

Membership News

Congratulations to the following member on their new role:

- **Mark Ma** – newly appointed to the role of Coordinator Financial Services at Moorabool Shire

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

LGV Council Finances Workshops 2020

For the past five years, Local Government Victoria has run an annual series of regional workshops to assist council finance staff in applying the Model Budget and Model Accounts, and communicate key changes. These sessions have also provided a forum for discussion of topical issues relating to council finances.

This year LGV have scheduled a series of six virtual workshops (one per Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning region) to be conducted on 11 and 12 June. Each workshop will cover key changes to the Model Budget and Model Accounts along with other aspects to consider in the current council planning and reporting cycles.

Registrations are now open and council finance staff with responsibility for preparing the financial statements in the Annual Budget or Annual Report are encouraged to register one of the following sessions:

- Barwon South West, Thursday 11 June, 1 pm to 2:30 pm
- Grampians, Thursday 11 June, 3 pm to 4:30 pm
- Port Phillip, Friday 12 June, 9 am to 10:30 am
- Hume, Friday 12 June, 11 am to 12:30 pm
- Gippsland, Friday 12 June, 1 pm to 2:30 pm
- Loddon Mallee, Friday 12 June, 3 pm to 4:30 pm

[**REGISTER HERE**](#)

Local Government Act 2020 – Update

The Local Government Act 2020 has now received Royal Assent and information is available at www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au. This website is the centralised point of information. The website will have links to:

- Important dates;
- Guidance material; and
- Engagement opportunities.

Remember to visit <https://engage.vic.gov.au/local-government-act-2020> to view information as well.

FinPro's advocacy in relation to the LGA Implementation

FinPro has distributed a range of information relating to the implementation of the Local Government Act 2020 – all this information is available on the FinPro Website [Resource Library](#).

To assist your understanding and ensure compliance for Councils, it is really important that you review the information provided. There are a number of requirements that need to be in place prior to 1 September 2020.

Once you have reviewed the information, we are really keen to hear from members who are willing to assist us with our feedback to LGV and the Project Control Board.

If you have a question or comment about any of the sections we have listed below, can you please complete the applicable form via these links. Feedback is required by COB Tuesday 9 June 2020 to allow us to get the feedback to LGV so it can be considered. It will also allow us review your feedback and see how FinPro will be able to assist you, our members.

[FinPro Survey](#) – do you have questions or comments on any of the following? If so, click the relevant topic and provide us with more information.

- [Public Transparency Policy](#)
- [Councillor Expense Policy](#)
- [Governance Rules](#)
- [Audit and Risk Committee and Charter](#)
- [Delegated Committees and Community Asset Committees](#)
- [Integrated Strategic Planning Framework](#)

Cash flow boost for councils with turnover of <\$50M

Councils with an aggregated turnover of <\$50m may be eligible for the cash flow boost which is being administered through the ATO. The cash flow boost should automatically be credited to your ATO account when you lodge your activity statement however it seems Councils may need to phone the ATO to confirm their eligibility. Please follow the [link](#) for full details and contact details.

Victoria Electoral Commission

A feedback item raised some time ago by members were costs passed on from the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) for the upcoming elections. Thank you to those who completed FinPro's survey on this point earlier this year. There has also been more recent communication from the VEC to Councils that they are again reviewing their processes, structures and costs to comply with COVID (whatever that may look like) – including updates for postal arrangements. On that basis, FinPro has collated some of the previous data and have now written to the VEC, seeking continued engagement with the sector about where costs can be reduced and/or efficiencies made.

A copy of that letter follows:

Mr Warwick Gately AM
 Electoral Commissioner

Dear Mr Gately,

We are writing on behalf of the members of Local Government Finance Professionals Inc (FinPro), the peak body representing Finance Professionals in Victorian Local Government.

Thank you for the work the VEC does for the sector to deliver elections of representatives for Local Government. We understand the principle of on-charging reasonable costs for elections, and support that. We also understand that operating frameworks may need to change due to COVID.

I note the recent communication to Councils, which flagged further VEC planning to progress elections in 2020. The letter includes details about likely changes to the operating model for the elections, including a move to postal voting for all Councils.

Local Government financial professionals had some significant concerns originally about the increase in costs (pre-COVID) flagged for the upcoming elections. As you will be aware, Local Government revenues are restricted to a cap linked to CPI. As an example, this was 2.5% per annum in 2019/2020 and will be 2% in 2020/2021.

The increases between 2016 and 2020 election costs are significantly higher than CPI – and place pressure on the sector's ability to provide other services.

FinPro undertook a brief survey of members, and some summary results are included below. Of concern more broadly is that the highest increases in costs appeared to be for small shires – usually those with the least capacity to pay.

| | TOTAL | Small Shire | Large Shire | Regional City | Interface | Metropolitan |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| Number of Respondents | 48 | 13 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 16 |
| 2016 Actual | \$14,843,265 | \$1,235,409 | \$1,841,632 | \$ 1,941,915 | \$629,532 | \$ 9,194,777 |
| 2020 Proposed | \$18,685,485 | \$1,606,765 | \$2,226,503 | \$ 2,350,302 | \$692,680 | \$11,809,235 |
| \$ Increase | \$ 3,842,220 | \$ 371,356 | \$ 384,871 | \$ 408,387 | \$ 63,148 | \$ 2,614,458 |
| % Increase - Average | 25.9% | 30.1% | 20.9% | 21.0% | 10.0% | 28.4% |
| \$ Increase - Average | \$ 80,046 | \$ 28,566 | \$ 34,988 | \$ 58,341 | \$ 63,148 | \$ 163,404 |

Overall costs rose by more than 25% - significantly higher than CPI over the same period. Obviously, all additional costs above CPI for the sector reduce the ability of the sector to provide services in respective local government areas.

Further, some member Councils have expressed concern that fines related to compulsory voting may be administered differently due to the changes to processes. Revenue from fines has in the past softened the impact of election costs for Councils.

We encourage continued engagement with the sector on opportunities – and hope that where possible efficiencies can be identified.

We would be willing to discuss our concerns with yourself or a representative.

The above letter was sent to the VEC on Thursday 4 June 2020.

Media Update Thursday 4 June from the Minister for Local Government

The following media release was distributed on Thursday 4 June 2020.

Local Projects for our fastest growing Communities

The Victorian Government is boosting funding for new and improved community facilities across Victoria's fastest growing suburbs – creating jobs and supporting local businesses as we rebuild from the coronavirus crisis.

Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek today announced a major expansion of the *Growing Suburbs Fund*, with an extra \$25 million to bring forward delivery of new facilities and upgrades that improve communities and their access to vital services.

The Fund will also be extended for the first time, to include six peri-urban councils experiencing strong population growth, ensuring projects are being delivered where they are needed most.

The councils that will now have access to the Fund are Baw Baw, Golden Plains, Macedon Ranges, Moorabool, Bass Coast and Surf Coast. Previously the Fund was only available to Melbourne's 10 interface councils.

The expansion of the Fund will drive jobs and investment in more communities across outer Melbourne and inner regional areas hit hard by restrictions put in place to slow the spread of coronavirus and save lives.

It complements the Victorian \$2.7 billion *Building Works Package*, which includes over \$278 million in shovel-ready infrastructure projects across the state to be delivered through councils.

Since its establishment in 2015, the Growing Suburbs Fund has facilitated \$665.7 million in local facilities, created more than 6,750 jobs created and supported 193 projects.

The Minister also announced \$3.8 million to improve the quality of their Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure for Victoria's 38 rural councils many of which have limited resources for remote working.

Each rural council will receive \$100,000 to enhance and improve ICT facilities to engage, consult and support their local communities.

Councils are encouraged to apply for the Growing Suburbs Fund at: <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au>

FinPro Professional Development Committee Update

Professional Development (CPD Hrs) Update

During the COVID-19 period we have managed to deliver a number of hours of free Professional Development to our members. For those keeping record of their CPD hours, please note the following allocations:

- Mental Health Session with Wayne Schwass – ½ hr CPD
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- LGV Update – 27 May 2020 – ½ hr CPD
- VAGO Update – 27 May 2020 – ½ hr CPD
- FinPro Q&A Session – 29 May 2020 – 1hr CPD

Some free online PD sessions that might be of interest:

CPA Australia has a host of Complimentary PD available via their [website](#):

Some items of interest for members include:

- [Bernard Salt predicts staircase recovery for Australia post-pandemic](#) | 15th May 2020
- [Data security in the age of working from home](#) | 3rd April 2020

If you have listened or watched any relevant podcasts / webinars that you think would be beneficial for other FinPro members please email the links through to [gab](#) and we will include in future Member Updates.

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 positions are currently advertised on our website:

- **Management Accountant**
- Mitchell Shire Council
<https://careers.mitchellshire.vic.gov.au/cw/en/job/492624/management-accountant>
- Contact Person: Hannah White – Management Accounting Coordinator (hannah.white@mitchellshire.vic.gov.au)
- Closes 9 June 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 (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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