

## FinPro Member Update June 2020 (Edition 2) Professional Development Update

Hear from our President, Bradley Thomas, as he updates members on our latest PD News:

[WATCH NOW](#)

### Membership News

Welcome to our new member:

- **Lina Scalzo** – newly appointed to the role of Financial Coordinator at the Rural City of Wangaratta

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

##### Co-Design for Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework

LGV are planning the approach for the co-design activities for the Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework and as mentioned in their last update, released a survey. To help target these workshops to best support the sector, please help by completing this [Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework Survey](#) for LGV by **5pm Monday 15 June 2020** (was previously Friday 12 June 2020).

A number of councils have provided LGV with a graphic of their planning framework where they could not replicate it in the survey tool. Sharon Redman (Project Manager, LGV) would be really happy to receive this information via a separate email.

[sharon.redmond@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:sharon.redmond@delwp.vic.gov.au)

The Integrated Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework will be of a lot of interest to FinPro members as it will include the:

- Community Vision
- Council Plan
- Financial Plan
- Revenue and Rating
- Asset Plan
- Workforce Planning

## Victoria Electoral Commission

We advised last week of our letter to the VEC, seeking continued engagement with the sector about where costs can be reduced and/or efficiencies made.

This week we received a response from the VEC on June 10 as follows:

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Dear Mr Thomas

Thank you for your letter dated 4 June 2020.

*I note your acknowledgement and support of the Victorian Electoral Commission's (VEC's) principle of charging councils' reasonable costs for the conduct of their elections and the necessary changes to the VEC's operating model as a result of the COVID-19 environment. As I examine the full implications of adjusting the VEC's operating model, any cost increases will be evident. When known, and as I indicated to councils in May, I will work with Government to identify an appropriate solution to manage these additional COVID-19 related costs.*

*I also note your concerns about the increase in election costs between 2016 and 2020, and that smaller councils are being impacted more than larger councils in terms of cost increases.*

*The VEC has always been and continues to be very mindful of the cost impact on councils for election services and looks for efficiencies and methods to keep election costs to a minimum. The VEC applies a marginal cost recovery model where direct costs are recovered but does not pass on core staff salaries and other overheads. This costing regime for the 2020 elections has again been externally audited and deemed appropriate.*

*Election service costs have specific components that do not align with CPI increases that relate to household consumer goods and services. For example: postage costs alone have increased by 20.8% since 2016 and salary costs for election staff have increased by 10.2%. The cost of paper for ballot material has also increased significantly. The number of eligible voters estimated to vote in the 2020 elections has also increased by 10% since 2016.*

*Overall, the quotes provided to councils for the conduct of their 2020 elections has increased by 34% compared to quotes for 2016. A comparison of amounts quoted to councils in 2020 with the actual charges in 2016 (as listed in the table in your letter) needs to factor in variations applied to 2016 final invoices arising from changes in voter and candidate numbers and reductions for uncontested elections.*

*I also note your observation that percentage cost increases tend to be greater for smaller councils compared to the larger ones. The largest election cost components are election office costs (including salaries), ballot material production and postage. It follows then that smaller councils will be impacted more significantly by increases in these costs than larger councils. The model applied by the VEC does not provide for larger councils to subsidise smaller councils where cost increases appear to be disproportionate to council size. Any change to this approach would need sector wide agreement.*

*You also note that some of your member Councils have expressed concern that fines related to compulsory voting may be administered differently due to changes in processes. The VEC is not aware of any changes that would impact the arrangement where Councils receive the revenue received as a result of non-voting penalties, and this is still set out in the Local Government Act 2020. I note that in 2016, \$18.8m was returned to councils in non-voting penalties. This was 72% of the total program cost charged to Councils of \$26.1m. Taking into account this "return", this translates to a cost of \$1.65 per enrolled voter for an election every four years.*

*While I am very understanding of the cost pressures faced by councils more generally, I consider that the election costs remain very reasonable in the face of increasing unit costs, in particular, postage, paper and salaries.*

*Yours sincerely*

**Warwick Gately AM**  
**Electoral Commissioner**

## FinPro Professional Development Committee Update

As you will have heard just now from Bradley Thomas, we have made the difficult decision to cancel our Annual Conference for 2020 and postpone our Leadership Program until March 2021.

This decision was a very difficult one to make as we know that so many of our members really enjoy these events and find them beneficial both from a professional but also from a personal level – and right about now, most could think of nothing better than getting away for a few days!

This does give us an opportunity though to re-think how we deliver professional development to our members, and next week we will be distributing a survey that we hope ALL our members will respond to, giving us a way forward that meets our member's needs.

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:Gab)

## 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

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## Thank-you to our 2019 Conference sponsors:

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### To Contact FinPro:

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