



# EPLGA BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

From the meeting held at **Wudinna** on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Congratulations were forwarded to all new Mayors and delegates joining the EPLGA family.

## **PRESENTATIONS TO THE EPLGA BOARD**

### **Red Cross (Collette Brown) – Climate Change Adaptation Project for Councils**

The project is funded by DEWNR. The biggest challenge is engaging with community – most at risk are disengaged.

The EPLGA Board also resolved that the Eyre Peninsula Integrated Climate Change Adaptation group be retained on the following conditions:

- EPICCA Members to be Chairs and CEO's of EPLGA Board, RDAWEP Board & EPNRM Board and chaired by Mr Brian Foster, Member of the Premiers Climate Change Council plus two relevant State agency persons (e.g. DEWNR & PIRSA or others).
- EPICCA meetings only be held when necessary or called by two of the three member regional organisations.
- At the first meeting of the newly structured EPICCA Group meeting procedures & secretarial services for the group are established.
- That the industry sector agreement be extended or renewed with the State Government as soon as possible.
- That agendas & minutes of all meetings be forwarded to the EPLGA, RDAWEP & EPNRM Boards.
- That any projects or other activities requiring financial commitments be considered and signed off by the EPLGA, RDAWEP & EPNRM Boards prior to commencement.
- Grant applications require sign off by the EPLGA, RDAWEP & EPNRM Boards.
- That annually the EPICCA group reports to the EPLGA, RDAWEP & EPNRM Boards on any achievements.

The EPICCA group & related operations will be reviewed on or before 30 June 2017 by the EPLGA, RDAWEP & EPNRM Boards for effectiveness and as to whether the group continues.

### **RDA Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula Inc.**

The following report given by Dion Dorward in relation to RDAWEP activities and information:--

The Australian Government's nationally advertised EOI's for Board vacancies have closed. There has been a change in approach by the Government with the selection of Board Members. The Federal Government will appoint Chairs and Deputy Chairs who will then select the remaining Board Members as vacancies arise. This will require some Constitutional changes which are being worked through.

RDAWEP's Regional Plan for 2014-16 has been updated and when signed off by the Australian Government, will be available on the website. The Australian Government's focus is now firmly on economic development projects and employment growth. Most of their funding opportunities reflect this change in emphasis.

The first round of the National Stronger Regions Fund has closed. RDAWEP have been assisting Councils and eligible businesses with preparation of business cases, data, support letters and lobbying. A business case for the Thevenard Offloading Facility has been completed. If Council's have projects which are suitable for the next round in May and need assistance, they must ensure that they complete the RDAWEP Project Tracking Template.

RDAWEP has been a major partner in the AgriFood program which was a recent runner-up in the National Collaborative Training Awards.

Through the Regional Development Fund, Minister Brock has announced \$320k for the Whyalla Leisure Centre upgrade and \$200k for Gadaleta Steel Fabricators to assist in the construction of a paint and blast facility. RDAWEP have received \$80k over 2 years to continue with the Food Ambassador program.

Some of the RDAWEP marketing that has been developed has been converted to Chinese and other languages. Companies generally contribute 50-50 for marketing collateral.

The DSD Employment and Training contract for this financial year has been signed off. The EP Business Builder program that is being developed by Business Development Advisor, Mike Shore, will be rolled out in February 2015. It consists of 25 carefully targeted business programs whose 48 modules will be delivered in Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Wudinna and Ceduna over a 12 month period. These programs have been customised from feedback received from local businesses. The pilot for some of these projects was through the AgriFood project. RDAWEP has consulted with local accountants and business banks to gain an understanding of what they require from business. ANZ have formally recognised the quality of the program with a \$20k contribution.

RDAWEP is building a workforce and training service digital strategy involving 1 site that can strategically attract a labour pool of people with a variety of skills common to Eyre Peninsula's skills and jobs needs, particularly targeting seasonal employment opportunities.

RDAWEP has been working with Skana Gallery, Economic Development and Regions Officer with LGA. Her experience and connections are of benefit to the region.

NRM, EPLGA and RDAWEP are working together on a number of programs. Working cooperatively on regional planning will create a far more strategic approach to work that is done collectively. As part of this process, over the next 12 months RDAWEP will be conducting an Economic Development Forum within the CEO's meeting which will help drive the culture of economic development awareness across the region and create links with Local Government.

EP Mining and Energy Taskforce - RDAWEP is collaborating well with EPLGA to help drive this important initiative.

EconSearch – By February 2015 the RDAWEP should be in a position to deliver strong statistics to each Council to assist with planning and decision making.

Regional Procurement – ArcBlue have delivered their final report. RDAWEP will act as brokers which should create savings for Councils. It also goes together with RDAWEP's Business Development Services as it is constantly working with businesses to make them 'tender ready'. This will also drive each Council's local economies too.

RDAWEP has been working with Local Councils on a number of business cases for Federal and State Government funding.

RDAWEP has commissioned the document, 'Living Well'. This is a Masterplan for the Whyalla aged care and disability sector and will be worked through with the Whyalla Council and community. This document will assist a regional approach to aged care and disability planning.

Ongoing key industry consultation concerning major projects includes Iron Road, Valence Industries, Lukin Quays development, Mitsubishi at Port Bonython, Muradel biofuels and oil exploration in the Bight. The microalgae production facility at Whyalla that creates green crude oil from microalgae has gone from research and development to the early stages of commercialisation.

The EPLGA Board passed a resolution encouraging the Executive Officer to continue working with RDAWEP and EPNRM to develop a high level regional strategic plan. Further, the current EPLGA Management Plan and budget along with the Executive Officer's work plan are to be amended to reflect the change in priority.

#### **LGA Legal Services (Amanda Harfield)**

LGA's Legal Services Associate, Amanda Harfield spoke about the LGA's provision of legal services. She is running a 12 month pilot program offering an alternative to Councils obtaining legal advice. Certain legal advice sought by Councils, is common to all. This is an opportunity to cut costs by assessing LGA Legal Services and sharing advice. Those Councils that sign up receive the added advantage of a quarterly issues summary that covers all of the legal advice given in the previous quarter.

The pilot program is due to finish by the end of March. An evaluation will go to the EPLGA Board at the end of January with a recommendation as to whether to proceed.

#### **Department of Environment and Resources (DENR) (Heather Baldock)**

Heather presented on the following:

- A delay with the water allocation plan. The initial draft that has been reviewed needs to be legal, implementable and able to be understood by stakeholders. Hoping for release to the public in the New Year to go through the statutory consultative phase. Public forums plus another stakeholder meeting will be held.
- The EPNRM Boards annual business plan almost ready to go out for public comment. It is now an option for NRM Boards to endorse a business plan for 3 years. As part of the plan, the Board has decided to raise the NRM levy by CPI over the next 3 year period.
- The Board has been working on the Regional NRM Strategic Plan.
- The Board recently farewellled Annie Lane who has been Regional Manager for 4.5 years. She has moved to Canberra to work with the ACT Government in Natural Resources. Johnathon Clarke has taken on the role of Acting Regional Manager.
- Thank you given to Laurie Collins, the EPLGA representative on the EPNRM Board. The Board has welcomed his input and valued his time. Heather welcomed and thanked Rob Donaldson for accepting the position of EPLGA representative to the EPNRM Board.
- Premiers review of boards and committees – The State NRM Council and Native Vegetation Council have been cut.
- A new DEWNR Chief Executive will be appointed in the near future.
- Next NRM Board meeting will be in Elliston on 17 December 2014.

## **Country Fire Service (Robin Marlin)**

Robin presented on the following:-

- Environmental conditions facing at the moment are a wet winter and dry spring. Therefore fire fuel loads are heavy. Nationally it has been the warmest spring on record. This all points to an increased risk. The fire danger season was brought forward.
- There has been a public information campaign with regard to reducing fuel loads around properties.
- A number of controlled burns have been conducted successfully, initiated by DEWNR and supported by CFS.
- The Chief Officer has reached an agreement with the Chief Meteorologist of SA to have bureau staff member in the local office during the summer period.
- Emergency Services Levy - There are 60 brigades in the region, 4 have imposed restrictions on where they respond to fires in the region i.e. on Government land. Responses will be adjusted to include another brigade to attend.
- CFS is undertaking a sector reform. Minister Piccolo has been actively engaging with the volunteer groups within Region 6.
- iResponda – Robin appreciates the work that the LGA and Councils have done.
- The Lower Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Area Management Plan is the first formalised plan being formulated in the state regarding making risk assessments of properties within particular regions.

## **CWMS Users Group**

This group is working very well and is achieving far more than anticipated.

The EPLGA will write to the Essential Services Commission of South Australia and the Office of the Technical Regulator (with copies to the LGA CWMS Management Committee) on the following concerns:-

- The Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association understands that it is the intention of the Office of the Technical Regulator to require Council's to prepare and provide a Safety, Reliability and Maintenance Technical Management Plan for Water Industry Operations including CWMS, and that this plan and associated reporting is additional to the existing reporting framework that includes ESCoSA, Dept of Health and the EPA as well as accountability under the Local Government Act.
- The EPLGA raises concern with the indication given by Mr Trevor Tucker (OTR) during recent discussion with members of the EPLGA CWMS User Group that that this will be a 'one size fits all' plan implemented across the industry, and by the potential for OTR requirements to duplicate existing obligations of Councils.
- The EPLGA is unaware of any meaningful regional industry engagement undertaken by ESCoSA or OTR in order to understand the existing operations of Council CWMS, the administrative implications of the regulatory framework implemented by ESCOSA and OTR over the last 12 months, or to demonstrate any benefit of this framework to the CWMS sector or the customers serviced by it.
- The EPLGA urges ESCOSA and the OTR to review their stakeholder engagement with a view to genuine engagement and consultation with regional Local Government. In particular, ESCoSA and the OTR are invited to attend Eyre Peninsula to meet with relevant CWMS staff and gain insight into small, regional CWMS operations, in order that additional regulatory oversight, planning and reporting is tailored to reflect the scale of the operations.

- The EPLGA also seeks information on the appointment of the Technical Advisory Committee under the Water Industry Act, which the EPLGA believes must be comprised of representatives of the Local Government CWMS sector able to provide accurate advice and information on the particular operations of CWMS. Any proposal to utilise the existing Plumbing Technical Advisory Committee to fulfil the requirements of the Technical Advisory Committee envisaged by the Water Industry Act would be failing to recognise the unique range of technical and public issues associated with the Local Government Water Industry.
- The EPLGA supports the idea of a joint forum with ESCoSA and the OTR to be held early in the new year (and before any decisions are made on additional planning and reporting requirements) to allow Local Government Officers from the sector to contribute to proper debate intended to develop simple, meaningful and achievable processes without unnecessary additional administrative cost.
- The Executive Officer of the EPLGA is to notify local MP's and the LGA of the resolution.

### **Pensioner Concessions**

The EPLGA will raise the State Government pensioner concession concerns with the LGA. It will in the strongest possible method seek immediate action by requesting the LGA to:-

1. Continue to advocate for the retention of the pensioner concessions
2. Contact pension organisations to outline the facts about the concession and
3. Contact the media to ensure the focus for community discussions is the State Government and not Local Government as the pension concessions being withdrawn is a State Government funded issue.

### **EP Mining, Oil & Gas Community Development Taskforce**

The EPLGA Board adopted the Eyre Peninsula Mining Oil and Gas Community Development Taskforce minutes and recommendations:

1. That the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association (EPLGA) Board members consider, with the support of their communities, taking on a greater leadership role in the economic development of the Eyre Peninsula in partnership with Regional Development Australia Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula and the Department of State Development.
2. That the EPLGA Board consider a Regional Economic Development Policy supporting local and regional business growth, inclusive of Mining, Oil and Gas being drafted for consideration by its member councils (i.e. to be a brief policy of no more than one page).
3. That a Consultation Protocol for Local Government, that enhances community understanding of significant regional development proposal, is included in the draft Policy.
4. That the EPLGA Board endorses the amended EP Mining, Oil & Gas Community Development Taskforce terms of reference.

That the EP Mining, Oil & Gas Community Development Taskforce be renamed Eyre Peninsula Mineral and Energy Resources Community Development to better describe its terms of reference objectives.

### **Infrastructure/ Assets Management and Long term Financial Planning Assistance**

The EPLGA nominated the following Councils for a 50% subsidy (up to \$4,000 on a dollar for dollar basis) towards compliance in the Infrastructure/Asset Management and Long-Term Financial Planning, based on the criteria established in correspondence from the CEO of the LGA of SA.

- Elliston, Tumby Bay, Kimba, Streaky Bay and Wudinna Councils.

## **EPLGA Board NEXT MEETING**

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2015 at Whyalla (Annual Conference)

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