

FinPro Member Update July 2020

President's Message

Well isn't a week a long time in a Pandemic!

I feel really sorry for you all in Melbourne Metro and Mitchell Shire – I know this will be a difficult time for many and in some regards harder than the first time. Please continue to look after yourselves, family and work colleagues, it's important that we stick together to get through this. Please make sure you take some time to do something other than work, whether it be by listening to a podcast, doing a bit of exercise or watching one of the many available and free health and wellbeing webinars.

We understand there is a bit of uncertainty about the year-end processes, timing, and requirements. Tony Rocca (VP Technical) is meeting with VAGO next week to discuss these issues and it would be great over the next day or so if you do have some feedback on any concerns, if you could please e-mail Gab who will be able to summarise and provide to Tony.

With the impending changes to the accounting standards, we know that people are looking for more information. Early next week we will publish a list of helpful resources including a memo for your audit committee/auditors on the methodology for compliance with the updated accounting standards *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*, *AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* and *AASB 16 Leases*. We hope that it will be of benefit.

Finally, today our Executive met and discussed the results from the survey of how we can help you! Thank you to everyone that participated, it resulted in some very handy information for the Executive. We have decided to launch a monthly online PD Program, run on the last Friday of each month for the next four months. Topics and speakers will be different and cover both technical and professional development. These webinars will be free!! More information for these will be issued over the coming weeks.

As always please feel free to chat to Gab or myself if there is anything we can assist with.

Have a great weekend,



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

Membership News

We farewell **Glenn Kallio**, Director Corporate Services at Ballarat City Council who has now left that organisation.

We farewell **Leon den Dyver**, Manager Financial Services, who has left Macedon Ranges Shire to join the Education sector.

If you have any news to share with the FinPro membership please forward this to **Gab**.

FinPro Technical Committee News / Updates

General Information

The LGV website provides a host of information: [LGV - COVID19 Information](#)

The FinPro Website provides a host of information: [FinPro Resource Library](#)

Information available here includes:

- Previous copies of the FinPro Member Updates
- Implementation of the Local Government Act
- Accounting Standards Guidance
- Model Budget 2020/2021 and Model Financial Statements 2019/20
- Samples of council policies

Local Government Act 2020 Implementation – Update

Some of our members have asked for assistance in locating information about the timing of Royal Assent and operating across the two acts:

[This link](#) has the transitional arrangements which includes the dates of when each stage receives proclamation. The 1989 Act remains in place until the relevant section is proclaimed. It's important to also know that Section 163 which is about Rates, is not repealed and remains in force.

Questions have also been asked about locating a 'Phasing 'checklist' and the implementation of the relevant sections would be great.

This timeline is clearly outlined on the [above link](#) and LGV have also listed the dates of when each item is required.

For reference – this link is: <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs/local-government-act-2020/council-implementation-timeline>

Implementation Update – LGA 2020

The following information was distributed by LGV last Friday 3 July 2020 and is repeated here for those who missed the information:

Last week we introduced the first of a series of webinars called LGV Connects. This online session focussed on Governance Rules with over 250 registrants and a panel of Local Government sector experts. Thank you to our panel; Sally Curran from Moreland City Council, Tara Carter from Murrindindi Shire Council and Cameron Montgomery from the City of Ballarat. We have received some great feedback from the attendees who said that they found the session interesting and useful in terms of what other councils are doing and how they are approaching the implementation. This session was recorded and can be viewed [here](#).

*The aim is to provide the local government sector the opportunity to connect with LGV every six weeks. The next of these sessions is scheduled for is **Friday, 7 August 2020 between 1.00pm – 2.00pm**. Make sure you hold the time in your diary and register for this session [here](#).*

Audit & Risk Committees

After much feedback on the Audit & Risk Charter that was made available on EngageVic, the working group has revised the draft. The Good Practice Guide for Audit & Risk Committee Charters developed in 2011 has been updated to take into account the requirements of the new Act. A new model Audit & Risk Committee Charter has therefore been developed to provide guidance to Councils and their Audit & Risk Committees. In addition, an Annual Work Plan for Committees based on the Charter has also been developed and is now made available. You will find these here [Audit and Risk requirements](#).

Community Engagement

To continue the co-design process for Community Engagement Policy we will be hosting a discussion on **Thursday 16 July at 11am**. We will hear from sector Community Engagement experts in relation to their approach to developing a community engagement policy, the tools and templates being used and responses to frequently asked questions. We will also hear from one of our Chief Executive Officer's as they share a recent community engagement experience. This session will also help direct what's next in this process. The panel will include:

- Michael Tudball, CEO Southern Grampians Shire Council
- Georgie Meyer – City of Melbourne
- Natalie Thomas – Yarra City Council
- Sharon Prince – City of Port Phillip
- Carol Tu – City of Port Phillip
- Naomi McNamara – Murrindindi Shire Council
- Sarah Neville – City of Casey
- Sarah-Jade Chung – Darebin City Council

You can register for this session [here](#).

Think Tanks

There are two topics that we would like to progress through 'Think Tanks'; Councillor Induction Training and Delegated Committees and Asset Committees

Councillor Induction training

- We are looking for a working group made up of:
 - a) Councillors who have been recipients of the training,
 - b) Senior staff in Council that have experience in the delivery of this training and
 - c) Support staff that have been involved in the development of material and support in the transitioning process of Councillors.
- The co-design process that commenced for Councillor Induction training in June 2020 has provided us a good insight into what support the sector requires.

Delegated Committees and Community Asset Committees;

- We would like to form a working group made up of staff that have experience and expertise in the coordination and delivery of new requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 for Delegated Committees and Asset Committees.
 - The co-design process that commenced for these Committees has shown that the level of support required by the sector is at a more detailed level.

If you are interested in either of the two Think Tanks and meet the above criteria, we ask you to email us at LGAct@delwp.vic.gov.au and inform us of:

- Which Think Tank you are interested in
- Your level of experience
- Your Council position, and

- Why you want to be involved

We will require a time commitment of potentially 4 – 6 workshops of one hour each during July/August 2020. The expression of interest will close Friday 10 July. We will then set up session times with you.

Still to come

Victorian Government's Candidate Training course material is in the final stages of preparation and will be sent out to councils during the week of 13 July 2020.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our data collection for integrated strategic planning and reporting framework on EngageVic, the approach to the co-design activities is almost complete. The process and timelines will be available shortly and we will be looking for sector involvement in a series of workshops. This will include:

- Community Vision
- Council Plan
- Financial Plan
- Budget
- Revenue and Rating Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Annual Report
- Workforce Plan

We continue to appreciate the amazing people that make up the local government sector and their willingness to collaborate and share.

Performance statements – LGPRF SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDE FOR IMPACTS OF COVID-19

LGV has issued guidance on what Councils need to do to reflect the impact that Covid-19 may have on performance indicators.

The guide has been developed with a focus on:

- Transparent reporting – acknowledging the impact on council services and financial performance.
- Encouraging commentary – Council using commentary to disclose to the public the effect of social distancing and COVID-19 on their performance.

In the guidance paper, LGV have detailed the potential impact that Covid-19 may have on each measure and the possible treatment. However, this is not an exhaustive list and may or may not be applicable to all councils and other factors that have not been detailed may impact the measures, and will be up to each Council to make an assessment on what needs to be included.

LGV has also cautioned Councils to ensure that in the event a service has temporarily ceased or reduced and staff have been re-assigned and redeployed to other roles in the organisation not related to the service, to exclude those costs from the measure where practical to do so.

Survey of VIC Council 2020/21 Budget parameters and adoption timelines

FinPro recently conducted a survey of all Victorian Councils to help get an understanding of some of the budget parameters and budget adoption timelines for the coming year.

We conducted this survey in response to a number of queries received from our members, and hope the finalised document provides a useful point of reference.

The [survey results document](#) is current as at 9 July 2020, noting that a number of Councils are yet to adopt their final budgets. The information therefore is subject to change.

We will continue to update this document and request those councils yet to adopt their budgets confirm their final position once endorsed by emailing Gab.

This will lead to a final consolidated picture post 31 August 2020.

Thank you to all members for your input to date. If you wish to make any changes specific to your council, please do not hesitate to send that information through. Updates will be made as they come through and be available on the FinPro Website.

Website Link: <https://www.finpro.org.au/2020/07/2020-21-council-budget-parameters-and-budget-adoption-timelines/>

FinPro Professional Development

Cancellation of both our Leadership Program for 2020 and our Annual Conference has now provided us with an opportunity to reimagine our Professional Development offerings. We recently surveyed members about their Professional development needs over the coming months. Thank-you to the many members who took the time to provide quite detailed responses to us. This will really allow us to make some informed decisions regarding a new PD program for the remainder of 2020 which we will roll out in the new few weeks. The program will provide a 1 – 1 ½ hr. LUNCH AND LEARN session on the last Friday of each month. It will cover a range of topics and speakers and include Q&A and panel sessions. The program will be FREE to all members. Proposed dates are:

- Friday 31 July 2020
- Friday 28 August 2020
- September date TBA (pending AFL final series announcements), and
- Friday 30 October 2020.

Some of the key points conveyed to us via the survey that we will use to build our program for the remainder of the year were:

- The greatest challenges our members are currently facing at work are:
 - Managing stress and anxiety levels,
 - Communicating / connecting virtually,
 - Managing the workload, particularly for those who are managing home schooling with work, and
 - Managing teams and their health and wellbeing

- Members prefer a variety of training methods and the option to either 'watch' live or view as a recorded session at a time that suits them.
- Elements of live Q&A and interactive polls throughout online sessions are useful.
- Many members valued the Wayne Schwass sessions we ran earlier in the year.
- Sessions that allow for 'breakout' rooms for small group discussion would be appreciated.
- Regional group meetings are really positive and valuable and assist in keeping members connected.
- A number of suggestions were made in relation to how FinPro can assist in the implementation of the LGA 2020 and the FinPro Executive are in discussions with LGV to assist members.
- 41 members indicated that they would be possibly interested in being part of a 'virtual roundtable' to discuss ongoing assistance FinPro can offer members – Gab will be in contact with these members next week to discuss how this could work.
- The New Accounting Standards and Year End Accounts / Audit Processes are the current technical issues causing concern for members (along with implementing the LGA).
- Expert training on the following would be valued by members:
 - Leading teams virtually
 - Planning beyond COVID-19
 - Motivation/Mindset
 - Productivity tips
 - Fraud risks in a COVID- 19 environment
- Group chats would be really valuable.

Thank-you to everyone who responded to the survey.

As promised, two randomly drawn responders will receive a \$100 gift voucher each – the lucky winners are:

- Anita Bourke – Greater Shepparton Council, and
- Rebecca Campbell – Glenelg Shire

Gab will be in contact to get your details and send you your prize – Congratulations.

Job Vacancies

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

The following position is currently being advertised:

- Coordinator Procurement (Full-time)
- Hume City Council
- Applications close 20 July 2020
- For further information please view Position Description or contact Fadi Srour on 9205 2600

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 (Moreland City Council)
- 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) – also leads the FinPro Leadership Program

Thank-you to our 2019 Conference sponsors

To Contact FinPro:

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