

MAY 2007

Hi everyone! It is hard to believe that we are almost half way through the year – and what a year it is turning out to be! In this newsletter you will find the LGAQ submission to the Commission on the reform process – a must read. I am sure that the coming months will see many changes in our Councils and I urge you to fill out the survey that the QLGCSA has put together, particularly to advise if there is any help by way of training, or anything you can think of, that we can provide to assist everyone through this period of dramatic change.

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter – and many thanks to all those who have contributed.

Jan Kilbourne  
President QLGCSA

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM: LGAQ SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION

The LGAQ has submitted a Public Submission to the Local Government Reform Commission. This can be found on LGOnline along with a number of relevant attachments.

The submission contains 16 clear recommendations. Within these recommendations is a clearly stated position on the importance of community wellbeing and the role of Councils in contributing to this.

In section 5 of the report: **Key Considerations**, we have asked the Commission to consider these points:

An extract is below:

### **5.3 Communities of Interest, Social Fabric and Character of Communities. (introduction only)**

Under its Terms of Reference, the Commission “*must consider the grouping of like communities of interest to maintain the social fabric and character of communities and areas of the State*”.

The geographical size and diverse nature of Queensland will no doubt present an intricate challenge to the Commission in its consideration of these principles.

The difficulties of using the concept of community of interest in boundary reviews include:

- The absence of a single and widely accepted definition;
- Identifying and measuring communities of interest; and
- The various level of, and bases for, communities of interest.

Some might feel that the usefulness of the term “community of interest” with respect to local government has similarly diminished. It has been bandied about vaguely, with varying degrees of expediency, seriousness and passion. However, of the concepts offered to replace it, none seem to do so adequately. Such expressions as common identity, affinity, collective perspective, sharing common concerns, sense of common purpose, core of commonality, sense of belonging, a coherent social and economic whole, acting in the interests of community, and speaking with a united voice, have been put forward, yet each tends to cover only some aspect of the broad dimensions in which the concept of “community of interest can be applied in local government, (Fulcher H, S.A Department of Local government, “The Concept of Community of Interest” page1, 1989).

Due to these difficulties and in the absence of any other research applicable to Queensland’s circumstances, the LGAQ wishes to remind the Commission of the community of interest assessment used by the former Office of the Local Government Commissioner (OLGC). An excerpt of the OLGC’s work on this matter is outlined below for the benefit of the Commission.

## LOCALITY / TERRITORY

- A geographical unit within a finite and bounded physical territory.
- Homogeneous: identified on the basis of similar population and dwelling characteristics.

## COMMON INTERESTS

- A social system based on a system of local interrelated social institutions.
- Functional: involve & orientation to some common centre or centres as a result of an organised pattern or structure.

## PERCEPTION

- Human association based on feeling of belonging or tradition.
- Subjective: communities as perceived by citizens, external agencies.

These types of communities of interest will be used as bases for determining the various communities of interest in areas subject to review by the OLG. They will be referred to as homogeneous, functional and subjective communities.

The identification of homogeneous and functional communities of interests will provide the basis for assessment of the principles at subsections 2(a) and 2(d)(i) of *schedule 1, Local government Regulation 1994*. The identification of subjective communities enables the review process to assess and consider community views.

With societal changes such as increased residential mobility and increased frequency of households changing their place of residence, arguments have been put forward as to the importance of locality / territory in determining community of interest. A doctoral study on the role of community of interest in local government boundaries by Christopher Berry, *Local government Boundaries in Metropolitan Perth*, noted that various local government boundaries reports consider that as far as possible people should live and work within the same local government area. This study considers that while this seems a reasonable expectation in rural areas, it is difficult to attain in metropolitan areas due to the relative concentration of employment and the dispersed nature of where workers reside.

The trend of increasing separation of the place of work and the place of residence in urban and metropolitan areas means that the opportunity for a discernible discrete community to determine boundaries is reduced. In such cases, proposed boundaries (options) will be considered in terms of their impact upon identified communities. This includes communities which can be currently identified and those which are emerging. Emerging communities will be identified by consideration of expected settlement patterns in relevant planning documents.

### 5.4 Social Role of Councils

Communities of interest, social fabric and the character of communities are all intrinsically linked to the role played by councils in their communities.

**Over the last decade, councils, sometimes by default and sometimes by design are increasingly tackling issues associated with community development, community wellbeing and indeed, social capital.**

According to the World Bank, social capital refers to the “*institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society - it is the glue that holds them together*”.

In recent years, local government has been forced to step in to support services such as hospitals, schools, postal and banking services as well as to provide support to community groups as a result of the insurance indemnity crisis. In many instances this has arisen as a consequence of the State withdrawing from the provision of these services.

Many types of council have also become active in provision of public housing as a result of the lack of affordable housing options from the State or the private sector. This is a particular issue for small rural centres in facilitating local economic growth and allowing families to access required accommodation when moving for employment opportunities. Examples of rural Queensland councils actively involved in public housing provision include Bendemere, Warroo, Taroom and Tambo.

Indigenous councils have the full range of functions common to “mainstream” councils in Queensland. However, in some functions they have a much greater role and responsibility. Indigenous councils have substantial public housing programs, have a major involvement in community employment and training programs, are responsible for Community Police and typically operate a number of enterprises including hotels, motels and community building teams. In addition, some indigenous councils provide air transport, operate Emus or Crocodile Farms, or manufacture building materials such as concrete blocks.

The universal role of local government in the development and sustaining of “place” is also highlighted in the Lyons Inquiry into Local government - Place-shaping: a shared ambition for the future of local government.

Of particular relevance to the issue of social fabric, Sir Michael notes (2007, page 2) *“Though some economic and sociological analyses have challenged the importance of place and the importance of the local in modern society and economics, place remains relevant. As our understanding of the multi-faceted nature of social and economic problems grows, and as our aspirations to solve them and to govern uncertainty and diversity increase, the arguments for a local role in determining the actions of government and the provision of public services are becoming stronger. In addition, economic analysis continues to identify local factors and institutions as important influences on economic change and growth”*.

Sir Michael (2007, page 2) identifies the components of “place shaping” of particular importance to the role of local government, especially small and remote communities.

*“Throughout my work, I have promoted a wider, strategic role for local government, which I have termed ‘place-shaping’ - the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens. It includes the following components:*

- *building and shaping local identity;*
- *representing the community;*
- *regulating harmful and disruptive behaviours;*
- *maintaining the cohesiveness of the community and supporting debate within it,*
- *ensuring smaller voices are heard;*
- *helping to resolve disagreements;*
- *working to make the local economy more successful while being sensitive to pressures on the environment;*
- *understanding local needs and preferences and making sure that the right services are provided to local people; and*
- *working with other bodies to respond to complex challenges such as natural disasters and other emergencies”*.

Quite simply, many small communities in Queensland would not enjoy the current facilities available to them if they did not have a council to advocate for their specific needs.

It is important that the Commission recognises the significant social role undertaken by councils when considering the restructuring of council boundaries.

**The LGAQ recommends that the Commission:**

- 1. Acknowledge the complexity inherent in the identification of communities of interest.**
- 2. Adopt the principles utilised by the Office of the Local Government Commissioner in the assessment of communities of interest.**
- 3. Does not recommend the incorporation of indigenous councils into surrounding “mainstream” councils, unless agreed to by the affected councils.**

## Cairns Safe Communities Program

The journey towards World Health Organisation accreditation of Cairns as an international Safe Community has accelerated during the past few months. A 'whole of Council' approach has been assured with the establishment of the 'Intra-council Advisory Team', with representation from key Council branches and units.

Through a Planning Day, and statistics and data provided by the Tropical Population Health Unit, Qld Health and Qld Police Service, we have identified priority safety issues for the Cairns Region. We are in the process of forming 'Safety Issue Teams' (SIT's) to address these issues – inviting stakeholders from relevant Government and Non-Government departments to be involved. The first S.I.T will address issues of violence and crime, with the Dept of Communities (Building Safer Communities) and Qld Police Service (promoting their 'Violence No Way' campaign) taking a lead role.

Other issues deemed to be of concern have been environmental issues, ie. water safety, tropical diseases, and animal attacks. Also Senior Safety (including falls prevention), drug, alcohol and mental health, road safety and child health and safety, are seen as areas needing attention in Cairns.

The Safe Communities Co-ordination team has developed a logo and 'branding' criteria so that the various safety initiatives underway throughout the community that are 'making Cairns a safe place to live, work and visit' can be promoted through a wide, networking process.

We are also very excited about a proposed 'Community Safety Expo' being planned at one of Cairns' major shopping centres sometime in June/July.

For further information, contact Pam Maher, Co-ordinator Cairns Safe Communities Program, on [p.maher@cairns.qld.gov.au](mailto:p.maher@cairns.qld.gov.au).

## Cairns and Mareeba to host 2007 RADF State Conference

Arts Queensland has announced that Cairns City Council and the Mareeba Shire Council were successful in their bid to host the next Regional Arts Development Fund's (RADF) State Conference for 2007.

Councils were asked to partner this year in their bidding proposals. Mareeba Shire Council was the obvious choice for Cairns City Council, due to its geographical proximity to Cairns and the potential for future cross-shire collaborations in arts and cultural industries.

The conference will be staged between November 14-16.

Cairns City Council Mayor Kevin Byrne said: "Far North Queensland is ideally located to host an event such as the RADF State Conference 2007. Geographically, culturally and economically we gain much from being positioned in the Asia-Pacific rim".

Mareeba Shire Mayor Mick Borzi said: "Hosting the conference is a great opportunity to support the arts and bring the RADF program closer to the region's people".

Local and regional artists and cultural workers can look forward to showcasing their arts product, while leading Queensland companies and organisations are planning to have a very real presence at this year's conference.

More than 200 regional arts workers and artists from all over the state will be in the Far North later this year to discuss the state of the arts in regional Queensland.

For more information, call Robyn Holmes on 4044 3092.



# JUST COMMUNITIES NETWORK

## OUTCOMES OF THIRD NETWORK ROUNDTABLE

The third Just Communities Network Roundtable was held at the University of Technology, Sydney on 3-4 May. Mackay City Council along with Brisbane City Council are the only Queensland council's currently involved with this network.

The Just Communities Project continues to attract strong interest. It is becoming clear that its focus on making more effective links between community engagement, management frameworks, and governance and decision-making processes is fundamentally important in two ways:

- Firstly, it reflects key elements of the changing role of local government, including new requirements for strategic planning and community governance and accountability
- Secondly, financial sustainability and improved service delivery will depend to a large extent on councils' success in forging partnerships with community and other organizations, which in turn requires effective engagement and responsive management and governance.

At the third Roundtable participants:

- Reviewed progress to date and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the self-assessment tool used in Stage 1
- Considered international projects with similar aims and methodologies to Just Communities, notably the CLEAR\* model being piloted in Europe with EU support
- Exchanged ideas on areas for improvement in their councils and priorities for further work
- Endorsed the draft 'Ideas Kit' for action planning
- Undertook to establish a steering group in each participating council for action planning/implementation of priority actions
- Supported increased involvement of elected members and community representatives in the Project
- Agreed that the network should be broadened and that Project activities and achievements should be disseminated more widely.

It is proposed that in the next stage of the Project each participating council should convene a workshop to review progress and reach agreement on action priorities. The Project Team can provide a facilitator for these workshops at no charge, and we hope that all councils will accept that offer.

For further information regarding this network, please contact Mackay City Council, Manager Community Development, Jan Kilbourne on 4957 1730.

### **Crestmed Joblift**

The 'Crestmead Joblift' project was launched late last year by Logan City Council, in partnership with the State Government's Community Renewal program. The project is designed to provide job-seekers in Logan with greater opportunities to access employment opportunities.

Several suburbs within Logan continue to experience unemployment rates well above the Queensland average. Through consultation with Job Network providers it became clear that transport is one of the major barriers to people accessing employment in these areas. The Crestmead Industrial Estate is one area where transport was a key barrier to employment, with the local bus unable to service the entire estate or cater to the varying shift times. The estate employs thousands of people and the Crestmead Business Association also expressed their desire to see better public transport to enable their employees and potential employees to better access the area.

In order to provide a low-cost and flexible service the "shared taxi" model was developed. The service only operates when there are bookings and people are batched together to reduce costs. Users of the service pay \$2 - \$3 one way, are picked up from their home and dropped at designated points within the estate. There are two morning services and three afternoon/evening service times.

The success of the development of the project has been the project reference group made up of all key stakeholders including Queensland Transport, Job Network providers, the taxi service provider, Community Renewal, the Crestmead Industrial Estate Business Association and the Logan Office of Economic Development.

If on-going need can be demonstrated there is an excellent opportunity that this project will be supported as an on-going service to the job seekers of Logan.

## YOUNG PEOPLE RESTORE MEMORIALS

The Calliope community is reaping the rewards of a partnership between Calliope Shire Council and the Department of Communities Gladstone Youth Justice Service.

The Calliope Shire Cemetery Restoration Project has young people involved in restoring and repairing many of the older graves in the monumental section of the Calliope Cemetery. The graves are being cleaned, repaired where needed, and painted.



Calliope Shire Council Mayor, George Creed said, “We have had positive feedback from the community commenting how well the older monumental section of the cemetery is looking.”

“The maintenance and restoration of graves is generally the responsibility of the deceased’s family. However, over time there often is no-one living locally to tend to family monuments and they begin to suffer from neglect.”

“Council maintains the cemetery area generally, but resources limit the amount of restoration that can be achieved on many of the monuments.”

Department of Communities Youth Officer, Jamie Hankinson who brokered the project said, “This has been a great partnership producing real benefits for the community and young people involved.”

“Young people participating in the project are not only learning new skills in the correct maintenance and restoration of cemetery monuments, but in conjunction with Council we also incorporated an educational component where young people get the opportunity to learn some of the history of the cemetery.”

“They have viewed the old burial registers and learnt something of the lives of the people interred there.”

“One of the primary aims of the program is to teach young people of the importance of these monuments to loved ones and the place that they have in the history of a community.”

“We believe that this program will also help in reducing the level of vandalism of cemetery facilities.”

The program may also be taken to other areas. The Mount Morgan community are currently considering the project.

For more information on this project, contact Jamie Hankinson, Gladstone Youth Justice Service, Department of Communities on 4979 6531.

### **A win for Community Services**

On April 19, Manager for Community Support at Pine Rivers Shire Council, Kent Stroud, was presented with the Local Govt Managers Australia (LGMA) 2007 Young Managers Award for Leadership and Management Excellence.

The award is presented annually by LGMA Queensland to recognise outstanding Leadership and Management by a Young Queensland local government manager and judged on criteria demonstrating the following capabilities: Visionary Leadership, Innovation, Best Practise, Superior Interpersonal Skills, Contribution to the Community/Region, Professional Development, Effective use of Systems and Resources.

Kent manages a team of over 110 community services staff at Pine Rivers from a range of functions including Community Development, Social Planning, Childrens Services, Respite, Disability and Community Events.

It is great to see the Community Services sector, which is represented by the QLGCSA being promoted as a core Local Government function for aspiring leaders along side the more traditional services. Well done Kent.

*Cook Shire have participated in the Youth Partnerships Project that Rachael Uhr, LGAQ is piloting in Far North Queensland. The project we chose locally was to increase youth engagement in decision making / community consultation through a photo exhibition. The expo wasn't a competition - the community in Cooktown organised it and the expo asked that residents take 2 photos of what they loved and loathed about Cooktown. We ended up getting approx 180 photos of which 47 were from young people which is a great result. We still need to analyse what the issues presented by the community and young people - so stay tuned for the next edition?*

### **Pine Rivers gets Amp'd Up for Youth Week 2007**

To meet an increasing community need for youth orientated activities and opportunities for youthful expression, the Amp'd Up – Xtreme events for young adults concept was developed.

Pine Rivers Shire Council consulted with local young people and youth sector professionals and identified a distinct need for physical activity programs including greater opportunities to enjoy live music. A project team was formed consisting of young leaders, representatives from local youth sector agencies, activity providers and Council Officers.

Amp'd Up consisted of two core components; Extreme Activities Program and Battle of the Bands.

The extreme Activities Program provided a means for young people aged between 12 and 25 to engage in physical activity, to develop skills and raise awareness of the recreational opportunities available to young people throughout the Shire. The program focused on informal non-mainstream activities including rock climbing, BMX, Hip Hop & Body Percussion, Laser Games, Paintball and Inline Skating.

Jointly funded by Pine Rivers Shire Council and the Queensland Government Department of Sport & Recreation, Amp'd Up helped to establish strong and productive links with local young leaders, youth service providers, activity providers and sporting organisations from throughout the Shire.

The Battle of the Bands competition allowed young bands in the Pine Rivers region to compete against their peers to win a range of great prizes. Bands were invited to submit a ten minute DVD/Video of a live performance. From these entries, six bands were selected as finalists to perform live at the launch for the Amp'd Up – Xtreme Activities Program.

The Amp'd Up – Battle of the Bands program was run in conjunction with Catalyst Youth Arts Organisation at the commencement of National Youth Week 2007. As the primary project partner to Council, Catalyst Youth Arts Inc. provided a range of band support and training services as well as a 'rockumentary' of the event.

The Amp'd Up Battle of the Bands event was a raging success, with over 500 people in attending. The program was jointly funded by the Queensland Government Department of Communities (through the National Youth Week grants initiative), Pine Rivers Shire Council and Catalyst Youth Arts Inc.

## Lights, camera, action: youth film festival shines spotlight on local talent

Young and aspiring filmmakers took centre stage with hundreds of people viewing their creations during the second annual MUFFFY festival in April.

The 2007 Mondo Underground Film Festival for Young People, which coincided with the launch of national Youth Week, offered a rare opportunity for Sunshine Coast young people to showcase their work to a broad audience.

The event, which was the first of its kind on the Sunshine Coast when it was launched last year, is an alternative arts and film festival developed by young people for young people.

While the three-day festival featured the creative works of locals it also provided some insight to the competitive industry through the jam-packed program which featured film maker panel discussions, workshops and international film screenings.

MUFFFY is an initiative of Council's YouthLinx program, which aims to support young people across Caloundra City, and the wider Sunshine Coast, in all areas of community life, learning, development, employment, culture and recreation via a range of activities and projects.

This year, MUFFFY took on a slightly different identity: formerly known as the Maleny Underground Film Festival, it has been renamed the Mondo Underground Film Festival to reflect its broader audience, with Mondo meaning 'world' in Italian.



There was also an exciting new format for the film competition with four categories including animation, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, music/sport documentary, and people's choice.

Each category featured a school age and an 18+ category, with all winners eligible for the Best in Festival prize of \$1000.

The Best in Festival award went to Raoul Winters for his film Life of Piglet. The best under 18 entry was The Seven Sins by S Jayo, G Nelson and H Dale and the best over 18 entry went to Ashleigh Beck for Unlucky. Both these entrants won \$250.

More than 700 people attended the events across the weekend, which included activities and screenings across the Sunshine Coast. To find out about exciting developments for next year's festival visit [www.mufffy.com](http://www.mufffy.com)



Keep up to date with Caloundra City recreation and community news by subscribing to the TRACS *Talking Recreation And Community Services* newsletter today. Receive quarterly sports and community news direct to your inbox via email at [www.caloundra.qld.gov.au](http://www.caloundra.qld.gov.au) / 'City Online' / 'Subscribe to mailing list' and choose 'Recreation and Community (TRACS)' from the mailing list drop-down box.

Check out the April 2007 edition of TRACS. Available online at [www.caloundra.qld.gov.au](http://www.caloundra.qld.gov.au) / 'City Online' / 'Publications'. **Step inside** to read about:

- \* **Local group profiles**
- \* **Opportunities to "Get involved" in your local community**
- \* **Show me the money - available funding**
- \* **You said it - survey feedback on how TRACS is working for you.**
- \* **Annette Sym's FREE recipe - YUM!**
- \* **What's On - a huge list of local events... and more.**

Next issue available 1 July 2007.

## LOSS OF SERVICES IN THE BUSH

Communities across regional and rural Queensland are concerned about the impact forced amalgamations of rural shires will have on the delivery of social services in these areas.

Modern rural councils are about more than roads, rates and rubbish. To address identified gaps in services many councils now provide youth workers, aged care facilities, disability support services, support for Aboriginal organisations and community development staff to assist with projects and funding application writing to ensure their communities receive basic support services.

Communities like Mitchell in south-west Queensland are genuinely concerned about the possible forced amalgamation of Booringa Shire Council into a super council saying that not all Councils have Booringa's community focus and philosophy.

Booringa Shire Council owns and manages a 20 bed high and low care aged care hostel on a not-for-profit basis and its future will be in jeopardy if Booringa Shire Council ceases to exist. Principal Manager of Corporate Governance M/s Tanya Mansfield said that the facility's small size and the community's small population of 900 people may make it very difficult to attract a private operator to take on the operations. "Booringa Shire Council commenced in the aged care industry to address an identified gap in the services available to the community. Council runs the facility as a community service and does not make any profits from the venture. We hope that as a result of any amalgamations, the community does not lose this facility".

Aboriginal Elders have also voiced their concerns as to the future of the community development plan that they were progressing in partnership with Booringa Shire Council. Booringa Shire Council, the local Nalingu Aboriginal Corporation and the Federal Government entered one of the first Shared Responsibility Agreements in 2006, with the agreement detailing how the parties will work together to achieve community revitalization, economic development and cultural activities. Local Elder Aunty Irene Ryder has said that she is traveling to Brisbane next week and will try to meet with the Premier to express her concerns.

M/s Mansfield says that she will be seeking assurances from the Department of Communities and the Department of Health and Ageing as to strategies that they have in place to ensure services continue to be delivered within the community in the event that Booringa Shire Council is amalgamated.

For more information please contact:- Tanya Mansfield at Booringa Shire Council Telephone (07) 46238111, email [tanya.mansfield@booringa.qld.gov.au](mailto:tanya.mansfield@booringa.qld.gov.au)

