

FinPro Member Update June 2020 (Edition 3)

President's Message

Well this week started for many I'm sure by being shocked by 60 Minutes. This meant that local government experienced another unwelcome development with the sacking of the Local Government Minister. Unfortunately, these events overshadow the fantastic sector that is Local Government, and the role we play for our communities.

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. I hope the implementation of the new Act will lead to increased levels of integrity and accountability – particularly from our elected officials.

We must not let the negative events of this week impact on our desire to, and our ability to deliver great service to our communities.

FinPro looks forward to working with the new Local Government Minister and continuing to work with our members and partners.



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

Membership News

We farewell **Joan Lewis**, Director Corporate Services at Glenelg Shire who will be retiring on 3 July. Good luck and thanks for being part of FinPro Joan.

We farewell **Liz Rowland**, CFO at Moreland City Council and FinPro Executive Member – Liz will be leaving the sector on 10 July to join the team at Western Water as their CFO. Liz will stay on the FinPro Executive until the end of the FinPro Year. Congratulations Liz.

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

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Professional Development Update

FinPro Conference 2020

Unfortunately, we have had to make the difficult decision to cancel this year's Annual Conference. It had been scheduled for October at RACV Cape Schanck, however due to the uncertainty surrounding the rules of running such an event, combined with the potential risk we would take in exposing our members, speakers and sponsors to COVID-19, we have been able to successfully negotiate with the venue to cancel this year's event and run our next conference at that venue from 20–22 October 2021.

We are sad that we won't be running our conference this year, but trust we will be able to work with all our members to revisit our Professional Development Offerings this year to meet your needs.

FinPro Leadership Program 2020

Whilst we have made the decision to cancel this year's conference, we have also made plans to reschedule our Annual Leadership Program – it will now be held from 14 – 17 March 2021 – 6 months later than originally planned, but running nonetheless.

During these difficult times we have seen a number of our members take on leadership roles in their own organisations. Many had not previously considered themselves as leaders, but during challenging experiences, they have risen to the occasion. We encourage our members to start thinking about their team-mates – who would benefit from attending this Leadership Program in 2021. Details of the program will be distributed towards the end of the year.

This does give us an opportunity 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.

In the meantime, if you have any ideas please email them 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>

Follow up from questions asked at our recent Q&A and survey:

Q: Some members had concerns over the valuations as per the VGV as at 1 Jan without any consideration of movements in the market, commenting that this will generate queries and complaints from the community when the rate notices are issues.

A: FinPro agrees that these may be significant and will forward these concerns to the Valuer General Victoria.

Q: Will there be guidance and resources to assist with the new Local Government Act 2020 Implementation?

A: FinPro, together with LGV and other lead agencies, continue to provide guidance and information resources as and when available. Make sure you continually check in to <https://engage.vic.gov.au/local-government-act-2020> to review all the templates and be part of the engagement process.

Q: Will there be guidance or advice on COVID19 reporting requirements through the annual report.

A: VAGO and your auditors will assist with ensuring wording and disclosures throughout the financial & performance statements. VAGO will also include some information about this in an update they are distributing to the sector on Friday 19 June 2020.

Q: Rate increases – Our council needs to get the message out to the community on the financial impact of a 0% rate increase on future financial sustainability. Is there any assistance available here?

A: [Here is a simple tool](#) to demonstrate the impact of a 0% rate increase and the cumulative effect on the LTFP. It is also suggested that tools like this be used to brief senior managers and Councillors of these impacts.

Q: Can FinPro seek clarification from LGV regarding their position on the Annual Report being adopted by Council during the caretaker period?

A: FinPro has sought a response from LGV and is awaiting that response.

Comment: We have provided a number of other grants to our community related to financial hardship such as arts grant, rent relief and foreign student food vouchers.

Response: Councils that have mapped out assistance packages for residents and ratepayers are encouraged to provide this information to FinPro to share on the website for others to use.

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:

- Manager Financial and Corporate Planning
- Frankston City Council
- More Details: <https://www.seek.com.au/job/50095754>
- Closes: Wednesday 1 July 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](#)