

# Local Government: “Does The Squeaky Wheel Get The Grease?”

Emerging Leaders Program 2012





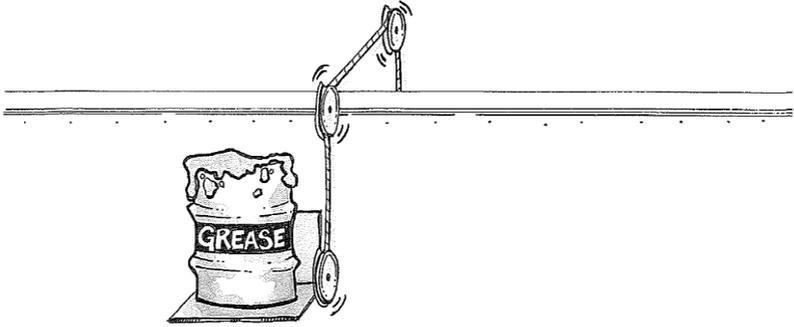
I hate to be a kicker,  
I always long for peace,  
But the wheel that does the squeaking,  
Is the one that gets the grease.

*“The Kicker” by Josh Billings.*



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# Executive Summary

Local Government: The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

A metaphor for when those who make the most noise, the “squeaky wheel”, whether through complaints, public action, or media attention, get what they want, “the grease”.

This has been the topic for investigation as part of the 2012 Emerging Leaders Program. Throughout the workshops, this topic led a discussion surrounding whether people are rewarded when they use frequent complaints, media manipulation, or appeals to existing bureaucratic processes to champion their cause, regardless of whether the wider community are happy with the decisions made.

When this statement was put to participants and speakers at the various modules, the overwhelming response was ‘YES’. Why is this so? What it is that creates, or facilitates, the squeaky wheel? Is squeaking something that should be embraced and encouraged? If so, how can we be sure that the louder squeaks are representative of the general population rather than the work of a core group of dedicated citizens whose opinions may be personally motivated? Finally, are there better ways of addressing issues so that the grease goes where it is needed, rather than to those who complain the loudest?

## Why Does This Matter?

When a persistent “squeak” occurs it has implications for council resources. It may require the attention of multiple members of staff, cause stress for those involved, cost money in resource allocation and staff time, pull attention away from other priorities, and convince people that the only way to resolve issues is to start squeaking themselves.

The “squeaky wheel” metaphor also covers both those who have a legitimate cause and those who are simply seeking attention or other gratification. The squeak could be caused by the general public stepping forward en masse to question or prevent decisions being made that may not be the most appropriate or which result in detrimental outcomes.

Complaints and demands are also forms of feedback and, while they may not need to be acted upon, their existence helps organisations improve how they address issues that affect the local community. They can also provide a timely reminder to undertake appropriate public consultation and engagement with the relevant stakeholders in future.

Therefore, it is important not to ignore them. It is useful to consider why squeaky wheels squeak, whether squeaking gets them the grease, and when, if ever, they should get the grease over those who simply lodge a single request or a complaint and otherwise accept decisions made by Council and council officers.



**It's important not to ignore the squeaky wheel.**

## Who Squeaks & How?

In order to better understand the phenomenon of the squeaky wheel, we need to clarify that virtually anyone can squeak. Squeaky wheels could be:

- Residents
- Commercial Tenants/Businesses
- Investors/Developers
- Community Groups/Associations
- Political groups/Individuals
- Local Government Elected Members
- Local Government Employees
- Interested parties from outside the area.

A person may begin squeaking to local council in a number of ways. Their wide range of options highlights the complexity of trying to understand and manage them. They might:

- Approach an Elected Member/s to lobby on their behalf
- Urge Elected Members to approach council staff via official and unofficial avenues
- Raise the issue through another level of government
- Use Facebook/Twitter posts on the council internet site
- Email elected members or council employees
- Post a letter to the council
- Make a telephone enquiry to council through customer service
- Directly call a council employee
- Submit a petition or opinion poll summary
- Present in person to council chambers or an outlet of council
- Utilise the various forms of media
- Establish a web-site / Facebook page

## What Drives A Squeaky Wheel?

Generally, those who don't agree with a decision or wish to cause a change don't squeak. Many people will simply point out an issue or register a complaint and then leave it at that. This might be for any number of reasons such as a willingness to accept an authority's decisions, an unwillingness to dedicate effort, or simply not knowing how to drive their case with their local council.

A squeaky wheel, on the other hand, may be motivated because they:

- Strongly desire a different response
- Wish to drive a political or business agenda
- Feel undervalued or mistreated
- Feel passionate about their issue
- Are negatively affected by a decision
- Would be positively affected by a desired decision
- Wish to change the allocation of funding
- Are suspicious
- Don't know or understand the usual processes
- Believe they have earned some special privilege
- Enjoy the attention.

A squeaky wheel is more likely to occur if there is some kind of personal impact on the individual's life. This can be broadly categorised into one of three areas:

- Financial impact (whether the individual or their family feel the impact of a decision in their wallets or the value of their home / business)
- Social impact (their lifestyle or that of their friends and/or family are affected by the changes, especially in regards to the withdrawal of services)
- Regional impact (direct impact evident within the area which they live which affects the way in which they live within an area, such as the loss of parks and playgrounds)

## Must We Listen?

When dealing with squeaky wheels, there is often the temptation to ignore them and hope they will go away. There's a number of reasons why this is neither appropriate, nor in many cases, strictly legal. There are some significant risks to consider when selecting an appropriate action or response (inaction is also, in this case, an action as it does involve an element of choice). Squeaky wheels:

- Can bring unwanted attention from many forms of media
- May encourage additional customer complaints
- May also be the subject of additional customer complaints due to harassment
- May require the diversion of resources to manage them and talk them through the various stages
- May have information that might prevent local government from making an error
- May negatively affect staff and elected member morale
- May divide community members over a forcefully driven issue

Can draw undue political attention and pressure where an idea is popular yet unsustainable, or otherwise problematic. Even if the initial idea was a good one, political pressure may cause it to be rushed through more quickly than is safe or practicable.



Sometimes listening to a squeaky wheel can help prevent local government from making significant mistakes.

## What Are Our Legal Requirements?

Unlike the other levels of government (Federal and State) that derive their responsibility and authority directly from the Constitution, the role of local government is provided by an Act of State Parliament. The *Local Government Act* (South Australian Government 1999) is the primary legislation governing the way local government operates and it identifies the roles, responsibilities and duties which Council is expected, and obligated, to fulfil. The principal role and functions of a council are set out in Section 6 of the Act (1999, p. 27):

### **6 – Principal role of a council**

*A council is, under the system of local government established by this Act, established to provide for the government and management of its area at the local level and, in particular—*

- (a) to act as a representative, informed and responsible decision-maker in the interests of its community; and*
- (b) to provide and co-ordinate various public services and facilities and to develop its community and resources in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner; and*
- (c) to encourage and develop initiatives within its community for improving the quality of life of the community; and*
- (d) to represent the interests of its community to the wider community; and*
- (e) to exercise, perform and discharge the powers, functions and duties of local government under this and other Acts in relation to the area for which it is constituted.*

Section 270 of the *Local Government Act* (South Australian Government 1999, p.215) also provides that council's must develop policies, practices and procedures for dealing with '*any reasonable request for the provision of a service by the council or for the improvement of a service provided by the council*'. The Act also provides that a Council's strategic

planning (annual business plan) is undertaken in consultation with the community and reflects the goods and services sought by the community. A Council must then try to balance the needs and desires of the community against the cost of providing each service.

Therefore it is important to see squeaky wheels not as a nuisance but as a necessary aspect of the democratic processes inherent in local government. This isn't to say that the squeaky wheel must always get the grease, but rather, that each request an individual makes should be examined on its own merit and not by the number of requests that have been made recently by that individual. It also reflects the importance of seeking a wider perspective on larger issue by consulting members of the community that might otherwise not provide their opinion on events that will affect them.



Each “squeak” should be examined on its own merits rather than judged by the amount of “squeaking” or the history of a particular “squeaky wheel”.

## **How Must Objections Be Legally Dealt With?**

Councils, and other government bodies, operate under administrative power, or public power, which means they derive authority through legislation. A key principle underpinning transparent and accountable local government is the provision of a fair process that allows the community to exercise their democratic right to ask for decisions and actions to be reviewed in an open and timely manner.

Decisions made whilst acting under administrative power also provide the community with the right to challenge decisions or ask for them to be reviewed. Decisions can be challenged through independent channels (such as the ombudsman) or judicial (court) review. The *Local Government Act* (South Australian Government 1999) also provides the framework under Section 270 to allow objections to be made on a Council's decision making process.

The *Local Government Act* also requires that there are grievance procedures set up for when people have sought a decision by council or its staff, are unsatisfied with that decision, and wish to have that decision reviewed by others. Councils also have a responsibility to respond to all queries and complaints.

Other decisions from a Council can also be challenged through the Court system, typically through the Environment Resources and Development Court or Magistrates Court. For example, a person who has lodged a Development Application with a Council and has received a refusal can lodge an appeal through the Courts.

The South Australian Freedom of Information Act (South Australian Government 1991) provides an avenue for members of the public to apply for information which is held within a government body which make it easier for the general public to learn about decisions made by government bodies and the processes through which they were made.

Therefore local government cannot make the mistake of assuming that squeaky wheels can, or even should, be ignored in favour of existing standards of practice or the councils' own perceptions on what is best for the local community. The difficulty lies in ensuring, however, that the squeaky wheel doesn't just "squeak" for them personally and that they are actually representative of a significant proportion of affected members of the local community. It becomes all the more troublesome when the squeaky wheel stands for an issue that only they care about or, worse, they desire an alternative outcome that conflicts with the majority view.

What do you do when an individual or small group wants something that no one else wants, or wishes to stop something that the general public wishes to come to pass? If the squeaky wheel knows how to squeak in the right way they can bring public pressure from the media, politicians, and people from outside the local area through the clever and dedicated use of social media and other forms of campaigning. This can lead to a silent majority where those who have neither the time nor the knowledge required to lead a successful campaign are silenced by a few vocal individuals who form only a small section of the affected population.

While there are times when the degree of negative impact upon that small section necessitates an increased focus on their needs, it is important that it is the impact upon them that dictates whether they get the grease, rather than how well they play the system.

# Changing Influences On The Squeak

Changing influences affect how a local government conducts business, interacts with customers, receives funding, adheres to and enforces legislation, and provides services and resources. What local government officials change and how they change it can all potentially ignite the desire of individuals and communities to raise issues and concerns. These concerns can become more entrenched over time giving the 'squeaky wheel' momentum as the people involved become more dedicated to their cause and more prone to use any method at their disposal to get what they need.

Key influences of change include:

## **1. Legislation**

Local Government must adhere to and enforce Federal and State laws as well as follow Council policies in how they operate and respond to complaints. As both legislation and policies are continually changed and updated, this can be a cause of contention for residents and visitors, who either don't agree with the changes, or don't believe that the changes are going far enough. It can also be difficult when legislative requirements aren't meeting the current needs of a particular community as the council is legally obligated to abide by the law in the face of even a storm of complaint.

## **2. Technology**

Advances in technology have seen significant changes to everyday living. The internet has provided people with an ability to explore issues and communicate with others from just about anywhere. Current technology has led some people to assume that the ability to lodge issues 24 hours a day and 7 days a week must result in quicker response times. This means that local government, Elected Members and employees are expected to manage information from multiple sources on a 24 hour cycle in order to understand and respond to these issues as

they arise. When local government fails to act in a timely manner, the individuals involved may become frustrated, or even hostile. By the time they receive a response they may no longer wish to collaborate and may instead complain to various parties, even as their issue is being resolved. For these reasons, it is best to be up front and clear about the expected time frames and try to communicate this to everyone involved.

Local government policy often requires that emails be answered within a 24 hour period and don't always clearly exclude weekends. Even those that do exclude weekends may still cause mounting frustration when people are trying to contact a part-time employee who may only work 2 – 3 days a week. Tensions may be eased if automatically generated emails clearly state the person's days of work as this will provide better context for some individuals who might otherwise feel ignored.

### **3. People**

Demographics within each local government area are constantly changing and therefore the needs of the local population are also changing. The Australian Bureau of Statistics noted a 1.5% increase in national population from 2006 to 2011 and population increases require greater infrastructure, such as housing and roads, to support them (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012a). In addition, in 2011 there was a 27% increase in Australian residents born overseas which has created a number of issues and opportunities that need to be considered when making decisions (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012b).

Demographics within a council precinct can change according to age, income, religion and culture; and these changes bring different needs and desires. People in different life stages require different amenities, services and facilities. Cultural trends may also influence expectations toward government services and service delivery. Local government needs to be aware of these changes and look for ways to be proactive in addressing issues before they become problems.

## **Surviving Social Media**

Social media has become another avenue for “squeaky wheels” to be heard as it expands their prospective audience and enables community participation and debate. While it is an excellent method of encouraging those who may be intimidated by traditional models of community consultation to have their say, it can also become difficult to manage when individuals from outside the area who are otherwise unaffected by the decisions come to dominate the discussion and provide unnecessary or inflammatory input.

The emergence of social media and networking has also provided an outlet for those who would otherwise be unnerved by the usual processes of community consultations and petitions. They can now easily and, often anonymously, offer comments and gather confidence for later action from behind the security of a computer screen.

It is difficult to measure the impact of social media, or the effectiveness of the responses, but it is important to try to enter the dialogue in a respectful and knowledgeable manner. If the majority viewpoint on a web-site is self-reinforcing about a particular issue then it is particularly important that there is someone delegated to respond to these issues and give an alternative perspective.

This issue is further compounded by the ability for people to discuss the issue anonymously. This makes it extremely difficult to determine how many people are involved in the conversation (for example, the possibility of making multiple accounts) or where they are from (for example, people in Alaska could dominate a discussion on the location of a skate park in Adelaide). Therefore it is best used as an additional tool in the community consultation package, as well as a basic barometer of public opinion.

Be aware that the community will find a place to discuss these issues even if local government provides no online forum, nor involves itself in existing forums. Social media might begin movements online and those movements can easily lead to people gathering in person at the council offices to make their presence and opinions known. Therefore it is important to find a way to get involved and encourage the involvement of the public in a respectful and responsive manner.

Recent experiences by local government have highlighted this growing trend towards re-engagement of the community in issues that are relevant to their standard of living and immediate neighbourhood. Mark Withers, CEO of Charles Sturt Council (2012, pers. comm.. 12 October 2012) states the following:

*Social media has given many people a voice where previously they had none. This voice is growing exponentially. It is rekindling a collective view and disseminating a dialogue which will increasingly affect government policy decisions. A new cyber democracy is appearing that is gaining credibility.*

*Cyber democracy has had another unexpected effect and that is that it is encouraging people to come out of their lounge rooms and participate in public debate about issues that are important to local communities. Social media is connecting people and giving them a new confidence to participate in public life.*

## Decision Making Models

It is important in a democratic society for individuals to be able to be involved in those decisions which affect them. For local government to determine whether decisions are socially sustainable, they need to ensure they have input from a wide range of stakeholders before allocating their resources. So how do you do this?

### ***How do you engage the wider community?***

The challenge for local government leadership is to engage the disengaged and capture the undecided – the voice of the community that often goes unnoticed or unheard, whether through apathy or uncertainty, on how to participate in shaping their community.

Community members often fall into three main categories adapted from:

**Champions of Change** – These people are innovators who are often the 'early adapters' to change who wish to push the boundaries of what is possible. They want to work with their local council to create a better future, but can become impatient if change is not happening quickly enough or in their areas of interest. This can lead to difficulty in areas where local government needs to proceed with care or risk making mistakes.

**Undecided** – People in the middle; this is often the majority of people who are either happy with what is being delivered or not unhappy enough to get involved. They generally want to get on with their lives without interference from others such as the local council.

**Status Quo Defenders** – These don't want change and will vocally oppose anything that they feel is a threat to them, their neighbourhood and their way of life. However, they shouldn't be dismissed as they can provide a different perspective on changes and highlight key issues and risks that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. The difficulty is in

getting them to understand that some changes may actually be beneficial to them and their local community.

Both the “Champions of Change” and the “Status Quo Defenders” have the potential to become squeaky wheels if they feel that they are not being heard. They may feel that the only way to be recognised is to complain incessantly.



**“Status Quo Defenders” can often have an important perspective. In the above example, a small business owner will lose his outdoor seating area due to a road widening proposal.**

In recent times, local councils have witnessed engagement from the 'Undecided' group when they have become passionate about a local issue (such as the sale of a council asset). This group then often aligns with either the “Champions” or “Defenders” to support their cause.

Traditional community consultation or engagement initiatives are often with the “Champions” or “Defenders” and may not necessarily represent the needs or desires of the majority.

# Engagement Model

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has developed a widely used public participation model and certification program, central to which is the belief that good public participation results in better decisions. The IAP2 Spectrum is a tool developed by IAP2 that provides assistance in the planning of an engagement project or activity by determining the level of involvement that the organisation wishes their stakeholders to have (International Association for Public Participation, 2004). Each level listed below involves an increasing level of public participation:

## Inform

**Public participation goal:** To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

**Promise to the public:** We will keep you informed.

### **Example techniques:**

- Fact Sheets
- Web Sites
- Open Houses



Informing the community is only the first step toward public participation.

## Consult

**Public participation goal:** To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

**Promise to the public:** We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influence the decisions.

**Example techniques:**

- Public Comment
- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Public Meetings

## Involve

**Public participation goal:** To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

**Promise to the public:** We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

**Example techniques:**

- Workshops
- Deliberate Polling

## Collaborate

**Public participation goal:** To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

**Promise to the public:** We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

**Example techniques:**

- Citizen Advisory Committees
- Consensus-building
- Participatory Decision-making

## Empower

**Public participation goal:** To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

**Promise to the public:** We will implement what you decide.

**Example techniques:**

- Citizen Juries
- Ballots
- Delegated Decisions

## Communication & Engagement Tools

In order to access opinions from a greater cross-section of the community, it is important to use a number of tools as different groups within the community will feel more comfortable with communicating their needs using different methods. There are a number of avenues available for undertaking community engagement such as:

- Open meetings and workshops with locals
- Meeting with stakeholders
- Social media
- Surveys
- Feedback forms
- Simple conversations with locals.

Social media is slowly becoming more widely adopted as a tool for community engagement. The internet is a tool that has the potential to encourage greater participation in community engagement by providing an option for people to have their say in their own time and in their own way.

It helps to differentiate your stakeholders when conducting a consultation so that you can hear from a range of different perspectives. For example, if Council were considering an option to widen a residential street which would require the destruction of a local playground, it would be important to hear from local residents, shops, schools, and other interest groups. It can often help to first list the different types of stakeholders involved in an issue to ensure that you have at least one, ideally more, representatives from each affected category (Hobbs 2008).



**It is easy to lose sight of how much perceptions may differ between groups.**

## **Managing The Squeaky Wheel**

It is important to identify the core issues of a problem when dealing with a squeaky wheel because incorrectly managing one may inflame the situation. If a person just needs to be heard, it may be enough to acknowledge their complaint and listen to them talk about the issue to their satisfaction. Once heard, the person may then be willing to accept the decision. Another individual might simply enjoy the attention and therefore will be encouraged in their squeaking if you spend a long time going over the issues. A third person might be genuinely concerned by their issue and will not be satisfied unless their concern is dealt with.

As hostility and frustration can become exceedingly problematic and entrenched once they occur, it is important to try to avoid inflaming the situation. It may be sufficient to ensure they understand that these processes take time and set appropriate and achievable deadlines. When these deadlines can't be met, it can often be easier to take the initiative and notify the individuals concerned with an explanation as to why the deadlines must be moved back rather than avoid the issue and wait to be contacted by them.

Sometimes squeaky wheels will go directly to the media. In an effort to deal with this, some local governments have adopted procedures which see all media engagement occur only through approval by the CEO or the Mayor. However, these approval processes also take time and, unless given priority, can lead to growing resentment from the media that may further inflame the issue. Considering the number of requests that can flow into a council, it may be useful to have alternative contact points that could assist with this process.

## Harnessing The Squeak

Squeaky wheels that are passionate about their concern might also be willing to have their energy harnessed to that cause and turned toward a productive end. Councils have a responsibility to respond to each person who raises an issue and rather than looking at squeaky wheels as a problem, there may be opportunities to see squeaky wheels as a resource to help guide processes and decisions.

As an example, some local government organisations noticed that several members of their local community were frequently squeaking about bumps in footpaths, graffiti, and pot holes in the local roads. Rather than accepting the frequent reminders of the continual deterioration of their assets, these organisations established volunteer programs focused on graffiti removal and damage spotters and therefore harnessed the passion of such people and channelled it toward a very productive end.

Squeaky wheels can also provide additional support to local government by championing the needs of the local community against other organisations, institutions or other associations.



**Squeaky wheels can become allies in helping local government make the decisions it needs to make.**

## **Conclusion**

The Local Government Act (1999) determines that Councils have a requirement to respond to issues and complaints raised, and that decisions may be subject to public scrutiny. This provides an avenue for the squeaky wheel to ensure it receives the grease, and one which may result in unwanted, and possibly unwarranted, media attention.

This can be a problem when important perspectives held by other parts of the community cannot be heard because those community members do not know how to apply pressure to the mechanisms of local government to ensure that they can give their opinion.

Therefore Local Government needs to be proactive and engage its communities before this happens by utilising a number of consultation tools with a variety of different interest groups to ensure that the needs of the whole community are taken into account. This ensures that local government will have a better understanding of the needs of the local community and, most importantly, means that people do not have to squeak to have their say.

## **Emerging Leaders Program**

The Emerging Leaders Program is delivered by LGMA (SA) in partnership with the Executive Education Unit at the University of Adelaide. It is a 10 month experiential learning program which includes a group project that is designed to assist the Emerging Leaders in developing leadership and organisational skills.

The Emerging Leaders Program aims to provide participants with the following:

- A greater level of comprehension and understanding of local government
- Increased confidence
- Enhanced self awareness
- An appreciation of and an ability to work with different personality types
- The opportunity to challenge their assumptions

Further information about the participant led modules can be found on the following pages.

## Squeaky Wheel Presentation

Our LGMA (SA) presentation group presented several scenarios based on a fictional road widening project funded by state government. The aim of the presentation was to demonstrate that what seems to be a simple project can have huge ramifications for residents, business owners and Local Government. These “squeaks” also have implications on Local Government resources.



**Penelope**

Penelope, affluent resident of the area, has driven the road widening campaign for her own personal reasons. She also happens to be a good friend of the Mayor.



**Annabelle**

Annabelle likes to drive her flash new car quite fast and wants to have a nice wide street to allow her to do this. She does not feel it is important that it may affect other residents or the local school.



**Rainbow Storm**

Rainbow Storm is opposing the project due to the proposed removal of a bush which she believes is an important part of the habitat.



**School Principal**

A local school principal is concerned that the school would lose their open space and playground area due to the road widening project.



**Jock**

Local fish and chip shop owner, Jock, is concerned that he will lose his outdoor dining area because of the project. He fears this will impact on his income.



### **Arrabella**

Federal MP, Arrabella, is insisting that any concerns over the project are nothing to do with her as the money was allocated to the local government in order for them to decide where to spend it. It is revealed, however, that her family is friendly with certain Council Elected Members.

### **Summary**

While this presentation aimed to use humour to depict a situation involving squeaky wheels, it also showed how the diversity of needs and opinions held by the general public can come into conflict. Differences in values and lived experiences can quickly become apparent during the consultation process. Everyone involved will have their own perspective on the situation and it is in balancing these perspectives that local government can best come to the right decision.

# Rural Perspectives Module

## **Speakers:**

Adrian Pederick MP – Member for Hammond (State)

Mayor Roger Strother – Coorong District Council

CEO Michael Boyd – Coorong District Council

Ms Sharon Hanson – Editor – Murray Valley Standard

Patrick Secker MP – Member for Barker (Federal)

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The afternoon session included presentations from the speakers who provided their insight and perspective on the challenges of local government in a rural setting, and enabled the group to gain an understanding of the different environments facing non-metropolitan councils. At the conclusion of the afternoon session, there was an opportunity to network with the speakers and staff from the Coorong District Council before heading back to our accommodation in Strathalbyn. A dinner at a local hotel rounded off the day. After breakfast the next morning, the group made its way to Goolwa for the afternoon's activity – the Spirit of Coorong Cruise. The 4 hour cruise provided the group with an understanding of the very dire issues facing the Coorong through salination and lack of water from the River Murray. The cruise also provided the opportunity to see lots of local wildlife and enjoy the beauty of the Coorong.



# Media & Engagement Module

## Speakers

Ms Leigh McClusky, Principal, McClusky & Co

Mr Mark Withers, CEO, City of Charles Sturt

## Panel

Mayor Felicity-Ann Lewis, City of Marion

Mr Mark Withers, CEO, City of Charles Sturt

Mr Neil Brown, General Manager City Infrastructure & Public Works,  
Adelaide City Council

Mr Craig Clarke, Unit Manager Communications, City of Marion

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The session included addresses from two key-note presenters who provided their insights into local government from a media, engagement and public relations perspective. After morning tea, a panel discussion was facilitated to further explore the question: *"Local Government - Does the squeaky wheel get the grease?"* The insights and experiences of the various panel members provided for lively discussion and debate. In particular, the pace of technological advancements and how this is changing the way local councils engage with their communities was discussed.



# Political Context Module

## Speakers

Mr Jeff Tate, Consulting PTY LTD (former CEO of the City of Onkaparinga)

## Panel

Mayor Gary Johanson, Port Adelaide Enfield Council

Mr Bill Hayes, CEO, The IFB Integrity Group PTY LTD

Mr John Harry, CEO, City of Salisbury

Mr Paul Di Lulio, CEO, Campbelltown City Council

Mr Paul Sutton, General Manager Corporate Services, City of Charles Sturt

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This session explored the three tiers of government in relation to the Emerging Leaders overall topic “*Local Government: Does the Squeaky Wheel Get the Grease?*” The workshop was broken into three sections. Firstly, Jeff Tate explored the subject “Local Government in a political Context”. Participants then split into three groups to identify key “squeaky wheels” and those who got the most “grease” (i.e. attention, action, funding) within each of the three levels of government (local, state and federal) using a visual diagram of each level. Finally, there was a panel discussion which used hypothetical scenarios relevant to similar situations currently in the media (i.e. a wind farm in rural Australia) with panel input on what certain stakeholders might stand to gain or lose.



# Sustainability Module

## **Speakers**

Mr Josie McLean, Director, The Partnership

## **Panel**

Mr Tim Mulhausler, Chair, SA LG Board Auditors Galpins Accountants  
Auditors and Business Consultants

Ms Wendy Bell, Bell Planning Associates Principal, Bell Planning  
Associates

Mr Ben Calder, Strategic Planner, City of Onkaparinga

Mr Steve Ainscow, Manager, SA Surfacing, Downer EDI

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The Sustainability workshop was held at the Woodcroft Community Centre. A short address by our keynote speaker, Josie McLean, was followed by a discussion on what sustainability meant to people. A lively panel discussion was held which included panel members selected to represent the triple bottom line for sustainability (social, environmental and financial sustainability). Lastly, a facilitated discussion was held to see if people's views on sustainability had changed over the course of the workshop. The workshop concluded with a green tour of the Woodcroft Community Centre with a focus on the sustainable elements of the building's design.



## 2012 Emerging Leaders Team



**Adrian Hill**  
Environmental  
Health Officer  
City of Holdfast Bay



**Jenny Brady**  
Events Coordinator  
Campbelltown City  
Council



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City of Marion



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## Participating Councils



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*Local Government Act 1999* (South Australian Government)

*South Australian Freedom of Information Act 1991* (South Australian Government)

# Acknowledgements

Local Government Managers Australia (SA)

Executive Education Unit

Fuji Xerox

Participating Councils

Speakers and Panel Members

Graphic Design by Shannon O'Farrell

Individual Photography by Lorraine Vingerhoets

Photographs supplied by the Presentation Team as part of the Emerging Leaders Program



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