

FinPro Member Update – Edition 29, 2021

President's Message

I write this Message as the last in this term of the Executive as we will hold our AGM and elections next Friday. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in person and encourage you to attend.

I wrote something like "Oh what a year" 12 months ago, so now I might write 'Oh what a s**t year!'

For most of us it has certainly been an incredibly challenging 18 months, but I believe we can hold our heads high. Many of you have worked incredibly long hours as the work/home balance was thrown out the window, you have not been able to see family/friends, have had to take on home schooling, and have watched too much Netflix along with too many COVID press conferences. No doubt there have been many challenging days and a few tears along the way, but as we near the end of 2021 I think we can be positive about what 2022 has in store for us. Many of us will be returning to the office in some capacity, given the new hybrid style of work, and many of us have taken on new opportunities – I am quietly looking forward to 2022.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Executive and Gab. As a group we only got to come together twice in person over the year, but we have really worked hard and delivered what we think is a great service to our FinPro members. My mantra is that *we really exist to try and make our members lives easier* and I hope we have been able to do that in some small part; whether it be our technical or personal professional development and webinars, our regular members update, networking opportunities or even just the joke of the week in the updates.

Life, Local Government and in particular the Finance departments seem to be moving at a pace that is just so difficult to keep up with, and there certainly is no 'quite' period anymore. I'm not sure we can change that too much, but we hope that you see your membership and involvement with FinPro as positive.

Lots of highlights of the year and I will touch on them at next week's AGM.

Enjoy your weekend.

Cheers, Bradley



Bradley Thomas
President – FinPro
CEO Hepburn Shire Council

Membership

Hello and welcome to new FinPro Members:

- [Lincoln Fairbanks, CEO, Loddon Shire Council](#)
- [Kate McInnes](#), Kingston City Council, and
- [Wil Scully, Laura Smith and Clare Warren](#), Frankston City Council

We pass on our congratulations to both Loong Kok and Colleen Seymour on their new roles at Yarra City Council. Both have moved to Yarra from Moonee Valley CC.

We farewell [Dennis O'Keeffe](#), CFO at Port Phillip City Council who is finishing at that council this week after almost 5 years and wish him well in his next adventure.

Upcoming Event:

Together again – FinPro AGM, Update and Lunch

Friday 3 December 2021 from 12 noon – 3.30pm

(Mentor / Mentee Training will be held prior to this event – from 11 – 12 noon)

Leonda by the Yarra

You are invited to join us on Friday 3 December 2021 at Leonda by the Yarra as we embrace the opportunity to reconnect with our peers, network and learn.

During the afternoon we will provide a FinPro Update, hold our AGM, be entertained by comedian Michael Shafer, and enjoy a lovely lunch.

After a very long time of only being able to meet virtually, we are excited to be able to offer this opportunity for you to catch up with your peers and network in person.

We welcome all FinPro members and Corporate Partners to attend.

Registrations close **Monday 29 November 2021**.

[Register now](#)

- [FinPro AGM 2021 Formal Notice](#)
- [FinPro AGM 2021 – Nomination Form for Executive Committee](#)
- [Minutes of the last AGM – 26.2.21 \(for year ended 30.9.20\)](#)
- [Current FinPro Rules](#)
- [Proposed FinPro Rules \(to be adopted at AGM 30.12.21\)](#)

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:

November 2021

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

December 2021

- Workforce Reporting Template – 1 December
- [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

Local Government Inspectorate Newsletter – Spring 2021

Their Spring newsletter was distributed to councils earlier this week and covers several interesting topics such as:

- Better education and oversight needed to improve councillor compliance
- How we assess complaints, and
- New 'Peter for South Gippsland

A link to the full newsletter is [available here](#)

Reminder: Model Accounts and Model Budget Feedback Survey

The following information request was sent to councils on 18 November and is included here for member information.

2020-21 Model Accounts and 2021-22 Model Budget feedback survey

LGV and FinPro are seeking feedback on the 2020-21 Model Accounts and 2021-22 Model Budget.

The results from this short survey will be used in the development and update of the 2021-22 Model Accounts and 2022-23 Model Budget.

Please feel free to complete the survey [here](#)

Responses close at COB Tuesday the 7th of December.

Sadiq Hussaini

Program Officer – Finance and Analysis | Local Government Victoria | Local Government and Suburban Development, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Upcoming webinar - Essential Services Commission

The following email was sent to councils earlier this week and is shared for member information (and action as appropriate).

Dear Councils

Compliance report 2021-22

The commission has released its annual Council rate cap compliance report for 2021-22 on its [website](#).

Upcoming webinar with councils

We will be releasing our updated higher cap guidance for councils for 2022-23 early next week. Following the release of the guidance we will be holding a webinar on 3 December 2021 from 10:30am to midday. This webinar will provide us with an opportunity to engage with council staff.

The webinar will cover:

1. Complying with the rate capping framework
 - timelines and process for the 2022-23 rating year
 - how we assess compliance
2. Reporting on the outcomes of rate capping
 - a summary of our most recent outcomes reporting, released in May
3. Applying for a higher cap
 - timelines and process
 - application requirements

If you would like to attend this webinar, please click on the button below to register. This will also give you a chance to provide us with any questions regarding the topics listed above.

Webinar registration

Please share the link to the registration form with council colleagues who might also be interested in understanding more about the Fair Go Rates system and the commission's role in administering it.

Local Government Team

Price monitoring and regulation



'Speakers' Corner

We welcome you all to a new section we have titled 'Speakers Corner.' The purpose of this section is to provide an opportunity for members to contribute a story, thought piece or some learnings they have which they feel would be of value for our membership. Whilst the pieces included in this section may not necessarily be the opinion of the FinPro Executive, they are certainly worthwhile sharing and a great basis for discussion and, at times, debate.

Pricing and Costing of Council services – contributed by Malcolm Lewis, FinPro Member

One of the ongoing sector challenges is finding the time and resources to determine the full cost of each of our services and then being able to regularly update a full costing model so that it continues to remain accurate year on year.

While there is general consistency with the capture and allocation of direct service costs, particularly as we now have the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, there is an emerging need to develop a more consistent approach to the allocation of indirect costs, including how we apply corporate overheads.

The practice of allocating corporate overheads to service units has its challenges, given the need to identify and apply a series of cost drivers to replicate how resources are applied in supporting the activities of each service. Typically, this often results in the need to apply an 80/20 rule approach, where 20+ percent of the effort could produce up to 80 percent accuracy during the cost allocation process. The law of diminishing returns then often applies, where investing the remaining 80 percent of the effort may only result in a marginally more accurate level of cost allocation.

When producing pricing policies for setting annual fees and charges, reference is often made to the principle of full cost recovery to reduce the cost burden to ratepayers. However, a pricing policy that refers to the principle of full cost recovery is based on the presupposition that the full cost of that service is known or at least can be reliably measured.

The reality is that in many cases, individual departments and business units develop their own approaches to fee and price setting, which includes assumptions about full cost recovery, without knowledge of the true cost of a service and without the oversight of trained finance professionals.

It is important that as a sector we develop a consistent framework and guiding principles for full-service costing that will, not only support more robust pricing and fee setting, but also enable councils access to better financial information when assessing and reviewing where and how much is allocated to each service.

One emerging application of the full costing model can be seen in the federal government's response to the March 2021 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. In its response, the federal government have, among other things, referenced the need for more accurate approaches to unit costing including the possible introduction of an activity-based funding approach.

While the federal government's approach is still being developed, it is becoming clear there will be a need for greater emphasis on understating the real cost for each unit of service delivery including an understanding and a consistent approach to the principles of full-service costing.

External training opportunities and webinars

Hybrid Work Hacks I Inclusive Meetings 101

This free session is presented by Microsoft and may be of interest to members

Welcome to Hybrid Work Hacks — a new series giving you quick tips, demos and snackable hacks to help you overcome the challenges of hybrid work.

The first episode is all about inclusive meetings.

The way we work has changed forever... And so has the way we meet and connect. It is now crucial for everyone to run inclusive and engaging meetings to create the best experience for all - whether they are in the room or remote

In this 30-minute session, we will dive into:

How to bridge the gap between remote and on-site staff to ensure equal presence for all attendees

The role of tech in hybrid meetings

Best practices and actionable tips for using Microsoft Teams for your hybrid meetings

[Register your spot now](#)

Leadership development scholarships for women in Local Government

Women & Leadership Australia is currently offering professional development scholarships for women across all areas of the Local Government sector, and we encourage you to share this opportunity.

[Women & Leadership Australia \(WLA\)](#) supports emerging, middle, and senior women leaders across all sectors and industries. Their career-defining leadership programs bring together a focus on applied learning with the latest in leadership theory and practice. They believe that advancing gender equity, especially in leadership, is central to creating a more fair and inclusive society.

Partial scholarships of \$,1000-\$5,000 per person are available for women in Local Government Finance Professionals. To encourage more women to step into leadership roles across the FinPro sector, WLA is offering scholarships for three leadership development courses. **Apply by 30 November** or find out more by [clicking here](#).

FinPro – Adoption of New Rules (December 2021)

Background

Every incorporated association must have rules. FinPro has had its own rules in place since 2003 when the name of the organisation changed from Victorian Association of Municipal Accountants (VAMA) to Local Government Finance Professionals (FinPro).

Since November 2012 new legislation¹ has been in place for incorporated associations with a requirement to adopt new rules, or in our case, continue with the existing “own rules”.

The reasons for updating the FinPro Rules are to create a modern set of rules:

- *The addition of a statement of purposes (a requirement if changing the rules)*
- *Providing for electronic communication and virtual meetings*
- *The addition of including a minimum number of members (proposing 50)*
- *A new process of how we vote in the Committee at the AGM – Proposing to elect half the committee each year for two-yearly terms (the aim to provide a more orderly succession planning for the Executive Committee) and*
- *Introducing a formal process for the Election of official office bearers (by the Executive Committee after the AGM)*

Further details and an explanation of the details rule changes – [read more here](#)

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

Coordinator Financial Services

- Northern Grampians Shire
- [More information](#)
- Applications close Monday 13 December 2021 at 12.00pm

Finance and Improvement Officer

- Maroondah City Council
- [More information](#)
- Applications close Friday 10 December 2021

Senior Finance Officer (Limited tenure)

- East Gippsland Shire Council
- [More information](#)
- Applications close Monday 6 December 2021 at 11.59pm

Team Leader – Commercial Services

- Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
- [More Information](#)
- Applications close 10 December 2021 at 6pm

Financial Accountant

- Ballarat City Council
- [More information](#)
- Applications close Monday 29 November 2021 at 12 noon

Finance Officer

- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- [More Information](#)
- Applications close Monday 29 November 2021 at 12.00pm

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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