php>

The national body for local government has welcomed the Australian Government's introduction of new Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) methodology, describing it as an opportunity for councils to reduce pollution and make productive use of methane emissions from old landfill waste.

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