



## **Registrations are open for the LGSA Tourism Conference 2012**

The LGSA Tourism Conference is back for its eighth year with a program that will foster an interesting debate on the benefits and challenges for tourism in a destination where coal mining, agriculture and tourism have to sit side by side in the koala capital of the world!

## **IPART Rate pegging limit determination for 2012/13**

On Tuesday, 6 December 2011, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) announced a rate pegging limit of 3.6% for the financial year 2012/13.

## **National Awards for Local Government 2012**

The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) are proud sponsors of two of the 2012 National Awards for Local Government.

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

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Sydney NSW 2000

## **Email subscription**

Subscribe to receive the Local Government Weekly and media releases directly by email on the LGSA website at: [www.lgsa.org.au/subscribe](http://www.lgsa.org.au/subscribe)

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Registrations will open soon for the 2012 Local Government Women's Association (NSW) Conference to be held in Dubbo in March.

### Item 4: Registrations are open for the LGSA Tourism Conference 2012

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New resources on fencing and boundary disputes are available on the LawAssist website.

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### Item 7: IPTI 2012 Local Government Rates and Revenue – Leading the Change Conference

The International Property Tax Institute (IPTI) in co-operation with NSW Revenue Professionals is holding a conference on Local Government Rates and Revenue.

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## Industrial Relations

### Item 9: Free StateCover Seminar - Workers Compensation and Work Health and Safety

Councils are advised that StateCover Mutual Limited is holding a free seminar for their members entitled *Workers Compensation Headaches? We've got your prescription.*

## Learning

### Item 10: In-house Training Services – Writing Skills Workshops

Learning Solutions will customise their Writing Skills Workshops to suit your in-house needs.

## Planning

### Item 11: Survey of Local Councils on BASIX

Armidale Dumaresq Council has prepared a survey for all councils in NSW on their thoughts and experiences with the BASIX program.

**Item 12: Issues Paper on the NSW Planning System released for comment**

On Tuesday 6 December, the Planning System Review Panel released its Issues Paper of the NSW Planning System Review titled, *The way ahead for Planning in NSW?*

## **In the News**

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[View the latest media releases distributed by the LGSA](#)

## **Awards**

### **Item 1: Award opportunities**

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## Conferences and Events

### Item 2: Upcoming conferences and events

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## General Interest

### Item 3: Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW) Conference – Creators of Change

**Registrations will open soon for the 2012 Local Government Women's Association (NSW) Conference to be held in Dubbo in March.**

The annual ALGWA conference provides a platform for councillors and staff to gather to discuss current and emerging issues facing women in Local Government.

Conference speakers will bring stories of how they have created change in their work place or in the community they live. The *Creators of Change Conference* will help inspire and empower elected members and staff that collectively represent 27 percent of Local Government in NSW.

**Conference dates**

Thursday 22 – Saturday 24 March 2012

**Location**

Dubbo Regional Theatre & Convention Centre, Dubbo

**Registrations & accommodation**

[Bradley@ccem.com.au](mailto:Bradley@ccem.com.au)

**Contact**

Lana Willetts  
Dubbo City Council  
02 6801 4451

**Ref:** R90/0017-02

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## General Interest

### Item 4: Registrations are open for the LGSA Tourism Conference 2012

The LGSA Tourism Conference is back for its eighth year with a program that will foster an interesting debate on the benefits and challenges for tourism in a destination where coal mining, agriculture and tourism have to sit side by side in the koala capital of the world!

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?*** It is presented in partnership with Destination New South Wales, the Tourism Industry Council, industry partners and sponsors.

There will be a great line up of speakers including 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 is creator of the 'Not Happy Jan...' advertisement, for Yellow Pages.

The MC will be Mandy Nolan, a well regarded comedian, speaker, author and coach.

The Conference will deliver a challenging and highly informative program dealing with many aspects of Local Government's engagement with tourism.

Conference sessions will deal with topics including:

- Managing the potential conflict between tourism and other industries.
- Identifying the impacts that an industry may have on your town and tourism.
- Making visitors comfortable in your town.
- Meeting, managing and changing perceptions.
- Updates on the Visitor Economy Taskforce Strategy and Local Government Planning Tool.
- Making the most of what you've got.

The draft program is now available on the website.

Don't miss the only Local Government focused Tourism Conference in NSW - by the industry for the industry.

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



**LGSA Tourism Conference**  
Monday 12 – Wednesday 14  
March 2012

**Registration due**

Early Bird by 31 January: \$550  
Register by 29 February: \$660

**Host**

Gunnedah Shire Council

**Website**

[www.tourismconference.lgsa.org.au](http://www.tourismconference.lgsa.org.au)

**Contact**

Jann Hing  
LGSA Events Coordinator  
02 9242 4031  
[events@lgsa.org.au](mailto:events@lgsa.org.au)

**Accommodation**

Gunnedah Visitors Information  
Centre  
1800 KOALAS (1800 562 527)

**Ref:** R11/0010

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## Community

### Item 5: National Awards for Local Government 2012

The Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA) are proud sponsors of two of the 2012 National Awards for Local Government.

The National Awards for Local Government 2012 recognise, reward and promote the innovative work of Local Government across Australia.

The categories sponsored by the Department of Health and Ageing are open to all councils and the LGSA encourages councils who meet the selection criteria to enter.

The Department of Health and Ageing have sponsored the following two awards:

1. **Excellence in Alcohol Management Award** - Recognises councils that work collaboratively with their community to respond to local alcohol issues.
2. **Rural and Remote Health Award** - Recognises councils in rural and remote areas that work in partnership to improve health outcomes in their community.

Entries opened on Thursday, 1 December 2011 and will close on Friday, 17 February 2012. Please check the website for other awards that your council can apply for.

**Entries close**

Friday, 17 February 2012

**Online information**

<http://www.regional.gov.au/local/awards>

**Ref:** R09/0019 MB

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## Community

### Item 6: LawAssist Website

#### **New resources on fencing and boundary disputes are available on the LawAssist website.**

LawAssist is a website for people representing themselves in courts or tribunals. The materials on the LawAssist website provide information about both law and procedure, and practical tools for people navigating the court process. LawAssist is developed by LawAccess NSW.

Resources for people involved in fencing and boundary matters have recently been added to the LawAssist website. There is information about things to consider when building, fixing or replacing a fence, including information about options if neighbours can't reach agreement. The website also provides information for people who have applied to the Local Court or Local Land Board for Fencing Orders and has step-by-step guides to preparing for hearings as well as sample forms and instructions. The resources also include a specific section devoted to boundary disputes.

In addition to the above information, where council is contacted in relations to a fencing dispute, the enquirer should also be directed to the Department of Lands on 02 9228 6726.

#### **Online information**

[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/LawAccess/ll\\_lawassist.nsf/pages/lawassist\\_fences](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/LawAccess/ll_lawassist.nsf/pages/lawassist_fences)

#### **Contact**

Rita Bhattacharya

02 8833 3104

[Rita\\_Bhattacharya@agd.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rita_Bhattacharya@agd.nsw.gov.au)

**Ref:** R90/1046

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## Finance

### Item 7: IPTI 2012 Local Government Rates and Revenue – Leading the Change Conference

**The International Property Tax Institute (IPTI) in co-operation with NSW Revenue Professionals is holding a conference on Local Government Rates and Revenue.**

The Conference presents a learning opportunity for policy makers, practitioners and academics working in the field of tax policy and property valuation.

The Conference features renowned international and local experts addressing a range of timely topics that will stimulate debate and discussion among participants. Topics will cover global and local issues including financial and economic trends in a post financial crisis world and current and emerging trends in property taxation. A stimulating lunch-time presentation on the Kokoda trail experience is also included in the program.

Program topics include:

- Global Perspective: Financial/Economic Trends in Post-Financial Crisis.
- Land Value vs Rental Value vs Capital Value for Rating and Taxing.
- Rates/Property Tax Regulation and Community: Processes, Trends, Impacts, Consultation, Independent Pricing and Regulation Tribunal of NSW.
- Natural Disasters: Recovery and Rates/Tax Relief.
- Environmental Upgrade Agreements.
- Alternative Revenue Sources for Local Government.

IPTI is a not-for-profit organisation with a goal to advance and foster property taxation and assessment ideals on an international level. Its conferences are held worldwide and assemble local and international experts from all facets of the assessment and taxation fields.

IPTI aims to assist governments, organisations, corporations, taxpayers and professionals alike to better understand the complex issue of financing local governments, and in particular, the essential role property taxation has in this process.

**Date**

Thursday 15 – Friday 16  
March 2012

**Venue**

Vibe Hotel Rushcutters Bay,  
100 Bayswater Road, Sydney,  
NSW

**Registration Deadline**

Thursday, 1 March 2012

**Program and registration details**

[www.ipti.org/event/local-government-rates-and-revenue-leading-the-change/](http://www.ipti.org/event/local-government-rates-and-revenue-leading-the-change/)

**Further information**

[www.ipti.org](http://www.ipti.org)

**Ref:** R04/0048 SM

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## Finance

### Item 8: IPART Rate pegging limit determination for 2012/13

**On Tuesday, 6 December 2011, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) announced a rate pegging limit of 3.6% for the financial year 2012/13.**

#### Further Information

[www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/local-government/councilincomesettingspecialvariation.asp](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/local-government/councilincomesettingspecialvariation.asp)

Ref: R90/0397-05 SM

The rate pegging limit of 3.6% is based on cost increases of 3.4% in the year to September 2011 pursuant to IPART's Local Government Cost Index, a productivity adjustment of -0.2%, and an advance of 0.4% (for 2012/13 only) to meet costs associated with the introduction of the carbon price.

The rate pegging limit for 2012/13 is up from 2.8% for the financial year 2011/12. It is almost equivalent to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the year to the September 2011 quarter of 3.7% (Sydney, all groups) and equivalent to the Labor Price Index for the same period of 3.6%.

#### ***LGSA Position***

The LGSA remains firmly opposed to rate pegging and strongly supports the abolition of rate pegging in conjunction with the introduction of a community based strategic service and resource planning framework. However, as an interim step towards the abolition of rate pegging and as it improves the transparency and predictability of the rate pegging process, the LGSA supports IPART determining the rate pegging limit based on its Local Government Cost Index.

The LGSA welcome the one-off increase of the limit by 0.4% to account for costs associated with the introduction of the carbon price (which is to come into effect from 1 July 2012). The advance is necessary because the rate peg for 2012/13 is set using past cost increases (year up to September 2011). The advance is to be reversed for future determinations because the actual impact of the carbon price will be reflected in the Local Government cost index.

The LGSA strongly oppose the application of a productivity discount factor because Local Government's general government and regulatory activities (funded from rate income) are not comparable to commercial service provision. Also, the NSW Government revenue is not subject to a productivity adjustment.

It needs to be noted that the Local Government cost index itself merely captures underlying price movements in inputs to service and infrastructure delivery. It does not cover increased costs arising from the need to expand services to meet growing demands or the need to increase infrastructure spending to address backlogs or growth needs.

The LGSA understands from IPART that these cost increases are to be addressed by way of special rate variations. The LGSA encourages councils to make applications for rate variations to cover growth needs, address backlogs, development contribution shortfalls and make catch up adjustments.

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## Industrial Relations

### Item 9: Free StateCover Seminar - Workers Compensation and Work Health and Safety

Councils are advised that StateCover Mutual Limited is holding a free seminar for their members entitled *Workers Compensation Headaches? We've got your prescription.*

The free seminar will cover the following areas:

- Ageing workforce.
- Industrial deafness.
- Skin cancer.
- Psychological injuries.

#### Date and venue

Monday, 27 – Tuesday, 28 March 2012  
Four Points By Sheraton at Darling Harbour, Sydney

#### StateCover Mutual Limited

02 8270 6000

#### Online Information

<http://www.statecover.com.au>

Ref: I11/0016 PB

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## Learning

### Item 10: In-house Training Services – Writing Skills Workshops

#### Learning Solutions will customise their Writing Skills Workshops to suit your in-house needs.

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 for you, we can also mix and match topics from different workshops or design new topic content to meet your specific requirements.

The following one and two day **writing skills** programs could be customised to your needs and conducted on your premises:

**Report Writing** – This one day course aims to provide the skills needed to write effective, clear and concise reports for managers.

**Improving Your Business Writing** – This course is best held over two days, spread one week apart so that participants can complete tasks in the intervening period. This is a practical skills program focusing on the basic principles of good business writing.

**English Grammar and Punctuation** – This one day program covers issues such as different types of sentences and when to use them; what is a verb, noun, adjective and adverb and why we need to know them; and what are the most common grammatical errors in writing.

**Writing Effective Minutes** – This one day practical workshop is designed to give participants an understanding of meeting procedures both in an informal and formal setting and the importance of minutes for the successful governance of a council or committee.

We also have other writing programs to assist you to write funding applications and present speeches and promotional copy. So if you have a writing skills need, please contact us with your details and we will provide you with a timely and comprehensive proposal, including cost, workshop content and presenter profile.

#### Further information

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

#### Contact

Judy Archer  
Learning Solutions  
02 9242 4182  
[learning@lgsa.org](mailto:learning@lgsa.org)

Ref: I98/0012 DR

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## Planning

### Item 11: Survey of Local Councils on BASIX

**Armidale Dumaresq Council has prepared a survey for all councils in NSW on their thoughts and experiences with the BASIX program.**

The survey results will be used to assist councils and the LGSA to provide feedback to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, which is currently undertaking a review of BASIX.

BASIX is the current NSW Government program which requires domestic building designers to address energy and water efficiency standards. BASIX is administered by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure and has legal effect as a result of State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX), which was introduced in 2004.

The modelling behind BASIX is understood to produce a net financial benefit over a (conservative) life cycle of a dwelling for every dollar spent complying with BASIX, most of which accrues directly to householders through lower energy and water bills.

The first review/update to the BASIX modelling parameters by the Department will occur during 2012. With this in mind, Armidale Dumaresq Council has prepared an online survey which is intended to obtain feedback from Local Government to inform the Department in its review process.

Completion of the online survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes. Councils' planners or building surveyors are encouraged to respond.

Your assistance in responding to the survey by Friday, 23 December 2011 would be greatly appreciated.

**Responses due**

Friday, 23 December 2011

**Online information**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/BASIX>

**Contacts**

LGSA

Robert Verhey  
02 9242 4080

Armidale Dumaresq Council

Steve Gow

02 6770 3841 or

[sgow@armidale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sgow@armidale.nsw.gov.au)

Sandy Scott

02 6770 3823

[sscott@armidale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:sscott@armidale.nsw.gov.au)

**Ref:** R04/0010 RV

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## Planning

### Item 12: Issues Paper on the NSW Planning System released for comment

**On Tuesday 6 December, the Planning System Review Panel released its Issues Paper of the NSW Planning System Review titled, *The way ahead for Planning in NSW?***

The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP established the Planning Review Panel (co-chaired by Tim Moore and Ron Dyer) in July 2011, to review the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the broader planning system.

The Planning Review Panel has consulted widely over the past couple of months conducting forums in metropolitan and regional locations across the State which have been attended by councillors, council staff and the general public.

#### **The Scope of the Issues Paper –and the listening phase:**

The Issues Paper presents and discusses a broad range of issues, posing numerous questions in relation to issues arising from the consultation process. Many of the issues are complex and some involve new concepts and departures from the existing way of doing things, though in many cases, the nature of the issues presented are not unexpected. Some examples of the issues covered include:

- The hierarchy and relationship of SEPPs, regional plans and LEPS.
- Calls for greater flexibility within the standard LEP template to account for local differences.
- Planning for and assessing cumulative impacts of development.
- Calls for consideration of a two part process for approving development, with a conceptual approval at the first stage and then a more detailed approval at the second stage.
- Mechanisms for effective community consultation in planning and development decisions process.
- Considering ways to push the dispute resolution process back down the development process.
- Measures available to streamline concurrence processes with State agencies.
- Third party appeals – who should be able to appeal planning decisions? What changes could or should be put in place? Who should 'hear' appeals?

#### **Making submissions**

The deadline for submissions to the Issues Paper is the Friday, 17 February 2012. All existing submissions are posted on the Departments website to assist information exchange between stakeholders and transparency. Likewise all future submissions will also be posted on the website. Information on how to lodge a submission is on the Departments website at <http://www.planningreview.nsw.gov.au/Submissions/tabid/104/Default.aspx>.

#### **Next Steps**

A working group, in collaboration with the Planning Review Panel, will review the submissions and produce a Green Paper by the end of April 2012. This will set out a recommended preferred structure and policy options for a new planning system for NSW. A 'white paper' and draft legislation will be released for exhibition before a bill is submitted to the NSW Parliament. Details of timing will be published by the Department next year.

#### **Submissions due**

Midnight, Friday, 17 February 2012

Access the NSW Planning Review Issues Paper [here](#).

Access the Minister's Media Release [here](#).

How to make Submissions to the Issues Paper: [here](#).

#### **Contact**

Jane Partridge  
Senior Policy Officer – Planning  
02 9242 4093

News items on planning issues [here](#)

**Ref:** R04/0066

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## **In the News**

### **Item 13: Media from the LGSA**

**View the latest media releases distributed by the LGSA**

#### **End rate pegging now, councils say**

7 December 2011

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/4094-7th-december-2011-end-rate-pegging-now-councils-say.asp?intSiteID=1>

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA) continue to call for the removal of rate pegging, following the second independent determination of the rate pegging limit by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART).

#### **Councils commend Planning Review Panel process**

8th December 2011

<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/4096-8th-december-2011-councils-commend-planning-review-panel-process.asp?intSiteID=1>

The Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA) welcome the release of the NSW Government's Issues Paper on the NSW Planning Review announced on Tuesday, 6 December 2011.

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