

FinPro Member Update May 2020 (Edition 2)

Presidents Message

We hope that you have had a reasonable week!

There have been fewer announcements around COVID-19 this week and I am sure you are all waiting with interest for the National Cabinet announcement today as well as updates from the Premier over the next few days. Some of you will be looking for when you can get a haircut, go to the pub, watch AFL, see your family, or even get back to the office. We are expecting wind-backs to happen slowly, and remember, adjusting to the 'new' normal will take some patience as well.

We are seeing more and more Councils budgets being put on display for community consultation. Congratulations to Finance Teams working through the development of these budgets in trying times.

We were extremely disappointed about comments made by the Victorian Treasurer early this week; they were unhelpful and do not support the great work that we know is happening right across the sector. Councils across Victoria are facing unprecedented demand for extra services to deal with COVID-19, and many have had considerable decreases to revenue sources. We will continue to feed our concerns about the cost of recovery that Councils will feel, and the impact this will have on our financial sustainability, to Government.

Be nice to your Mums (or someone special in your life) this weekend.

Bradley



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

Upcoming FinPro Events - Dates for your diary

[FinPro Seminar](#) – An online update from LGV and VAGO will be provided on the week ended 29 May 2020 – further details in this issue.

[FinPro Conference](#) - Wednesday 21 – Friday 23 October 2020
RACV Cape Schanck

Membership News

We congratulate the following members on their new roles and welcome new members:

- **Syeda Fatima** has been appointed to the role of Financial Accountant at Mitchell Shire Council.
- **Jay Panchal** has become a member of FinPro. Jay is self employed with an interest in LG.

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

FinPro Technical Committee News / Updates

Technical updates from the sector

General Information

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

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.

FinPro recently distributed an [Update of the Implementation of the Local Government Act 2020](#) – a copy is available on the FinPro Website.

LGV advised this week that they have created a 'pathway of documentation' which will be of great assistance to everyone. The following information was distributed to councils on [Tuesday 5 May 2020](#):

Subject: Enabling Councils to meet the 1 September requirements

Today I am writing to all Victorian council CEOs to provide an update on LGV's approach to implementing the Local Government Act 2020.

As you have all experienced first-hand, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has created an environment where the entire local government sector has to innovate, test, review and redesign the way you work and deliver services. And all this has happened in an incredibly short period of time and the sector, the people, have been incredibly responsive and agile.

LGV's Local Government Act Implementation Team has also been working to adjust their approach by adapting implementation plans and engaging in an online environment. Many of you will have participated in the early stages of this. We

recognise that an important aspect of this work is to be responsive to feedback and agile in adapting our approach.

Our key motivation is to support the sector with the opportunity to lead the implementation and determine - through co-design processes – the products and materials that best meet your needs. Our intention is to enable capacity building and transformation across the sector. However, within this dynamic time of Coronavirus (COVID-19) we understand that providing support to councils to achieve the requirements due for implementation by 1 September 2020 is important, and we will be running a parallel process to support this.

The items due for implementation by 1 September 2020 include:

- governance rules
- expense policy
- delegated committee and asset committees
- audit and risk committee and charter
- public transparency policy.

LGV, with the support of the Project Control Board, is working with two goals in mind:

- transformation through challenging the sector to work with LVG to co-design support for councils that builds capacity, encourages innovation and that is best practice; and
- fast-tracking the development of a “pathway” of documentation that will support councils to meet these requirements on time.

We will contact you with further opportunities for involvement in the next few days via our mailing lists.

Hannah Duncan-Jones | Director Policy and Strategy – Director responsible for Local Government Act 2020 Implementation | Local Government Victoria

Fire Services Property Levy

In the Victorian State Government's [media release on Tuesday 5 May](#) it was stated that the Fire Services Property Levy paid by all Victorian households will be frozen at this year's collection level – this was stated as part of a statement that the Government would freeze all fees and fines that were due to be increased in July at current levels.

1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021

- value of a fee unit is \$14.81; and
- value of a penalty unit is \$165.22

These rates are specified in [Gazette Number G16 dated 23 April 2020](#)

1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020

- value of a fee unit is \$14.81; and
- value of a penalty unit is \$165.22

These rates are specified in [Gazette Number G14 dated 4 April 2019](#)

BULLETIN: 35/2020

Landfill Levy Rate Rises Deferred

The Victorian Government will defer the planned adjustments to landfill levy rates for six months while local government, households and businesses are dealing with the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The first adjustment will be delayed until 1 January 2021.

The six-month deferral will save taxpayers an estimated \$33 million.

The levy changes are part of the State Government's Recycling Victoria package, a 10-year action plan to transition our waste and recycling sectors, which will reduce cross-border dumping from states with higher levies. They will also encourage more recycling and reduce waste to landfill.

Landfill levy changes 2020-2023

Levy	2019-20 (current)	1 July 20 - 31 Dec 20 (2020-21) ¹	1 Jan 21 - 30 Jun 21 (2020-21)	1 Jul 21 - 30 Jun 22 (2021- 22)	1 Jul 22 - 30 Jun 23 (2022-23)
Metropolitan Municipal and Industrial Landfill Levy	\$65.90	\$65.90	\$85.90	\$105.90	\$125.90
Rural Municipal Landfill Levy	\$33.03	\$33.03	\$42.95	\$52.95	\$62.95
Rural Industrial Landfill Levy	\$57.76	\$57.76	\$75.59	\$93.19	\$110.79
PIW - Category C Landfill Levy	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$85.90	\$105.90	\$125.90
PIW - Category D Landfill Levy ²	New category from 1 July 2021	New category from 1 July 2021	New category from 1 July 2021	\$105.90	\$125.90

1. The introduction of changes to landfill levy rates has been deferred for six months. The proposed adjustments for 2020-21 are now due to begin from 1 January 2021. Landfill levy rates have been frozen for the first half of 2020-21 (1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020) and will remain as current 2019-20 rates and will not be indexed.

2. The Victorian Government also announced a deferral to the commencement date of the Environment Protection Act 2017 from 1 July 2020 to 1 July 2021. Category D will be introduced when the amendments to the Environment Protection Act 2017 take effect at this time. The term Prescribed Industrial Waste (PIW) will also change to Priority Wastes at this time.

Colin Morrison

Acting Executive Director, Local Government Victoria

Update from VAGO – Audit Fees

VAGO are pleased to be able to confirm that VAGO will be freezing the audit fees for 2019-20 (0% increase for 2019/20) in response to the COVID-19 event impact. This was approved late last month and formal fee letters will be sent out early next week.

FinPro Resource Library

FinPro would like to share information and resources that make life 'easier' for Finance Staff. As such, information such as the following is provided as a resource to FinPro members.

- [COVID-19 Financial Hardship Policy – Example from Moreland CC March 2020](#)
- [Flexible Work Arrangement Guidelines – updated March 2020 \(Maribyrnong CC\)](#)
- [Procedure – Office Ergonomics – 2018 – \(Maribyrnong City Council\)](#)
- [COVID 19 – Council Support Options \(Port Phillip City Council\) March 2020 and also COVID 19 – Council Support Options \(attachment\) Port Phillip City Council\) March 2020](#)
- [COVID-19 Financial Hardship Guidelines – DRAFT – City of Greater Bendigo March 2020](#)
- [Info to Contractor re COVID-19 – Indigo Shire – March 2020](#)
- [Zoom User Guide – Prepared by the City of Great Bendigo March 2020](#)

Thank-you to all who have shared their documents. If you have any other documents to share please send them through to [Gab](#).

FinPro Professional Development Committee Update

Planned May 29 2020 Professional Development Day – (online)

In lieu of the one-day Professional Development Day we had planned for Friday 29 May (pre-COVID_19), we will now be running an on-line webinar, focusing on the following key issues:

- **General update from LGV** – provided by Hannah Duncan-Jones, Director Policy and Strategy – Director responsible for Local Government Act 2020 Implementation | Local Government Victoria
- **Update and Implementation of the Local Government Act 2020** – provided by Hannah Duncan-Jones (and to be followed up with a Q&A with Bradley Thomas (President FinPro) and Sharon Redmond (Project Manager, LGV)
- **Update and focus from VAGO for the year end audit process** – provided by Sanchu Chummar, Acting Sector Director, Local Government, VAGO.
- Economic Update / Discussion

Our thoughts at this stage are that we would provide recordings of the above updates to members on Wednesday 27 May. Members can then watch these at a time that suits them, but prior to the morning of Friday 29 May. At **10am on Friday 29 May** we would then facilitate a Q&A around both the Local Government Act and the VAGO Update. Questions can be posed prior to the Q&A or at the time.

Further information will be provided in next week's FinPro Member Update.

If you have any thoughts on this please feed them through to either [Binda Gokhale](#), Chairperson of the FinPro PD Committee or [Gab](#).

Access to webinar – Robyn Moore

A number of organisations that we use to access speakers have provided us with links to webinars speakers have recorded – one such recording is a webinar provided by Leading Voice – a 40 minute webinar on 'The Power of the Word (when it is all too much)', presented by Robyn Moore. Robyn spoke at our conference in Torquay a few years ago and was very popular. The recording is free and [available here](#) if you wish to listen to it.

You will learn:

- How to stay on the COVID 19 "Roller-Coaster"
- The power of laughter, gratitude, connection and kindness
- Authorship in the face of crisis
- The 4 thieves which could steal our humanity during this pandemic
- The new normal

Robyn's personal, authentic presentation is designed to be of value for individuals, families and staff during these times of CHANGE< SHUT DOWN and UNCERTAINTY.

Scholarship Opportunity – Women in Local Government

Final Call: Last Chance to Register for Scholarship Funding

Women currently working in the local government sector have a final opportunity to register their interest in a scholarship worth up to \$5,000 to support participation in an online leadership development program.

Women in Leadership is unsure when this funding will be available again, and the registration deadline has been extended until 5pm on June 19. Find out more here:

<https://www.wla.edu.au/localgovernment.html>

FinPro Yammer Forum

Never has it been more important than now to reach out to other FinPro Members and be a part of the FinPro Yammer Forum. This online discussion platform gives an opportunity for members to raise topics for discussion, ask questions, seek out policies and also find out what is going on in the sector.

Some of the conversations on our yammer forum this week have been around:

- Expenditure delegations
- Dashboard / Management Reports
- FBT Returns

If you are not already a member of the forum, please contact FinPro and we can join you up – email gab at gabrielle@finpro.org.au

If you are a member, we encourage you to get online and seek the assistance of your fellow LG Finance Peers.

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](#)

- Job Title
- Website link
- Dot points giving main details of the position eg. salary or band and main details
- Contact person for any questions
- Closing Date

Regional Finance Groups

Whilst FinPro offers training and networking opportunities for all finance professionals working in the Victorian Local Government sector, our regional groups also provide additional opportunities for training and networking. These are more informal sessions which really benefit from input and support from the Council's in each area. Please get in touch if you think there are issues or opportunities which can be brought up at these groups.

There are 6 regional groups in Victoria, which together, cover all of the state. They are:

- Central Victoria – Contact: [Nathan Morsillo](#), Greater Bendigo City Council
- South West Victoria – Contacts: [John Brockway](#) (Surf Coast Shire) and [Belinda Johnson](#) (Southern Grampians Shire)
- South East Victoria – Contact: [Kim Jaensch](#), Frankston City Council
- Metropolitan – Contact: [Tony Rocca](#), Maroondah City Council
- Western Metropolitan – Contact: [Wei Chen](#), Wyndham City Council
- Northern Metropolitan – Contact: [Tania O'Reilly](#), Banyule City Council

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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