

FinPro Member Update – Edition 25, 2021

Good morning,

Rather than reading my President's message this week I thought I would mix it up a bit and I've done a video again.

[Watch Bradley's welcome message now](#)

Have a great weekend everyone,

Bradley Thomas

President – FinPro (and CEO Hepburn Shire Council)



Membership

Congratulations to **Megan Falla** who has joined the team at Surf Coast Shire as Management Accountant. Megan was previously at Moonee Valley City Council.

Congratulations too to **Damian Hogan** who has taken on the role as CFO at Moonee Valley City Council. Damian moved there from Darebin City Council where he was the Finance Manager.

Welcome to **Jenna Grant** who has joined the team at Greater Bendigo City Council team as Management Accountant (Organisation).

Welcome too to **Geoff Gray** who has joined the team at Mildura Rural City Council as the Management Accounting Officer.

Farewell to **Mandy Kynnersley**, Manager Business and Performance at Mansfield Shire. Mandy has been a FinPro member for many years and always attended our events. She is leaving the sector and will be missed by many.

Upcoming events

14 – 17 November 2021 – Leadership Program at Country Place Kalorama (moved from 5 – 8 September 2021)

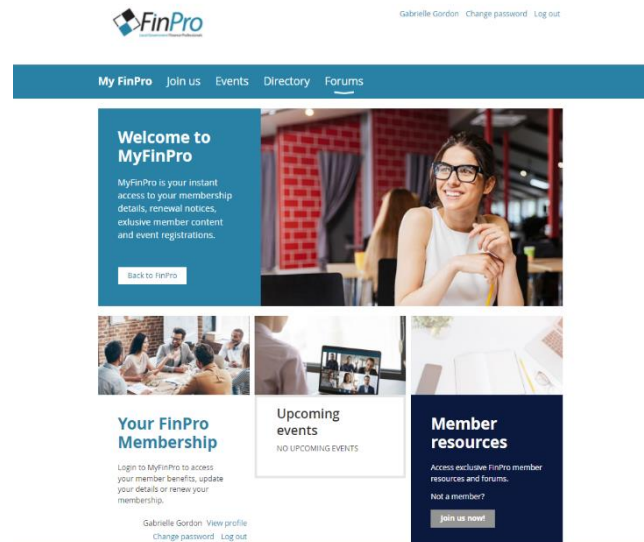
3 December 2021 – FinPro End of Year Lunch and AGM – Leonda by the Yarra

23 – 25 February 2022 – FinPro Annual Conference at RACV Cape Schanck (moved from 20 – 22 October 2021)

Membership Renewals and New Member Portal (coming soon)

The FinPro Financial Year commences today, 1 October 2021. FinPro Membership renewal notices will be sent out in the coming week. For councils who have a Council Membership, the renewal notice will be sent to the main contact person. For Individual Members, renewal notices will be sent individually.

We have lots of great new ideas for the coming year including the introduction of a FinPro member portal, member forum and a new look membership where individual members will be able to manage their own subscriptions.



Local Government Act Implementation Update

The new Local Government Act 2020 is the most ambitious reform to the local government sector in over 30 years. The Act will improve local government democracy, accountability, and service delivery for all Victorians. Copies of relevant information is available on the [LGV website](#)

Important Dates in relation to the LG Act:

September 2021

- [2020-21 Annual Report – by 30 September 2021](#)

October 2021

- [Financial Plan – 31 October 2021](#)
- [Council Plan – 31 October 2021](#)
- [Community Vision – 31 October 2021](#)

December 2021

- Chief Executive Officer Employment and Remuneration Policy – 31 December
- Workforce Plan – 31 December
- Recruitment Policy – 31 December
- Staff Code of Conduct – 31 December
- Complaints Policy – 31 December
- Procurement Policy – 31 December

2022

- Asset Plan – 30 June 2022

Financial Plan update (an article from FinPro member, Malcolm Lewis)

It is now only one month to go before we are required to adopt the Financial Plan (due 31 October). As a sector, the financial professionals have again rose to the challenge by adding a further report to what often seems like an ever-increasing list of annual compliance documents.

The Financial Plan template, that FinPro developed on behalf of LGV and the sector, was designed primarily as a compliance document to satisfy the new LG Act and the new Regulations. The legislation also requires each Council to follow their own engagement policy, which often means deliberative engagement prior to final adoption.

This presents its own challenges given the Financial Plan document is prepared in line with accounting and legislative standards rather than in a format that the community can be easily understood by the community. One option to support deliberative engagement is to include the output-based Council Plan format to the Financial Plan. Provided year one of the Financial Plan aligns with the numbers from the adopted Budget this should be achievable without significant rework.

The Council Plan format reports gross expense, income and the net spend for each service that could then be further broken down into the net spend for the average ratepayer or even a net spend for every person in the municipality. This information should enable the community to more readily understand the relative cost of each service that cannot be easily identified from the accounting-based compliance reports.

Given this is only year one, the next stages in the journey will be to provide a more strategic focus and continually develop the integration framework including the linkages to the key documents that underpin the development of the Financial Plan.

Malcolm Lewis

Asset Plan

Just to note as an update on an LGV working group meeting about the Asset Plan. FinPro has some representatives getting along to meetings as well, and below are a few points from this meeting last month.

The key item that was confirmed is that deliberative engagement is NOT mandatory for the first Asset Plan cycle. This has been written into a revised tech description – which is available [here](#) on the LGV website (scroll down to 6.4 – Asset Plan).

In the first meeting, which was back in August, there were a few questions raised, including:

- Is the output a template or something else? Guidelines? Principles?
- Considered length – would a page of principles guiding AM be enough or is something more detailed required?
- How much must it integrate with other plans (Integrated Strategic Planning)? Will there be an audit process to ensure compliance?
- There was discussion about what was ‘non-negotiable’ and what were nice-to-haves/capability building activities.

Hope that assists – of course if any specific questions, contact LGV on their email for LG Act changes through their [website](#).

Access to funding through TCV - Update

FinPro representatives met with representatives from LGV and TCV yesterday (30 September 2021) to discuss the proposed TCV loan to local government. On behalf of the sector, FinPro has welcomed the initiative from the state government and provided a list of questions that were collected from its members.

The discussion was productive and LGV has undertaken to provide a Q&A based on these questions. Once received we will distribute to members.

We are also keen to hear from Councils who may be seeking to refinance loan maturities occurring prior to January 2022 (ie. existing loans undertaken through the Local Government Funding Vehicle or other banking institutions) or those seeking to undertake new borrowings to identify level of funding demand likely for the sector at this point as we continue our engagement with TCV. If you have any information in this space please [contact Gab](#) and she will collate this information which will be valuable in further discussions with LGV / TCV.

Grosvenor Rate Cap Review

FinPro Committee members. Tony Rocca, Binda Gokhale and Danny Wain, attended a consultancy session with Grosvenor yesterday (30 September 2021) regarding the Rate Cap.

The discussion was an opportunity to provide input into how the Rate Cap has operated since its inception. It covered the Policy objectives of the cap, and whether they are being achieved, how well they have or have not been achieved and why. Additionally, it covered elements of the Act and whether there are better ways the cap can be measured and what those elements would be and why.

Thus far, the group at Grosvenor have undertaken six workshops within the sector. There is another workshop on the 8 October 2021 that is being run for others that may have missed out.

If you would like further information, please contact Sarika from the Grosvenor Group, regarding the 8 October 2021 workshop: sarikabhana@grosvenorpg.com.au

LGV, FinPro, VLGA Connect Live Panel Discussion: Debt - Another Resource for Councils to Consider

Brought to you by Local Government Victoria, FinPro and the VLGA.

Thursday 21 October 2021 from 10am – 11.30am online through zoom

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Panelists include:

- Hon Shaun Leane MP - Minister for Local Government
- Andrew Greaves - Victorian Auditor-General
- John Comrie - Local Government Financial Sustainability Consultant
- Lucy Roffey - CEO, Central Goldfields Shire Council

Moderated by Chris Eddy

Update from VAGO

The following information was distributed to councils from CAGO on 29 September 2021 and is shared for member information:

Hi all,

I hope you are safe and well.

VAGO performance audit and other integrity bodies — [September 2021 update](#) is available now for your reference. The layout is different to previous months as we are using a common template with performance audit.

Cyber-attack alert!

- As many of you are already aware, a [Victorian council experienced suspected cyber-attack earlier this month](#). Google search shows other councils also has been targeted in cyber-attacks in recent years. Refer [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for details.
- Refer to [Victorian Government resources](#) to prevent a cyber incident including some basic steps you can take to improve your organisation's cyber security. Refer to [cyber security standards and guidelines](#) and [Cloud security guidelines](#).
- Refer also to [Federal Government resources](#) on useful advice for improving cyber security. This includes mitigation strategies compiled by The Australian Cyber Security Centre — [The Essential Eight maturity model](#) that organisations can use to improve their cyber resilience and [cyber security guidelines \(ISM\)](#) that provide practical guidance on how organisations can protect their systems and information from cyber threats.

Roads to Recovery (R2R) and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) grant acquittals are due by 31 October 2021:

- We will resource up during October 2021 to meet your 2020-21 R2R and LRCI acquittal submission timeline. I am **not** aware of an extension for these grant acquittal deadlines at this stage.

Two-month extension to submit 2020-21 annual report:

- On 15 of September 2021, Acting Minister for Local Government approved a two-month extension to Councils and RLCs to meet their legislative reporting obligations. This means that **councils and RLCs have until 30 November 2021** to submit their annual report to the Minister for Local Government.
- I have already informed your auditors on this extension and provided a copy of the formal advice from the Minister for reference.

Update on 2020-21 audit program:

- With 104 local government entities to audit for 2020-21 financial year, we are on track to issue audit opinions for 62 LG entities by cob today. Under the circumstances we all are in, I believe

*it is a **very good outcome for the sector!** Based on prior year experience with similar extended reporting timelines, I expect most of the remaining report certifications and audit opinion releases will happen in the next couple of weeks.*

- *At this stage, I am not aware of any major delays in VAGO audit opinion release process. However, if you have any concerns about the turnaround or timing of VAGO reviews/ opinion issue that are with us currently for clearance, please do reach out asap.*

Other matters:

- *The 2020-21 LG Parliamentary report is on track for tabling by 30 November 2021. We are reimagining report design to make it more concise and easier to consume.*
- *AUASB recently [released a publication](#) that is focussed on data integrity, addressing matters related to the collection and transformation of data by the auditor. I believe **some of the commercial considerations discussed in this publication will be important to you** in the context of auditors collecting, transforming, and using data as part of audit process.*

If you have any queries, please feel free to reach out.

Kind regards, Sanchu

Sanchu Chummar

Acting Sector Director, Local Government

Victorian Auditor-General's Office

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General Information

Assistance to parents with school aged children - Helping you survive lockdowns and home schooling

Like most parents, I have struggled to keep my school aged child motivated and even 'coping' during the past 18 months. The current lockdown is particularly difficult.

Recently our school ran a webinar for parents with Dr Michael Carr-Gregg, one of Australia's most preeminent Child Psychologists. Michael presented to each level at the school on coping and building resilience to deal with COVID and lockdowns. His presentation came with some fantastic practical strategies for students and their families.

He also ran a session for parents which I found to be extremely beneficial, and having sought permission from the school, I am happy to share with members as well.

[Hear from Dr Michael Carr-Gregg now](#)

The first part of the recording is the school welcoming people – would suggest starting at the 6.15-minute mark!

Gab Gordon

COVID-10 Engagement Toolkit webinar**Wednesday 13 October 2021 from 12pm to 12.45pm (online through zoom)**

Looking at how to engage with your communities during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic? Capire Consulting are running the following free session which may be of interest:

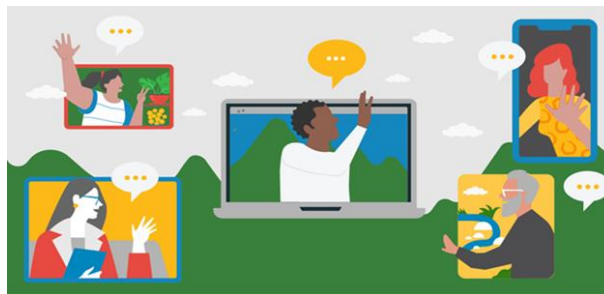
How do you engage with your communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone. We have all faced restrictions in response to what is happening in our own neighbourhoods. In times like this, it is more important than ever that people can have a say on the decisions that impact them. We believe it is important to reflect on how engagement practice has adapted. Join Niamh Moynihan and Eleanor Howe for a dialogue on adapting community engagement approaches in the face of the pandemic.

This webinar will cover:

- how community engagement and community professionals had to adapt their practices
- how Capire has adapted its community engagement practices throughout the pandemic
- Capire's Community Engagement During COVID-19 Toolkit

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Current positions advertised on the [FinPro Website](#)

- **Manager Financial Services**
 - Hepburn Shire Council
 - [Further details](#)
 - Applications close 5pm Monday 4 October 2021
- **Procurement and Insurance Risk Specialist**
 - Hepburn Shire Council
 - [Further details](#)
 - Applications close 5pm, Monday 11 October 2021
- **Rates and Valuations Coordinator**
 - Glen Eira City Council
 - [Further details](#)
 - Applications close 11.59pm on 12 October 2021

- **Coordinator Budget and Business Support**
 - Yarra City Council
 - [Further details](#)
 - Applications close on Friday 1st October 2021

FinPro Executive Team 2021

President	Bradley Thomas (Hepburn SC)
Vice-President – Chair Professional Development	Binda Gokhale (Wyndham CC)
PD Committee Members	Alan Wilson (Melbourne CC)
	Belinda Johnson (Southern Grampians SC)
	Charles Nganga (Casey CC)
	Melissa Baker (South Gippsland SC)
Vice-President – Chair Technical	Tony Rocca (Maroondah CC)
Technical Committee Members	Danny Wain (Monash CC)
	Fiona Rae (Golden Plains SC)
	Mark Montague (Whittlesea CC)
	Nathan Morsillo (Greater Bendigo CC)
	Simone Wickes (Frankston CC)
	Wei Chen (Yarra CC)
Secretary / Treasurer	Gabrielle Gordon

Thank-you to our 2021 Corporate Partners

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|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| * APV Valuers and Asset Management | * LG Solutions |
| * Commonwealth Bank | * Maia Financial |
| * CT Management | * New Era Management |
| * .id informed decisions | * VOTAR Partners |
| * Ibis Information Systems | * Vision Super |
| * MAGIQ Software | * Westpac |

FinPro Contact Details

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