



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

13th June 2006

GM7 LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS AUSTRALIA
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SUMMARY:

To outline the LGMA Conference highlights.



DESCRIPTION:

From the 21st to 24th May I attended the LGMA Conference in Perth. The conference was attended by 600 professional staff and elected members from throughout Australia. In previous years I have described this conference as the premier Local Government Conference in Australia and this years conference lived up to expectations.

The conference segments included keynote speaker sessions and concurrent workshop sessions covering three themes, Strategic Directions, Community Outcomes and Organisational Development.

The keynote speakers were: -

- Chris Connolly, Coach Fremantle Dockers AFL football club. Chris spoke about pressure and stress at the top and the need to stay focused and move forward.
- Martin Horton, Director of Services, Improvement and Development Agency in the United Kingdom. The Agency specialises in offering Local Government Improvement and Development Services. You shouldn't run services to meet targets but look after the interests of the community in what we do. Leadership is being able to put aside what you have built up because by the time you have reached your goal ideas have moved on.

- Professor Greg Craven, Executive Director of the John Curtin University. Government in Australia is three tiered with Local Government being reliant on the other tiers for financial assistance. Commonwealth grants are increasingly specific grants such as Roads to Recovery so the Commonwealth by passes the states and has an influence over policy and regulation.
- Bob O'Neill, Executive Director International City / Country Management Association USA. Hurricane Katrina devastated the states of Louisiana and Mississippi and government was slow to respond because of the division of responsibility between Local, State and Federal Governments. Nobody was in charge, nobody was accountable. There was no direction.
- Professor Fiona Wood, 2005 Australian of The Year, who spoke about autocratic versus democratic leadership but in a crisis flexibility and focus are the keys.

The workshops that I attended were: -

Strategic Directions

See Saw – Rich and Poor
Economic Development – What's It All About

Community Outcomes

What is Customer Service
People Connection – The Key to Understanding
To Do or Not To Do

Organisational Development

Triple Bottom Line Capacity Building for Local Governments
The Local Government Manager and The Learning Organisation
Talent Wars and Positive Workplace Cultures

The Customer Service Workshop presented by the Thuringowa Council in Queensland Customer Service Manager mirrored the Customer First Centre established at Kempsey although it didn't appear to have such a detailed Knowledge Management System. A number of points on community consultation were learnt including distinguishing between decision maker assumptions and community assumptions and ideas on different ways of consulting with the community currently not being utilised at Kempsey including not developing the process before consultation, open house all day consultation and resident feedback registers.

There is a need to market Council as a place to work and introduce work / life balance benefits - *Smart people pick organisations.*

As outlined earlier in this report I found the conference to be extremely beneficial and I would recommend Councillor attendance in 2007.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

Nil

- *Economic*

Nil

- *Policy or Statutory*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be noted.

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A V Burgess
GENERAL MANAGER