

FinPro Member Update December 2020 (Edition 1)

President's Message

Afternoon all,

Well we are into summer! Not that the forecast for this weekend and early next week is summer like.

Plenty happening in the rush to the end of the year! It's a time of year I find everyone has a little less patience and wants more things done quickly. Please remember to look after yourself, take a deep breath and help each other, and together we will all get through to the finishing line.

Usually we would be holding our AGM and Lunch today (a highlight of our calendar), with wonderful networking opportunities. However, given COVID and the associated restrictions imposed, we have decided that we will hold our AGM in February (allowed under our Association rules), so the current Executive will stay in place for a couple more months (thanks to all the Executive for your continued support). If being a member of the Executive, which is a great opportunity to support your sector, feel free to get in contact with myself or another of the current exec team.

We are aiming for our February event to be a hybrid event, potentially with smaller groups meeting at a regional level and live-streaming through sessions throughout the day. This event will combine our regular February PD with our AGM. As we develop the program, we will keep all members updated.

Have a great weekend everyone,

Bradley



Bradley Thomas - FinPro President
Director Community and Corporate Services – Hepburn Shire

Membership News

With Council's updating and renewing their membership for the coming year, we are very pleased and appreciative of the 72 Councils and 3 libraries that have renewed their membership for 2020/21.

We also welcome back the following members to FinPro:

- **Glenn Kallio** who has taken up the role as Acting Manager Finance at Moonee Valley City Council

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

Membership Renewal information [available here](#)

Corporate Partnership information [available here](#)

FinPro Technical Committee News / Updates

Local Government Act Implementation Working Groups

The FinPro Local Government Act 2020 Working Group is meeting for the third time today.

A reminder to go to <https://engage.vic.gov.au/local-government-act-2020> for all LG Act information.

FinPro have established 3 Subgroups who are working closely with LGV, to best establish how they can assist LGV in guidance. The Subgroups are:

- **Budget Document** – Hannah White from Hepburn is the project lead for this working group.
- **Long Term Financial Plan** – Malcolm Lewis is the project lead for this working group.
- **Rating and Revenue Plan** – John Brockway from Surf Coast Shire is the project lead for this working group.

Subgroup Leads and LGV met today, 4 December 2020 to provide an update in relation to how all the subgroups are travelling/progressing with each of the three priority areas.

The three groups are working well and closely together, to ensure alignment amongst the three key topics of Budget, Financial Plan and Revenue and Rating Strategy.

Subgroup Leads are meeting with LGV again next week, leading up to the fourth Working Group Meeting, where draft templates will be presented to the wider group.

They are aiming to have Draft Templates on the Engage Victoria website December/January for initial deliberation/consideration by the wider sector.

Ombudsman's Investigation – Council responses to ratepayers in financial hardship

The Victorian Ombudsman is currently undertaking an investigation into how councils in different parts of Victoria respond to ratepayers experiencing financial hardship. The aim is to identify good practice that can be shared across councils. This was announced some time ago, and is still being worked through. They are considering issues including:

- whether information about councils' financial hardship assistance is easily accessible for ratepayers
- whether councils' financial hardship assistance is fair and reasonable, and whether councils apply that assistance appropriately
- how councils' hardship assistance schemes compare with best practice, for example in utility hardship schemes
- what councils can learn from their current COVID-19 relief schemes to improve responses to financial hardship in future.

The investigation is focusing on assistance for residential ratepayers in relation to their primary residence, as well as farmers. It is considering payment plans and other measures to help ratepayers pay rates, as well as the financial hardship options set out in the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).

FinPro has been approached this week to take part in the consultation process and have accepted the opportunity to meet and discuss this with them. Members of the FinPro Executive will be meeting with the Ombudsman's Office on the 15th December.

Survey on the impact of 'exempting social housing' from rates

The following information was sent to each Council on Monday 30 Nov – to the most senior finance person at each council. 19 councils have responded so far. If you are able to respond by COB Monday 7 December that would be appreciated.

The State Government recently announced their 'Victoria's Big Housing Build' policy, which will result in Victoria's largest-ever investment and social affordable housing – this is a fantastic announcement with over \$5.3 billion being made available.

The policy notes a new partnership with local government, where Homes Victoria will work with local government to develop a 'social and affordable housing compact'. Our sector will play an important role in identifying priorities for social housing growth within our municipalities. Homes Victoria will consult with councils on mechanisms to bring social housing closer in proximity to other public value infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, which are exempt from council rates. This reflects the public benefit that access to safe, secure and affordable housing brings to local communities.

FinPro are working with the MAV to identify the financial impact on councils if Council Rates for 'social housing' were exempt (and therefore redistributed to other ratepayers). As a starting point could you please complete this very quick [survey](#) to assist with some robust evidence for possible advocacy.

FinPro Webinar: Preparing for the upcoming Budget Cycle 2021/22

[Register now](#)

Thursday 10 December 2020, 10.00 – 11.00am

Most Councils will now have turned their attention to the 2021/22 Planning and Budgeting processes. The frameworks under which plans and budgets are considered this year will be vitally important - possibly more than that for prior years. They will be heavily influenced by a range of factors including:

- Setting a new Council Plan covering the period 2021/22-2024/25 in a new term of Councillors
- Compliance with all the new requirements under the Local Government Act 2020
- Changing service requirements and expectations from our communities and other stakeholders

Critically, our planning will need to be in the context of ongoing uncertainties in a pandemic/post pandemic environment. The integration of our systems, processes and thinking will be critically important.

Join us for this one-hour session where we will hear from 4 council's about how they are approaching these challenges, both in terms of external community and stakeholder engagement and driving an integrated approach to align with their Council's strategic objectives.

Our presenters will be:

- Dennis O'Keeffe – CFO Port Phillip City Council
- Allan Williams – Manager Financial Strategy (Acting) South Gippsland Shire
- Charles Nganga – Deputy CFO Casey City Council
- Narelle Klein – Director Finance and Systems, City of Wodonga

Our facilitator for this webinar will be Danny Wain, CFO Monash City Council

There is no cost associated with attending this webinar for all FinPro members enrolled in the Online PD Program for 2020/21.

FinPro AGM and February PD – The FinPro Executive have decided to delay the AGM until February 2020 in the hope that we will be able to provide at least a hybrid ‘live’ and ‘virtual’ event at that time. This event may be held by Region, depending on the restrictions at the time and will combine both the AGM and the February PD.

FinPro Leadership Program 2021 – Our next Leadership Program will be held from **16 – 19 May 2021**. Proudly supported by Vision Super, this program will offer the opportunity for up to 12 Emerging Leaders from within the FinPro Membership to take part in a 3-day residential program, onsite at Country Place Kalorama. We encourage all our members to consider applying for this program, or encouraging someone within their Council who they believe would be suitable to apply. Applications will open in February 2021.

FinPro Conference 2021 – This event is booked in at RACV Cape Schanck for **Wednesday 20 – Friday 22 October 2021**.

Message from our Corporate Partner – MAGIQ



MAGIQ Software is pleased to invite you to attend our upcoming webinar on MAGIQ Software's Long Term Financial Planning solution.

When: Thursday 10th December AEST

Topic: Deep Dive into our Long-Term Financial Planning solution
 (also known as MAGIQ Financial Planning)

Local Government Acts across Australia now require 10+ year financial plans and budgets to be maintained.

This webinar will show you how to create your financial plans simply and help your organisation to:

- Reduce the risks involved in the preparation of multi-year financial plans
- Experience fast turnaround times in the creation of multi-year financial plans
- Spend less time on the process and more time on valuable decision making
- Deliver an organisation-wide efficient, secure, controlled and auditable financial planning process

We look forward to demonstrating how our Long Term Financial Planning solution can help you.

To register for this event, please click here:

https://magiqsoftware.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fyKuqaW_ScmrQ7pQ-0Az2A

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

If you have any questions, please contact your Account Manager.

We look forward to you joining us on Thursday 10th December at 11:00am.

Message from our Corporate Partner – CBA

Today (Friday 4 December 2020), the Commonwealth Bank Local Government Banking Group distributed their Local Government Newsletter for December 2020. This issue included information about the following:

- [get up to date on the economic performance of Australia's states and territories in the latest State of the States report;](#)
- access **Economic Update - 2020** and **Building Mental Wellbeing** and resilience webinars;
- access and share the recent **Financial Wellbeing for Women** webinar recording and resources on how to tackle cybercrime;
- read industry papers covering the future state of payments and merchant fraud, plus;
- explore the impacts of coronavirus and Australian medical practice responses in [CommBank's 2020 GP Insights Report.](#)

If you would like to access any of the information included above or look at the different webinars the CBA are offering please contact Gil Saad, Relationship Executive, Local Government Banking Group VIC at saadg@cba.com.au or 0434 413 703

Job Vacancies

FinPro is happy to place advertisements on our website for any finance related positions our members councils are advertising. Please send the details through to [Gab](#)

Current positions

- **Team Leader Financial Services**
- Warrnambool City Council
- <https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/careers/202012952114>
- For further information about the role please contact Wendy McGorm, Coordinator Financial Services on 5559 4861 or wmcgorm@warrnambool.vic.gov.au
- Closing Date – 18 December 2020

- **Financial Accountant**
- Moreland City Council
- <http://applynow.net.au/jobs/MOR50-financial-accountant>
- For further information about the role please contact Glenn Johnston on 9240 2482
- Closing Date – 5.00pm, Friday 4 December 2020

FinPro Executive Members

President – Bradley Thomas (Hepburn Shire Council)

Executive Officer – Gab Gordon

Vice-President: Chair Technical Committee – Tony Rocca (Maroondah City Council)

Technical Committee members:

- Danny Wain (Monash City Council)
- Kristy Stephens (Bass Coast Shire)
- Liz Rowland (Western Water)
- Mark Montague (Yarra City Council)
- Nathan Morsillo (Greater Bendigo City Council)
- Vishantri Perera (Yarra Ranges Shire Council)

Vice-President: Chair Professional Development committee – Binda Gokhale (Wyndham CC)

Professional Development Committee members:

- Belinda Johnson (Southern Grampians Shire)
- Charles Nganga (Casey City Council)
- John Brockway (Surf Coast Shire) – also leads the FinPro Mentoring Program
- Kim Jaensch (Frankston City Council) – leads the FinPro Leadership Program

We thank our 2020 Corporate Partners

- Commonwealth Bank
- CT Management
- MAGIQ Software
- LG Solutions
- VOTAR Partners
- Vision Super

[Corporate Partnership](#) is available to all businesses and is an opportunity to support FinPro, our members and the sector as we journey through COVID and are unable to provide face-to-face Professional Development and live sponsorship opportunities.

For further information please contact Gabrielle Gordon on 0400 114 015 or at gabrielle@finpro.org.au