

Welcome to the December Edition of the FinPro News

Presidents Message

Welcome to our last members update for 2019!

A massive thanks to everyone associated with FinPro for a busy but enjoyable year. Whether you are a member, a corporate partner, an Executive member or consultant in the Victorian Local Government Finance sector, it's been an absolute pleasure to be President of FinPro for the year and I thank the ingoing Executive for re-electing me for a second term as President for 2019.20, along with Binda Gokhale and Tony Rocca as the two Vice-Presidents of FinPro for the coming year.

On Friday 6th December we held our Annual General Meeting where many joined us to hear from the inspirational Susan Alberti about her life story, the election of the 2020 executive and the awarding of Life Membership to Gabrielle Gordon. Gab has been the cornerstone of FinPro since joining the executive in 1995, and taking on the role of Executive Officer in 1997. Gab is the heart and soul of the FinPro. Quite simply, it wouldn't be in the fantastic shape that it is in, as the leading financial voice for the sector without her. Congratulations Gab!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Executive Members – Marc Giglio, Amy Montalti and Helen De La Plaza – for their dedication, support and involvement with FinPro. Special thanks in particular goes to Marc who has played a very active role on the Executive for 15 years!!!

The new Executive will be holding a planning day on the 31st January as we prepare for the year. If you have any ideas or comments you would like the Executive to consider please email either myself or Gab.

2020 promises to be a very busy year for the sector with the likely adoption of a new Local Government Act. The Rating Strategy Review will be also tabled and Council elections will be undertaken.

I hope everyone gets a chance to recharge their batteries over summer and also to take some time to reflect on 2019 and the role we play in local government, making our local communities better places to live and work.

Merry Christmas,

Cheers, Bradley



Bradley Thomas - FinPro President

Director Community and Corporate Services – Hepburn Shire

New Members

We welcome the following new members this month to FinPro:

- Jeffrey Burke - Finance Officer, Mildura Rural City Council
- Amy Zappia - Finance Officer - Mildura Rural City Council
- Lauren Siladi - Finance Officer - Mildura Rural City Council
- Sue Carroll - Finance Officer - Mildura Rural City Council
- Sue Green - Finance Officer - Mildura Rural City Council
- Simon Buccheri - Contractor - Corangamite Shire Council
- Andrew McLeod - Director Corporate Services, Hobsons Bay City Council
- David Langley – Systems Accountant, Cardinia Shire Council
- Joanne Perera – Management Accountant, Maroondah City Council
- Peter Wan, Business Partner for Community & City Service, Melbourne City Council

We farewell

- Mark McMillan, Financial Services Coordinator Mildura RCC - Left to join Lower Murray Water as Manager Finance.

If you have any news to share with the FinPro membership please forward this to [Gab](#).

FinPro AGM and election of the 2019.20 Executive

FinPro held our AGM and end of year function on Friday 6 December 2019 at Leonda by the Yarra. Over 130 members attended on the day.

During the AGM, Shane Marr, acting as Returning Officer, conducted the election of the FinPro Executive for 2019.20.

The outgoing Executive were Marc Giglio, Banyule City Council, Helen De La Plaza, Cardinia Shire Council and Amy Montalti, Whittlesea City Council.

Marc, Helen and Amy were thanked for their significant contribution to FinPro over the term of their roles as members.

The ingoing Executive for 2019.20, elected unanimously, are:

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| • Belinda Johnson , Southern Grampians Shire | • Kim Jaensch , Frankston City Council |
| • Binda Gokhale , Wyndham City Council | • Kristy Stephens , Bass Coast Shire Council |
| • Bradley Thomas , Hepburn Shire Council | • Liz Rowland , Moreland City Council |
| • Charles Nganga , Casey City Council | • Mark Montague , Yarra City Council |
| • Danny Wain , Monash City Council | • Nathan Morsillo , Greater Bendigo City Council |
| • Gabrielle Gordon , FinPro | • Tony Rocca , Maroondah City Council, and |
| • John Brockway , Surf Coast Shire Council | • Vishantri Perera , Yarra Ranges Shire Council |

Also, during the AGM, Gab Gordon, acting in her role as FinPro Treasurer, reported that FinPro continues to be in a strong financial position with an income for the year of just over \$450,000 and an operating surplus of \$5,500.

Gab reported that the Executive have identified a number of areas that will require additional financial resources during the coming financial year, particularly in assisting council staff with guidance and implementation training following the introduction of the New Local Government Act and also following the finalisation of the rating review in March 2020.

FinPro Executive Member Profiles – new members

Liz Rowland



Liz joined Moreland City Council in September 2016 as Chief Financial Officer. In November 2018 the organisation underwent a restructure and Liz's role changed to Executive Manager Finance, where she is currently responsible for the portfolios of finance operations, procurement, rates collection and valuations, and property.

Prior to joining Moreland City Council, Liz spent 13 years with the Building Commission and Plumbing Industry Commission, later renamed to the Victorian Building Authority (VBA), where she held multiple roles over the years, starting as a Levy Compliance Officer, and leaving the VBA after 4 years as the Chief Financial Officer.

Liz brings with her a passion for continuous improvement, people development and gaining value for the community. She's looking forward to working with the FinPro Executive where she can share her knowledge and experience and learn from her colleagues.

Vishantri Perera



Vishantri joined Yarra Ranges Council in March 2012 as the Senior Financial Accountant, prior to being promoted as the Executive Officer Finance and then to her current role of Manager Financial Services where she is responsible for the delivery of Financial, Property and Rating, Procurement, Governance and Risk and Infringements services.

Vishantri started her Local Government career at City of Port Phillip in 2001 and then moved on to Glen Eira City Council before joining Yarra Ranges Council.

Vishantri started her working life as an accountant in the telecommunications sector in Sri Lanka before migrating to Australia in 2000, where she worked with an advertising firm before moving into local government.

With a background in the private and public sectors spanning over 25 years, Vishantri is passionate about upskilling and investing in staff and making improvements to Council's internal processes to deliver the best results for the Council and its community, while ensuring services are efficient and cost-effective.

LGPro Conference

LGPro will be holding their annual conference on Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20th February 2020 at Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. This is the day prior to our FinPro PD day. For some of our members, this may provide an opportunity to possibly attend both events.

[Further details of the LGPro event](#)

FinPro Technical Committee News / Updates

Local Government Rating Review Victoria Update

The following information was distributed on Tuesday 10 December 2019 by the LG Rating Review Secretariat:

Thank you to everyone who took the time to make a submission to the Local Government Rating System Review, your comments and suggestions will be considered by the Review Panel over the coming weeks.

All submissions have now been published to the Review website, www.engage.vic.gov.au/rating-review, and to protect the privacy of the submitters, all personal information within submissions has been removed.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat.

Rating System Review Secretariat | Local Government Victoria
Local Infrastructure | Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Level 35, 2 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000
T: 03 9948 8533 | E: rating.review@delwp.vic.gov.au

VAGO – Local Government Report

On 27 November 2020 VAGO released their annual report into Local Government – <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/results-2018-19-audits-local-government>

ESC – Council Compliance Reports

The ESC recently published reports that determine whether councils have complied with the relevant rate cap when they set their rates for each financial year.

[READ THE REPORT HERE](#)

LGV Bulletin – distributed to Councils Friday 13 December 2019

Results of 2018-19 Audits: Local Government

Following the completion of the 2018-19 financial audits the Victorian Auditor-General tabled his report titled *Results of 2018-19 Audits: Local Government in Parliament* on 27 November 2019.

At the date of the report's publication the financial audit of one council had not been completed. Clear audit opinions were issued for the financial and performance statements of the remaining 78 councils.

Subsequent to the tabling of the report, a clear audit opinion has been issued on the outstanding audit.

The Auditor-General found that generally Victorian councils continue to be financially sound and that at 30 June 2019, most councils – particularly metropolitan councils – continue to demonstrate strong financial performance, positive operating results, strong liquidity ratios and low debt levels.

The report made seven recommendations. The four recommendations directed to councils relate to:

- Monitoring building cladding rectification works;
- Working on longer-term solutions to recyclable waste;
- Strong procurement frameworks and controls; and
- Oversight of external service providers.

The remaining three recommendations are addressed to Local Government Victoria (LGV). The report recommends that LGV continue to provide guidance on the incoming Australian Accounting Standards and provide further guidance in relation to AASB 1052 Disaggregated disclosures and asset valuations. These recommendations have been accepted. LGV will continue to develop and enhance the suite of better practice guidance issued in relation to financial reporting.

LGV will continue working with the sector to address the Auditor-General's other recommendations including opportunities to improve procurement practices.

The report also makes observations regarding the internal controls relevant to council financial and performance reporting, including the identification of 126 new medium and high risk internal control issues during the 2018-19 audits. The timely resolution of issues or deficiencies identified during the audit process is important and should remain an area of focus for councils.

I encourage you, if you have not already, to review the report and distribute it to councillors, audit committee members and staff as appropriate. Any recommendations relevant to your council should also be addressed in a timely manner.

Colin Morrison
Acting Executive Director
Local Government Victoria

News Release – Friday 13 December 2019

Delivering a Fairer Deal for Victorian Ratepayers / Premier of Victoria

Release as follows:

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering fairer rates for Victorian households – setting the cap on Victorian council rate rises at 2 per cent.

Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek has announced the new cap, which is guided by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) forecast by the Department of Treasury and Finance for 2020-21.

The Fair Go Rates cap has been in place for four years and brought to an end a decade of council excessive rates increases, which averaged six per cent per annum.

The cap was set at 2.5 per cent in 2016-17, 2 per cent in 2017-18, 2.25 per cent in 2018-19 and 2.5 per cent in 2019-20.

The cap is also informed by the Essential Services Commission (ESC) who have recommended that it be set at CPI.

Reports by the ESC in 2019 showed that, for the first time, all 79 of Victoria's councils had complied with the rate cap.

As a result of Fair Go Rates, annual growth in council rates has slowed and spending on capital and services has increased.

For more information on Fair Go Rates visit delwp.vic.gov.au/fairgorates.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek

“We said we’d protect Victorians from unfair rates hikes and that’s exactly what we’ve done.”

“Our Fair Go Rates system has put a stop to a decade of unfair, unsustainable increases that hit hard-working Victorian families.”

“Fair Go Rates is encouraging Victorian councils to improve accountability and transparency, ensuring they are listening to their communities and delivering the services that matter most.”

[Download the media release](#)

FinPro Yammer Forum

Many FinPro members are part of the FinPro Yammer Forum. This online discussion platform gives an opportunity for members to raise topics for discussion, ask questions, seek out policies and also find out what is going on in the sector.

If you are not already a member of the forum, please contact FinPro and we can join you up – email gab at gabrielle@finpro.org.au

If you are a member, we encourage you to get online and seek the assistance of your fellow LG Finance Peers.



Thank-you to our 2019 Conference sponsors:

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Some of our wonderful sponsors have put together a **case study showcasing what services or products they offer – to view these case studies just click on the sponsor as listed above!**

PD Hours

Wanting to update your CPD Hours Register for CPA Australia or AANZCA? For a list of all the professional development events held by FinPro since 2015 please refer to our [website](#).

LinkedIn

Make sure you sign up to FinPro - Victorian Local Government Finance Professionals, on LinkedIn to stay in contact with current past members of FinPro.

Upcoming FinPro Events - Dates for your diary

FinPro Seminar

Friday 21 February 2020
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

FinPro Conference

Wednesday 21 – Friday 23 October 2020
RACV Cape Schanck

To Contact FinPro:

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