



# DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

February 2014

## Director General's Column

One of our key objectives as a Department is to build closer collaboration and stronger partnerships between the State Government, local governments and community service organisations. In doing this, our aim is to improve the integration and delivery of services to Western Australian communities.

I am pleased that our new four-year strategic plan, which was recently endorsed by the Public Sector Commissioner, reflects this emphasis and provides a blueprint for our work with the sector.

Supporting the State's local governments in the planning and development of strong and sustainable communities, as well as promoting good governance and regulation will continue to be a key focus.

As will our work in supporting key communities of interest including seniors, youth, carers, women, volunteers, children and families, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Currently, we provide funding to over 140 different community organisations across the State.

The integration of the former Department of Local Government and Department for Communities has provided us with the opportunity to build links between non-government organisations, local governments and communities to ensure that services and programs are coordinated and delivered in a way which best meets the needs of the communities they serve.

There are many exciting opportunities for the new Department to explore in collaborating with community sector organisations more closely and I look forward to highlighting some of these in future editions of the DG Report as they emerge and are realised.

Jennifer Mathews  
A/DIRECTOR GENERAL



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## Update on Metropolitan Local Government Reform

Recent weeks have seen the momentum continuing to grow in the development of metropolitan local government reform.

The Local Government Advisory Board has published its call for public submissions on the 34 formal proposals it has received for changes to Perth's metropolitan local government boundaries. These relate to 28 of the 30 metropolitan councils and to the shires of Murray and Wandering.

The six-week public submission period will close at 4pm on Thursday, 13 March.

Information about the Board's inquiries and how to make a submission is on the internet at [www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/MetroInquiries](http://www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/MetroInquiries)

The new Local Government Reform Toolkit is also up and running, providing a step-by-step guide for local governments in the lead-up to the proposed reform changes on 1 July next year.

The Toolkit contains extensive information to help local governments navigate the numerous tasks that must be managed as part of reform including setting out the four stages in the reform process: review, plan, mobilise and implement.

Developed jointly by the WA Local Government Association (WALGA), Local Government Managers Australia (WA) and the Department of Local Government and Communities, the Toolkit is at [www.reformtoolkit.com.au](http://www.reformtoolkit.com.au)

Content for the Toolkit was provided by people right across local government with the expertise and experience to ensure it contains valuable information, practical guides and useful materials.

The project team also consulted a reference group of Chief Executive Officers before completing their work to make sure it met their needs and would be useful in their work on reform.

A series of "train the trainer" sessions have also been held for local government staff to show them some of the Toolkit's special functions and key features.

## Reform Update in Country Western Australia

The Town and Shire of Narrogin continue to examine reform options that will deliver long term benefits to their communities. Whilst the October 2013 local government elections resulted in a change of some elected members, both councils continue to work proactively together to progress reform.

Both the Shire and Town have contributed to a revised business plan. Following each council's review of the business plan it is anticipated that it will be released for community input prior to a decision on whether to progress reform.

The Local Government Advisory Board's (the Board) inquiry into the proposed amalgamation of the South East Avon Regional Transition Group was completed in January 2014. The Board recommended that the amalgamation of the Shires of Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York be rejected.

Under the *Local Government Act 1995* the Minister for Local Government is bound by the Board's decision and therefore must accept the recommendation.

While the proposal to amalgamate the Shires will not proceed at this point in time, the local governments have benefited from the Regional Transition Group model regarding the level of due diligence undertaken and progress towards Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements.

The local governments will also gain from standardising their Information and Communications Technology arrangements which will provide for more effective sharing of resources and communication into the future.

## Webinar Series for Elected Members

As part of its ongoing program of advice and support to the local government sector, the Department recently held a series of internet based seminars or 'webinars' for council members.

The webinars covered key aspects of the *Local Government Act 1995* and its regulations which relate to the legislative responsibilities of council members. It is intended that they be complemented by later sessions focusing on the strategic role of council in the legislative framework for integrated planning and reporting.

The first of the webinars entitled Conflicts of Interest which covered elected member requirements regarding disclosure of interests at meetings will soon be made available on the Department's website for viewing at any time.

For more information on the webinars please contact Andrew Borrett via [andrew.borrett@dlgc.wa.gov.au](mailto:andrew.borrett@dlgc.wa.gov.au)

## Registrations for Tidy Towns Close 1 March 2014

Keep Australia Beautiful Councillors and staff are seeking nominations for this year's Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities competition.

The program aims to foster sustainable behaviours and a litter-free environment in regional communities in Western Australia.

In recent years the submission process has been simplified with staff available to assist entrants reporting on:

- recycling and waste management initiatives
- improving the general appearance and facilities of your community
- reducing water and/or energy consumption
- promoting your community's heritage and identity
- arts and cultural projects
- conserving the natural environment
- encouraging young people to participate in your community
- successful outcomes from youth-initiated or youth-led social or environmental action.



In fact, any project that makes a difference to your environment and community is eligible for an award.

Please telephone Gail Dodd or Shirley Brindley on 08 6467 5131 or email [tidytowns@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:tidytowns@dec.wa.gov.au) for more information.

Alternatively, register online at: [www.kabc.wa.gov.au/programs/tidy-towns/online-registration.html](http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au/programs/tidy-towns/online-registration.html) and staff will provide additional support if required.

## National Youth Week Planning Full Steam Ahead



An Australian, State, Territory and Local Government Initiative

Australia's largest celebration of young people— National Youth Week – kicks off in Kalgoorlie on Saturday 5 April.

The Department of Local Government and Communities provided 88 grants for local projects during National Youth Week 2014 that offer opportunities for young people to express ideas, showcase talents and have their voices heard.

The events include 62 activities in the country and 26 in the Perth metropolitan area. Forty-six of the grants (52%) went to local governments for activities such as:

- 'The Amazing Race' challenge in the Shire of Shark Bay
- The City of South Perth's book swap, sketch classes with a cartoonist followed by a viewing of an animé film, a careers expo and a youth swap meet.
- The City of Canning's Liquid Pool Party and Disco with swimming races, dive bomb competitions and dance competitions.
- The 'Linked Together' project run by the Shire of Wongan-Ballidu and supporting young people to demonstrate their links to the community through photography.

Local government also plays a significant role in the Week's major events, with the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder supporting the launch event and City of Perth involved in the Kickstart Markets closing event.

For more information on National Youth Week email [youngpeople@dlgc.wa.gov.au](mailto:youngpeople@dlgc.wa.gov.au)

## Board Readiness Guide for women to be launched in March

A new resource is being developed by the Department to empower women to assess their board readiness and provide them with information about how to attain board roles.

The 'Being Board Ready: A Guide for Women' resource will be launched by Minister for Women's Interests, Hon Liza Harvey MLA on 4 March to mark the start of International Women's Day celebrations for 2014.

Evidence indicates that engaging women in leadership positions and on boards can improve outcomes for businesses and organisations. Despite this, women continue to be underrepresented on boards across all sectors.

The guide was initiated by the Women's Advisory Council and developed by the Department of Local Government and Communities. The Minister will launch the guide to an audience of business leaders, senior women in local and state government, and male agents of change so that it can be promoted to women throughout organisations who might be suitable for board positions.

Other events being held for International Women's Day include the UN Women breakfast, the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services Sparking High Tea, the Women in Resources Awards and the WA Women's Hall of Fame. Details of these and the many community events being held across WA are available under the 'Communities in Focus' section of [www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au)

## Heritage Planning and Management Seminar in Albany Next Month

Are you interested in learning more about heritage?

The Heritage Council of WA's popular Heritage Planning and Management Seminar will be held in Albany from 19 to 21 March 2014.

It includes presentations and workshops on heritage planning, assessing heritage significance, Municipal Inventory reviews, Heritage Impact Statements, managing heritage assets, heritage tourism, community heritage as well as site visits and talks on historic towns.

The seminar coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the departure of the first convoy of ships carrying the Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force to the First World War.

Co-hosted by the City of Albany, the seminar is of particular relevance to local government officers and elected members. Planning officers who are members of the Planning Institute of Australia can claim professional development (PD) points for participating in the event.

The seminar costs \$440 (inclusive of GST).

Registrations close on 7 March. For more information visit the State Heritage website ([stateheritage.wa.gov.au/about-us/education-research-events/education-training-seminars](http://stateheritage.wa.gov.au/about-us/education-research-events/education-training-seminars)).

## Nominations Now Open! 2014 Community Services Excellence Awards

Nominations are invited for outstanding community sector organisations or individuals for the 2014 Community Services Excellence Awards.

The awards recognise the important role that individuals and organisations in the community sector play in making a positive difference to people, families and communities through innovative and creative services.

Now in their fourth year, the awards reflect our ongoing commitment to work together to improve outcomes for all Western Australians.

We are keen to promote partnerships between not-for-profit organisations, local governments and other agencies, so please consider them for a nomination in the partnerships category. Winners receive a \$5,000 cheque provided by Lotterywest.

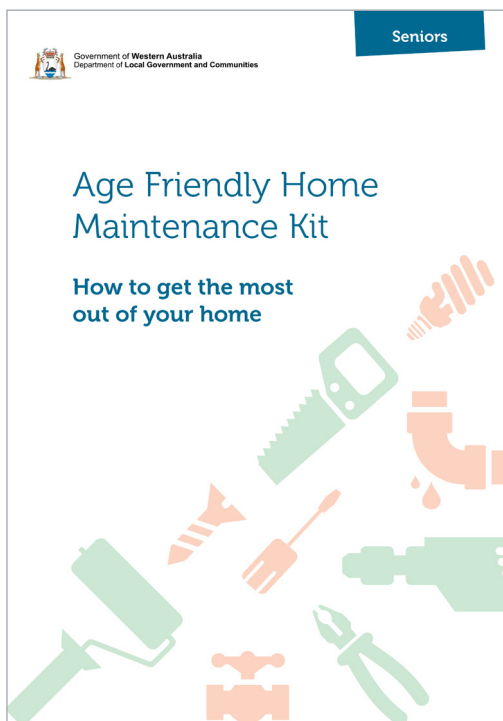
The awards are coordinated through a partnership between the Department of Local Government and Communities (DLGC) and the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS).

Nominations close 5.00pm, Friday 28 February 2014 and can be made online at [www.wacoss.org.au/csea2014](http://www.wacoss.org.au/csea2014)

For further information please contact Amanda Grbavac at DLGC on 6551 8700 or Sinead Doherty at WACOSS on 9420 7222 or email [csea@wacoss.org.au](mailto:csea@wacoss.org.au)



## Age Friendly Home Maintenance Kit Now Available



The Department of Local Government and Communities has developed an Age Friendly Home Maintenance Kit, which aims to provide seniors with useful information about managing the maintenance of their home.

Age Friendly Communities research, supported by the Department and conducted by Western Australian local governments found that, overwhelmingly, older people wished to remain in their own homes as they age. Regular maintenance ensures a home remains age friendly for longer.

The Age Friendly Home Maintenance Kit highlights the need to regularly assess the condition of a home. It is a tool that assists in assessing each part of the house to identify issues of concern. It also includes useful tips about safety and security and how to deal with tradespeople.

Local governments are encouraged to promote the [Age Friendly Home Maintenance Kit](#) to older residents within their communities. View the Age Friendly Home Maintenance Kit under the 'Communities in Focus' on [www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au)

## Age-friendly Network Encourages Consultation with Seniors

An Age-friendly Communities (AFC) approach to planning involves consultation with seniors themselves and seniors organisations to help identify priority action areas at the local level.

The Department played a key role in developing the internationally recognised 'World Health Organisation Guide to creating Age-friendly Communities' in 2007 and has subsequently supported 27 local governments to undertake the AFC methodology planning research.

Approximately 33% of Western Australia's total seniors population is living in a local government which has actively adopted an age-friendly planning approach. The Department continues to promote the AFC approach throughout Western Australia as it fits well with the local government integrated planning process and is seen as a key area of common ground where the strategic outcomes for communities and local government intersect.

Most recently, the Department led the formation of the AFC WA Network Working Group comprising Departmental representatives WA Local Government Association (WALGA), Council on the Ageing WA (COTA) and the City of Melville.

Through the guidance of the Working Group, the AFC Network is being designed to:

1. Form linkages between local governments and other stakeholders engaged in age-friendly community planning
2. Encourage and support the uptake of Age-friendly Communities planning methodology as the preferred tool for consultation with seniors as part of the local government planning process in new local government areas.

The Western Australian AFC Network will ultimately link in with the international World Health Organisation AFC Network. To determine the next steps to establishing a web-based network, COTA will conduct a survey of local governments and report back to the Working Group by the end of April.

The Working Group is also considering criteria for a dedicated Age-friendly Community Award, to be announced during Seniors Week, which recognises the age-friendly work of a local government.