

FinPro Member Update – Edition 18, 2021

Good afternoon members,

From 1 emergency to another!!! It's great to see some unwinding of restrictions related to COVID and I'm sure our Melbourne members will be pleased to get out past the 25km mark. However, some parts of the State have been hit by the significant storms from last week. What's the saying "when it rains, it pours"? Please look after yourself if you have been further impacted by the Storms.

Today we were hoping to have come together in Melbourne for our PD Day – that hasn't been possible, but we were able to run an online event. Thanks to all who attended and thanks to our wonderful speakers who shared their knowledge and experience with us today. The recording will be available from Monday. We are also full steam ahead, planning for our annual conference to return in October and for it to be in person 😊 All our fingers and toes are crossed.

FinPro has offered support and will be working with LGV on responding to the Ombudsman's report into Rates Hardship. We are also partnering with the MAV to review the impact on rates and rating structures in response to a number of announcements related to Social and Affordable Housing.

We will shortly launch a survey asking each Council to detail what software systems are being used. We will put this information together and share with members. Hopefully, it assists you knowing who else is using similar systems and give you an opportunity to touch base with them if you have any questions.

We are well into budget adoption season and year-end audit planning season – good luck and enjoy! Look after yourself!

Bradley Thomas
President – FinPro
CEO Hepburn Shire



Upcoming events

5 – 8 September 2021 – Leadership Program at Country Place Kalorama

20 – 22 October 2021 – FinPro Annual Conference at RACV Cape Schanck

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

Membership

Welcome to **Tori Smith** who has joined the team at the City of Greater Bendigo as Management Accountant. We also welcome **Simon O'Connor** who has joined the team at Moreland City Council as Finance Unit Manager.

We welcome **Rohma Rauf** and **Kristen Roy** to the team at Northern Grampians Shire. Rohma has joined the team as Coordinator Financial Sustainability, and Kristen, as Financial Accounting Officer.

We farewell **Allan Cochrane**, Team Leader Financial Services at the City of Whittlesea. Allan has been in the sector for over 10 years, has been an active attendee at our PD events and is now seeking a 'slower' lifestyle.

Technical Update

New Procurement Policies under the Local Government Act 2020

Members should be aware that after 30 June 2021, all councils, are required to comply with S108 & 109 of the Local Government Act 2020 and adopt a new Procurement Policy. The Policy will need to be adopted by 31 December 2021 and will need to be reviewed at least once every four years thereafter.

Under the 2020 Act, Council's will have to establish their own public tender thresholds & exemptions and Council's must consider opportunities for collaboration. The Act also allows greater powers for Councils to engage in beneficial enterprises or co-operative business opportunities which deliver increased public value. There has been significant collaborative work done in preparation for this change with regional groups preparing either one policy or policy guidelines in preparation of their new policies to their council. Check with your procurement team(s) on the progress for your council.

For a sample Procurement Policy please refer to the Policy prepared by Moreland City Council on our [website](#). If your council has also developed a policy they would be willing to share please send it through to Gabrielle Gordon – gabrielle@finpro.org.au for inclusion on the FinPro website.

Local Government Victoria Update – Bulletin 34 / 2021

The Bulletin included below was issued by LGV on Friday 11 June 2021 and is included here for your information:

BULLETIN: 34/2021 SUBMISSION OF 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORTS

Councils and Regional Library Corporations (RLCs) are required to submit their 2020-21 annual report to the Minister for Local Government by 30 September 2021.

Councils

The savings and transitional provisions in section 329 (7)(b) of the Local Government Act 2020 mean that the Local Government Act 1989 continues to apply to the preparation of council 2020-21 annual reports. Regulation 16 in the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 includes savings and transitional provisions that mean the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 also continue to apply to council 2020-21 annual reports.

Councils are also reminded that section 57(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 2020 provides that all policies, plans and reports required under the Act must be publicly available in accordance with the Council's Public Transparency Policy. Section 58(c) requires council information (which includes documents) to be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community.

Regional Library Corporations

Section 330 of the Local Government Act 2020 means that existing RLCs must continue to apply the Local Government Act 1989 and submit their planning and reporting documents to the Minister for Local Government until they are wound up.

Submission details

Councils and RLCs can submit their documents by electronic means to OfficeMinLeane@ecodev.vic.gov.au with a copy to lgy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

If councils or RLCs wish to post their documents the mailing address is:

The Hon Shaun Leane MP
Minister for Local Government
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
DX 210074

Local Government Victoria is available to provide advice to councils via lgy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Julie Reid
Executive Director, Local Government Victoria

Local Government Victoria Update – Bulletin 27/2021

Bulletin 27/2021: Disclosure Requirements – Differential Rates was issued by LGV on 28 May 2021. Following the release of the Bulletin there was uncertainty amongst some members regarding council's requirements to disclose the objectives of the differentials in the Budget Document.

Following discussions with LGV we understand that this is not an issue of widespread concern but in response to an early indication that council's may have moved back from previous disclosure levels concerning differential rates. This may or may not have been a consequence of the combined revised budget requirements and the revenue and rating plan under the staged implementation of the LGA 2020.

LGV remains committed to working with the sector and Fin Pro in particular to provide clarity where there is uncertainty.

Given this is a transition year, and following discussions with LGV, we are confident of working with LGV and local governments for greater clarity as we refine practices for future years. We have been advised that this won't provide concerns to the point of having to revise documents this year, however, it will be considered in more detail as part of the 2022/23 budget cycle.

BULLETIN: 27/2021: DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS – DIFFERENTIAL RATES

Local Government Victoria reviews all council draft budgets annually to identify areas of best practice, concerns and trends. This year's budget process has included new requirements of the Local Government Act 2020.

It has come to our attention that a number of council budgets reviewed do not appear to have met all the requirements of s.94(2). Specifically, this is the omission of the required disclosures to specify the objectives of any proposed differential rates. These requirements are described in s.161(2) of the Local Government Act 1989 which remains in force.

It is essential that councils ensure their budget documents comply with all requirements of s.94(2) of the Local Government Act 2020 to ensure they are valid, including the validity of any proposed rates and charges.

Local Government Victoria has developed updated guidance to support councils through the 2021-22 budget process available here: <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/strengthening-councils/sector-guidance-planning-and-reporting>.

Local Government Victoria is available to provide advice to councils via lgy@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

Julie Reid,
Executive Director, Local Government Victoria

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](#)

Seeking member assistance

FinPro is here to help our members.



One way we can do this is by sharing council policies. Another is by our team looking at a variety of policies on a particular issue and then building a 'best practice' policy out of them. Our plan is to do both of these, depending on the particular policy.

We are seeking your assistance to put together these really valuable resources for you all, our members. If your council has a policy they would consider 'pretty good' or even 'best practice' and you are willing to share it, could you please send it through to gab and we will either share it as it is, or work with it (and others) to build a 'best practice' policy for all our members.

We are seeking policies for the following:

- Procurement policy
- Borrowing strategy/policy
- Borrowing tender
- Hardship policy
- Reserves policy/Strategy
- Pricing/Cost recovery policy

In advance, thank-you.

General Information

We often come across general interest stories or ideas that may be of value to even one of our members. Here is the latest, it is to do with sleep. The article was taken from the New York Times!

How to sleep again

Your sleep habits may have suffered during the pandemic. We spoke to experts about building new and better habits [to overcome “coronasomnia”](#) Here’s a sample.

The 25-minute rule

If you get into bed and can’t fall asleep after 25 minutes, or you wake up at night and can’t get back to sleep after 25 minutes, then get up and do a quiet activity that calms your mind and makes you drowsy.

Throw away your worries

Sit down with a blank piece of paper one to two hours before bed each night. Then write down all of your thoughts, especially anything that is bothering you. If most are worries, then crumple up the paper and throw it away.

Exercise for better sleep

[At least 29 studies](#) have found that daily exercise, regardless of the type or intensity, helps people fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer, especially among people who are middle-aged or older.

If sleep is a problem for you right now – we hope something here helps 🗣️

A note from our Exec Member Nathan Morsillo about the podcasts he listens to

I was chatting the other day about podcasts and have put down a quick list. I'm not as regular on podcasts as when I was commuting more regularly (did I mention I love Bendigo?), but now and then I still go with them in the background. Outside of work I used to keep up with Reply All; Slate Gabfest for some US politics; Tim Ferris and some other random ones. However, here are some of the work-related ones in the leadership (sometimes snake-oil!) field. Putting some of these into practice is harder than listening... but there's so much good content out there.

With COVID + conferences dropping off last year - these can be one other way some staff can do some self-learning along the road. I'm sure there's heaps of others out there - these are just the ones I've stumbled on over the journey. Always good to support the Australian ones.

Also immediately below is one in the Local Government news space that has been around recently. All of these are on Spotify or Apple Podcasts... just scroll for the episodes that jump out as interesting.

All the best,

Nathan (Manager Financial Strategy, Bendigo City Council and FinPro Executive Member)

VLGA Connect (Local Government news)

<https://www.vlga.org.au/resources/podcasts>

- Has a quick 10-12 min (pretty regular) round-up of news across Local Gov. Starts in Victoria, but seems to touch on NSW/Australia and occasionally international stuff.
- Covers CEO moves; new stuff on the go; Ombudsman's reports; and other bits and pieces.

On general team leadership / management - here's some other ones:

Synergen leadership podcast

<https://www.synergengroup.com.au/podcast/>

- Massive library - Australian based; and interviewed quite a few authors and coaches who are good value.
- I haven't kept up with this one the last year or two as much, but here are some episodes that I remember being good value from memory (89 Julia Steele; Ep88 Shane Hatton (lead the room); Ep79 with Shelley Flett).

No Bullsh*t Leadership

<https://www.yourceomenter.com/leadership-podcast>

- Selective ones of this are where I've been listening in the past few years... and some I wish I'd heard earlier. Particularly in Local Government where there can sometimes need to be a bit more accountability or movement, some stuff to get you thinking.
- Some early episodes were OK thought starters:
 - Excellence Over Perfection: Laying the foundations for successful execution
 - The Psychology of Feedback: Stop avoiding leadership work
 - Respect Before Popularity: Letting go of the need to be liked

Manager Tools (1:1's; feedback; meetings)

<https://www.manager-tools.com/manager-tools-basics>

- Spent a little bit of time with this one a few years ago. Good foundational basics stuff - start at the link above.
- These guys can waffle a bit, but the core stuff on 1:1's (hint: you must do them); feedback (hint: see advice about 1:1's); and Coaching/delegation are well worth the time.

Upcoming VLGA event 'Leading the Agenda for 2021'

The VLGA is pleased to present our first *Leading the Agenda* for 2021 as a face-to-face event with our partners Pitcher Partners. The topic for this interactive forum is **Audit & Risk Committees: What You Are Too Afraid to Ask**

Moderated by Chris Eddy our panel includes:

- Mark Dupe, Chief Executive Officer Baw Baw Shire Council
- Katie Baldwin, Audit & Risk Committee at Monash City Council, Head of internal audit at CSIRO
- Richard Wilson, Risk Advisory, Pitcher Partners

Friday 9 July 2020

11.30 am to 1.30 pm

Pitcher Partners, Level 13 664 Collins Street, Docklands

VLGA Members Free

Non-Members \$55 (GST incl.)

Registration

Light refreshments will be served

If you require further information please contact [Liddy Clark](#) from my office.

Kathryn Arndt

Chief Executive Officer, VLGA

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

- **Management Accounting Coordinator**
- Surf Coast Shire
- Refer to the [Council website](#) for more information
- Additional questions should be directed to Gabby Spiller on 5261 0600.
- Applications close 5pm on 20 June 2021
- **Systems and Capital Works Accountant**
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Refer to the [Council website](#) for more information
- For further information, contact Chhavi Walia, Coordinator Financial Services on (03) 5366 7100.
- Applications close at 5pm on Sunday 4 July 2021
- **Systems Accountant**
- City of Greater Bendigo
- Refer to the [Council website](#) for more information
- For further information please contact Mark Eeles, Coordinator Financial Reporting and Operations on (03) 5434 6141
- Applications close COB Tuesday June 22, 2021.

- **Project Accountant**
- City of Greater Bendigo
- Refer to the [Council website](#) for more information
- For further information please contact Kate Fox, Coordinator Management Accounting and Analysis on (03) 5434 6322
- Applications close COB Tuesday June 22, 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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