



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



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**EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM  
FINAL REPORT 2015**

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## Foreword

A core purpose and objective of Local Government is to build and enhance community development and well-being. Economic prosperity and growth are essential elements of sustained community well-being – hence Local Government's involvement in economic development.

With South Australia's economy undergoing a challenging transformation, Local Governments must play their part.

The Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) sector supports the majority of non-government jobs in local and regional economies. Small businesses need the support of Local Governments to enable – not constrain or over-regulate – growth. They need partnerships and alignment with Local Governments to maximise return on effort and capital invested in growth plans and activities.

In some instances they will require leadership and support from Local Governments to access new, high value growth markets. In other instances Local Governments will be the catalyst for growth themselves providing a platform for aspirational small businesses to build from strategic investments by Councils in their communities.

I was delighted to be invited to address the Class of 2015 in the Local Government Professionals Australia, SA Emerging Leaders Program. The participants' understanding and enthusiasm in addressing the key strategic role that Local Governments can and must play in the transition of their local communities as a means of rebuilding the State's economy was particularly encouraging.

How, where and when might Local Government step up? Who has already stepped up and how? I look forward to Local Government Professionals Australia, SA driving this discussion within the industry over the years to come.

**Sean Keenihan**

*Chairman of Partners*

*Norman Waterhouse Lawyers*



**Developing local communities is the lawful objective and role of Councils, legitimising Local Government's essential role in the transformation of local economies and communities. It has powers under the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), and controls many assets.**

Key roles played by Local Government include advocacy, collaboration, building relationships, business operations and enabling communities. Perhaps there is a perception that, over time, industry and commercial interests have pushed Local Government into the role of the three 'Rs' - Roads, Rates and Rubbish. However, given the complexity and diversity of their operations and community expectations, there is much more to Local Government.

**What is Local Government?\***

The term "Local Government" refers to the system in which 68 local Councils operate in South Australia. The Constitution Act 1934 (SA), the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), and the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA), create the legal framework within which Local Government operates and the four-yearly election process which underpins the representative nature of Local Government Councils.

Democratically elected members make up Local Government Councils and, with staff support and in partnership with their local communities, they manage more than \$8 billion worth of community infrastructure and invest about \$1 billion a year in providing services to people who live, work, do business in, and visit the local Council area.

As with other democratically elected governments, i.e. State and Federal Governments, Councils have powers to raise revenue (primarily through Council rates) to provide and maintain infrastructure and services, to regulate activities (such as building development) and to impose penalties if local regulations are breached (eg. dangerous dog attacks).

The Local Government system in South Australia is integral to the democratic system of government in Australia which provides vital economic, social and environmental support for communities.

Since the 1960s Councils' roles have steadily expanded. This is due to:

- Community standards and expectations growing along with economic growth (eg. a higher number of vehicles per household leads to demand for safer local roads/traffic management and the emergence of Legionnaire's Disease creates new environmental health inspection requirements);
- Reductions in the size of both Federal and State public services and greater legal requirements (eg. building fire safety inspections now done by Councils and higher workplace safety standards affecting all employers); and
- Greater demand for local services (eg. recycling or immunisation of school children against Meningococcal C).

**How Councils Operate\***

Councils largely operate autonomously within the framework of the legislation and are primarily accountable to their local communities. They are generally not subject to Ministerial direction by either State or Federal Governments. Sometimes, such as in the area of planning and development, Councils work jointly with the State Government, and their decisions may be subject to advice and direction from State Government. Further information regarding the legal framework for Local Government, and other relevant legislation is available via the SA Government's legislation database.

Local Government in South Australia is typified by:

- High standards of operational competence and accountability;
- Sharing resources, working consultatively and cooperatively with other Councils and other spheres of government;
- Low net debt and conservative management of finances; and
- Expanding roles to respond to community demands and service gaps.

\*Source: Local Government Association of South Australia's website:  
<https://www.lga.sa.gov.au/page.aspx?u=193>



**Local Government, as the third tier of Government in Australia, is the closest to the community, with many daily 'touch points' for industry, business and community. This makes it ideally placed to identify and deliver community outcomes, as it has the unique capacity to more deeply understand and deliver what it is the community needs.**

# LONG TERM PLAN FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA



**The South Australian Strategic Plan is the lead document to identify and articulate the transformation planned for the state and to direct collective action.**

It was written in 2004 (and updated in 2011) to drive South Australia's prosperity, sustainability, creativity and innovation. Local Government is critical to the successful enabling of the 3 key drivers; improved wellbeing, expanded opportunities and stronger communities.

The Plan sets out the State Government's long term vision for South Australia:

***South Australia's Strategic Plan creates a future shaped by choice, not chance. Keeping our communities strong and vibrant, protecting our rich environment and pursuing shared economic prosperity will provide a better future for South Australians. By investing together in our health, education and innovative ideas we can secure our top priority: the wellbeing of all South Australians.***

The Strategic Plan is intended to express the core values of the State and its 100 targets reflect key priorities organised under 6 common themes.

**Growing Prosperity** - including achieving financial security, population and employment growth and improving the State's economic and competitive position.

**Improving Wellbeing** - making South Australia safer in all areas of daily life and a healthier community.

**Attaining Sustainability** - increasing renewable energy generation and use, reducing waste and protecting biodiversity.

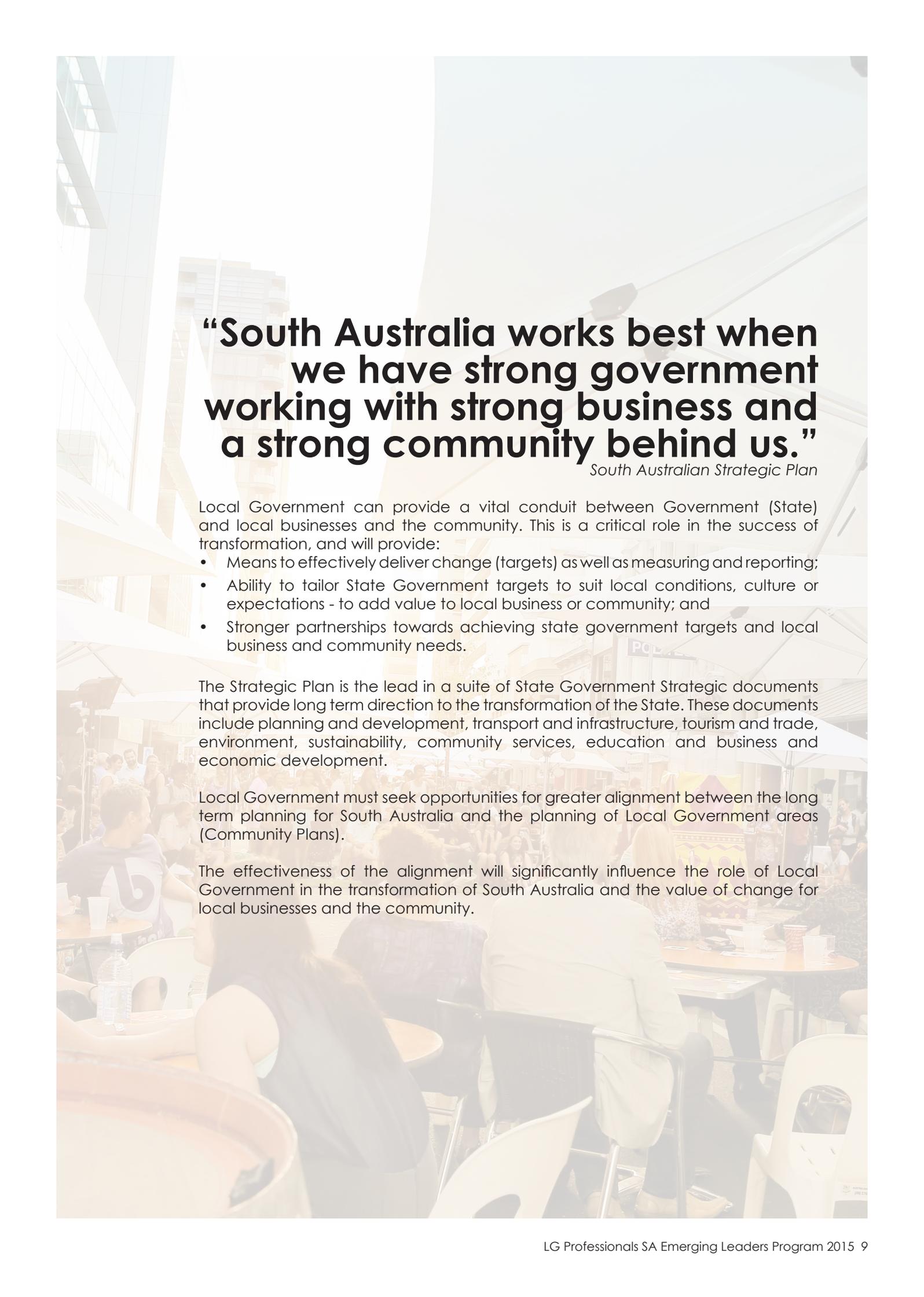
**Fostering Creativity and Innovation** - valuing heritage in art and creativity, increasing investment in research, development and innovation.

**Building Communities** - increasing equality in leadership across the community, supporting diversity and valuing volunteers.

**Expanding opportunity** - improving education and training, housing affordability and social services.

The 100 targets direct State Government's Policy, Program and funding. Each target is outlined with a key direction, key measure, explanation and nomination of lead agency within State Government. The targets are measurable to demonstrate progress towards the broader state vision and goals.

These targets are the key to achieving the transformation of South Australia. Local Government must align with these objectives to maximise its influence in the State's transformation and to ensure that the transformation provides benefits to the local community, businesses and environment.



# **“South Australia works best when we have strong government working with strong business and a strong community behind us.”**

*South Australian Strategic Plan*

Local Government can provide a vital conduit between Government (State) and local businesses and the community. This is a critical role in the success of transformation, and will provide:

- Means to effectively deliver change (targets) as well as measuring and reporting;
- Ability to tailor State Government targets to suit local conditions, culture or expectations - to add value to local business or community; and
- Stronger partnerships towards achieving state government targets and local business and community needs.

The Strategic Plan is the lead in a suite of State Government Strategic documents that provide long term direction to the transformation of the State. These documents include planning and development, transport and infrastructure, tourism and trade, environment, sustainability, community services, education and business and economic development.

Local Government must seek opportunities for greater alignment between the long term planning for South Australia and the planning of Local Government areas (Community Plans).

The effectiveness of the alignment will significantly influence the role of Local Government in the transformation of South Australia and the value of change for local businesses and the community.

## 2015 EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM



**In 2015, Local Government Professionals Australia, SA has delivered the tenth iteration of the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP) in conjunction with University of Adelaide's Executive Education Unit.**

The ELP 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; and
- The opportunity to challenge their assumptions.

In 2015 there were 28 ELP participants enrolled (a record number for this program), with participants from a total of 16 different metropolitan and rural councils.

The ELP delivers eight training modules; one per month from May to December. At the end of the program, the group is required to submit a major project presentation on a theme determined by Local Government Professionals Australia, SA.

The theme for this year's ELP major project and the subject of this report is:

### ***"Local Government's role in the Transformation of South Australia."***

The 2015 ELP has been a very interesting and rewarding experience with a wide range of passionate and motivational speakers delivering on a wide variety of topics.

Module One was a two day residential retreat, which included a session with the participant's mentors and a dinner with mentors and other invited guests. Group activity and speakers assisted the participants to begin to build relationships that would be required throughout the program.

During Module One all the participants were formed into groups based on the results of individual Team Management Profiles which were undertaken prior to the module.

Each group was given a topic to research and present on, with topics consisting of:

- *Rural Perspective;*
- *Political Context;*
- *Sustainability; and*
- *Media & Engagement.*

#### **Rural Perspective**

The Rural Perspective module consisted of a tour from Tea Tree Gully to Clare and Burra and back via the Barossa. This highlighted the importance of collaboration within and outside of Local Government such as that shown between Adelaide Hills Council, City of Playford, Town of Gawler and the CFS during the Sampson Flat bushfires. Another example of collaboration was sharing of personnel and resources between rural councils. The idea of Council as a business was also raised, with one example being the tourism opportunity provided by the Paxton Square Cottages business run by the Regional Council of Goyder. Overall, the day gave all participants an increased understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by rural councils.

#### **Political Context**

The Political Context module provided in insight into the role that Local Government has in enabling economic development and advocating for the needs of the community. This included a bus tour of the Mount Barker growth areas, and how the Mount Barker District Council has responded to the challenges and opportunities faced following the State Government decision to rezone 13,000 hectares of rural land to residential, with a target to increase population of Mount Barker by 26,000. There were great examples shown as to how Local Government has responded and provided leadership in managing the current and future needs of their community.

#### **Sustainability**

The enabler role was revisited during the Sustainability module, with examples discussed including Local Government's role in the development of the Brickworks Market at Thebarton, and the St Clair Development at the former Cheltenham Racecourse. A presentation on the Salisbury Water Project gave insight into what can be achieved by councils collaborating on projects, and when councils think



'outside the square', along with the challenges faced. This project has also resulted in economic benefit with recycled water used to irrigate local parks and is sold to local business. The Sustainability module also introduced the topic of Builder of Relationships, such as Local Government's role in the highly successful business mission to China's Shandong Province in May 2015.

### **Media and Engagement**

The Media and Engagement Module again highlighted Local Government's role in Builder of Relationships. Examples included engaging with the community regarding fire awareness and local issues such as community open space and dog control. The final presentation of the day spoke of the project between Campbelltown Council and local businesses to create the 'Flavours of Campbelltown' Food Trail and how it has been effective for economic growth in the area and building local relationships.

Following the four modules, the ELP 2015 participants determined that Local Government's role in the Transformation of South Australia includes:

- Advocate;
- Collaborator;
- Relationship Builder;
- Business; and
- Enabler.

These roles are discussed in greater detail, with supporting case studies throughout this report.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN ADVOCATE



**An advocate is one who “publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.”**

## **Advocating for Individuals**

The transformation of South Australia relies heavily on the ability of Local Government to act as an advocate for multiple facets of the community. These include residents and individual customers, businesses and business interests, other Local Governments and even State and Federal Governments. The role of Local Government as an advocate is somewhat underestimated but as South Australia grows and progresses into the future, the importance of Local Government advocacy will become more apparent and utilised much more effectively.

## **Advocating for other Local Governments**

An essential role of an advocate is to support and guide individuals or businesses when other avenues appear closed or unavailable. To the individual, having Local Government oversee an issue or a cause is essential because it adds validity if a larger entity, such as a council, supports it. It also adds a form of protection due to the “safety in numbers” theory. Too often a valid cause is ignored or undermined because the “voice” is too small, however with Local Government advocating for these “smaller voices”, the issues are brought into the public eye and have a much greater chance of being actioned.

## **Advocating for Business**

Councils within South Australia vary in size, population and income significantly. This creates power for some of the larger councils, but conversely weakens the smaller and less densely populated regions, eg. regional. It is imperative for the future survival and development of these less powerful councils that the larger, wealthier and more influential councils advocate to the State and Federal Governments on behalf of the less influential Councils. This is most notable in terms of Federal funding and prioritisation of projects. When Local Governments advocate on behalf of other Local Governments it helps build stronger, more reliable relationships between the Councils which in turn creates more effective and transparent interactions in the future.

South Australia’s economy in the present and more importantly, in the future will heavily rely on Local

Government being an advocate for business.

Current commentary in daily news feeds highlight South Australia as having one of the highest unemployment rates in the country and one of the worst performing economies. Over 90% of businesses in South Australia are small businesses, and are therefore responsible for the employment of the majority of the State’s workforce.

It is crucial that these businesses survive and grow to help the overall economy. State Government provides opportunities for these businesses to expand their market share by advocating for them to larger, previously inaccessible markets. By using their profile and influence, Local Government has helped take the quality products produced by small business, and exposed them to the world. The perfect example of this is Local Government becoming involved with the Shandong Province in China.

The financial benefits to small business can have a flow on effect with the economy as a whole because small businesses can grow which puts more people in employment and puts more money into the economy. Advocacy on behalf of small business truly opens up South Australia to the world economy.

## **As an Advocate, Local Government will:**

- **Open doors to new markets for local businesses that were previously unavailable or inaccessible to them**
- **Be the voice for individuals who are not heard by higher authorities and fight for a desired outcome**
- **Collectively advocate on behalf of individual Councils, to support colleagues and provide more consistent leadership towards common goals**



### **Case Study - Pensioner Rate Cut**

On May 14th, 2014, the Australian Government decided to cut the National Partnership Agreement on certain Concession Card and Senior Card Holders (NPA). At the time the State Government funded concessions for council rates to the value of approximately \$190 per card holder per year. When federal funding was removed, the State Government announced a new 'Cost of Living Concession' to replace the old NPA, resulting in the removal of council rates concessions. This affected approximately 160,000 South Australians (10% of the population).

Together, the LGA and Local Governments objected to these cuts as it was creating hardship on many residents as well as putting an enormous financial burden on Councils, especially those with a higher population of pensioners and low income earners in their demographic. Local Government lobbied as a collective and defeated the proposed cuts. The new concession scheme was adjusted and the cuts to Council rates concession were removed.

Individually, the residents or an individual Council would have most likely been powerless to revoke the cuts, but as a collective they were able to advocate for their residents, provide support and be the voice that was powerful enough to administer change. The residents and Councils both benefited financially, but the process highlighted that residents should have faith that their council would support and protect their interests.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS A COLLABORATOR



**Within Local Government, collaboration can range from resource sharing between Councils, to Councils working together with one another to deliver projects to the community.**

Working in collaboration also extends to Councils working together with other levels of Government or even businesses and the community that have led to the transformation of local communities and economies.

## Reasons for Collaboration

There are many reasons for collaboration:

- It strengthens the relationship between councils and other government entities;
- It allows the opportunity to capture and share knowledge and innovation;
- It provides for a strong, open and productive working relationship;
- There are reduced costs due to economies of scale and the elimination of duplication;
- It can free up resources which can be used to provide other services to the community; and
- Allows Councils to potentially grow and be more sustainable.

Collaboration between Councils has occurred with great success over the last few years. Not only are there networking groups where ideas and knowledge can be shared among peers within the various professions, but there have been many successful projects where two or more councils have combined resources and worked together to provide more efficient services to the community.

## Examples of Collaboration

There are many examples of where collaboration has occurred, which include:

- Library One Card – South Australian Councils working together to deliver a library management solution for all Councils to use.
- Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority (NAWMA) – a regional subsidiary of the Town of Gawler, City of Playford and City of Salisbury which provides waste management for those Councils as well as educating residents on waste disposal.

- Eastern Region Alliance (ERA) – Seven Councils (City of Burnside, City of Campbelltown, City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters, City of Prospect, City of Tea Tree Gully, City of Unley and Town of Walkerville) have elected to work together to provide greater services to their communities. Services which are discussed regularly include ageing and health, arts and culture, business and economic development, corporate services, depot/operations, environment, governance, infrastructure and assets, libraries, open space and leisure facilities, and planning policy.
- Council Solutions – a joint initiative of City of Adelaide, City of Charles Sturt, City of Marion, City of Onkaparinga, City of Salisbury and City of Tea Tree Gully with a purpose to optimise the financial sustainability through the benefits of collaborative strategic procurement and contract negotiation and management.

Local Government has shown that over the years, by working in collaboration, it has assisted and will continue to do so, in the transformation of South Australia to ensure the continued prosperity of our communities.

## As a Collaborator, Local Government will:

- **Build partnerships to deliver better outcomes for the community more efficiently**
- **Promote collaboration to improve working relationships and sharing of knowledge - within Council and with the community**
- **Support greater sharing of resources between Councils to improve the quality of services available to businesses and the community**



### **Case Study - Library One Card**

In 2009, a business case was developed by The South Australian Public Library Network showing that 85% of libraries had library management systems that were more than 5 years old and that a single library management system among Councils would provide efficiencies while allowing customers to have access to a much larger range of library materials. The benefits to Councils were that the need for libraries to manage their own computer and software systems was alleviated, and that the need to have a large range of material at each library was reduced. Smaller libraries would have access to a high level service which would have otherwise been completely outside their resourcing.

All councils were to use a single system known as 1LMS, and users of libraries would have a library card known as "One Card" which would give them access to computers and library materials in any library in South Australia, as well as 24 hour access to online services. Users could reserve any library item within the State and have it delivered to their home library, and then return it to any library. The project was conducted in collaboration between the Libraries Board of South Australia, Local Government Association, and all the South Australian Councils and took quite a few years of working together to get the project to completion.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS A RELATIONSHIP BUILDER



**“Local Government should not downplay its seminal role in a range of major projects, programs and initiatives that have led the transformation of local communities and economies.”**

*Mr Sean Keenihan (Senior Economic Development Advisor to State and Local Government, Chairman Norman Waterhouse Lawyers, Chair South Australian Tourism Commission)*

Local Government has historically been influential and capable in transforming communities due to how well positioned Councils are to build relationships with State and Federal Governments, the local community (rate-payers, businesses and visitors), industry and other Councils. There are many examples of this occurring to the economic benefit of local communities.

## **Engagement with Business & Industry**

The Metropolitan Local Government Group (MLGG) is a committee comprising Adelaide Metropolitan Mayors and Council CEOs. The MLGG's 'Think Tank for Economic Development' July 2015 initiative allowed Mayors and Chief Executive Officers to engage with business and industry representatives in a forum to map a way towards economic growth. The first forum was attended by approximately 36 industry representatives. The Think Tank was a great step forward in developing improved working relationships with business and industry, providing an opportunity for Local Government to listen to business leaders to hear what Local Government can do to help make doing business easier. It provided an opportunity to hear from business about the challenges facing small business start-ups, planning issues, zoning, change of use requirements and things as fundamental as terminology between government-speak and industry interpretation.

## **Engagement with State Government**

Lord Mayor Martin Haese and the Local Government Association convened a 'Summit for Jobs Growth' in August and November 2015 for South Australian Mayors, resulting in a commitment to maintain a high focus on economic development and employment. The Summit was attended by Premier Weatherill and underscored the importance of collaboration

between Federal, State and Local Governments. The Premier's attendance was a sign of the increasing acceptance of Councils' capacity to play an active role in the transformation of South Australia's economy. Mayors in attendance set tangible outcomes to help create much needed jobs.

## **Engagement with China**

Local Government's role in the highly successful business mission to Shandong in May 2015 was another public display of the legitimate and necessary role Council's play in supporting economic development of the communities they represent. Its success demonstrated that State Government is increasingly supportive of Local Government's broader economic development role, particularly at local and regional level, and how it will underpin the transformation of the State's economy and ensure the continued prosperity of communities for generations to come.

Local Government gives small to medium enterprises (SMEs) a business advantage in China in areas of Tourism, Education and Food and Wine because the position of Mayor is highly respected. The Mayor to Mayor relationship is highly trusted allowing SMEs privileged, structured and supported entry into markets in China.

## **As a Relationship Builder, Local Government will:**

- **Promote active community engagement, expanding its reach, influence and staff expertise**
- **Exercise leadership, intervention, stewardship and participation in economic strategy, policy and initiatives to support local businesses**
- **Develop strategic relationships to create new opportunities not available through other levels of Government**



## Case Study - Flavours of Campbelltown Food Trail

The Flavours of Campbelltown Food Trail was a result of a City of Campbelltown workshop held in 2009 that identified food manufacturing as an authentic strength in the area and how best to promote this. The Food Trail was launched in February 2010 by the then Premier of SA. The trail has grown from nine original members joining for free to 30 members paying \$500 each year.

The objectives were to increase tourism to the area, promote Campbelltown as being an area of strong food manufacturing, to support local businesses and to attract new businesses to the area. Outcomes have included increased sales of between 40% and 400% reported by businesses since joining the Food Trail; increase in visitor numbers on tours from 800 per year in 2012/13 to 3000 per year in 2013/14; cross-pollination between businesses in order to support sales and each other, and business expansion.

This project built many bridges between Council and its businesses, and has been a great exercise in promoting to all businesses that Council is willing to support them.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS A BUSINESS



**Local Government should support the Business Sector where possible and leverage Council assets and resources to generate business opportunities while achieving competitive neutrality.**

## **Delivering Services Sustainably**

Historically, Local Government's key 'business' has been to deliver services to the community in exchange for rates and in doing so manages billions of dollars of infrastructure on behalf of the community. South Australia is fortunate to have been one of the first states in Australia to legislate Asset Management Planning and has resulted in many Local Governments having achieved or nearing financial sustainability. This is an important achievement as it ensures that the community is provided with the best possible service at the least possible cost. By 'doing more with less' Council can focus on shifting services or providing new services to ensure the ever evolving community receive the services they actually need. The old stigma of the role of Local Government being 'Roads, Rates and Rubbish' is disappearing as new services are provided.

## **Promoting and Assisting Local Businesses**

Local Government can leverage their resources to assist local business through:

- Increasing tourism opportunities and awareness;
- Mentoring of small business; and
- Rezoning land use to enable new business opportunities.

Local Government is also key in supporting local business through the awarding of contracted work for the management of Council infrastructure and delivery of services. The Polaris Centre in Mawson Lakes runs various programs for small business for a fee to assist them to develop and improve their business which in turn offers alternative options and increased employment.

## **Local Government Business Units**

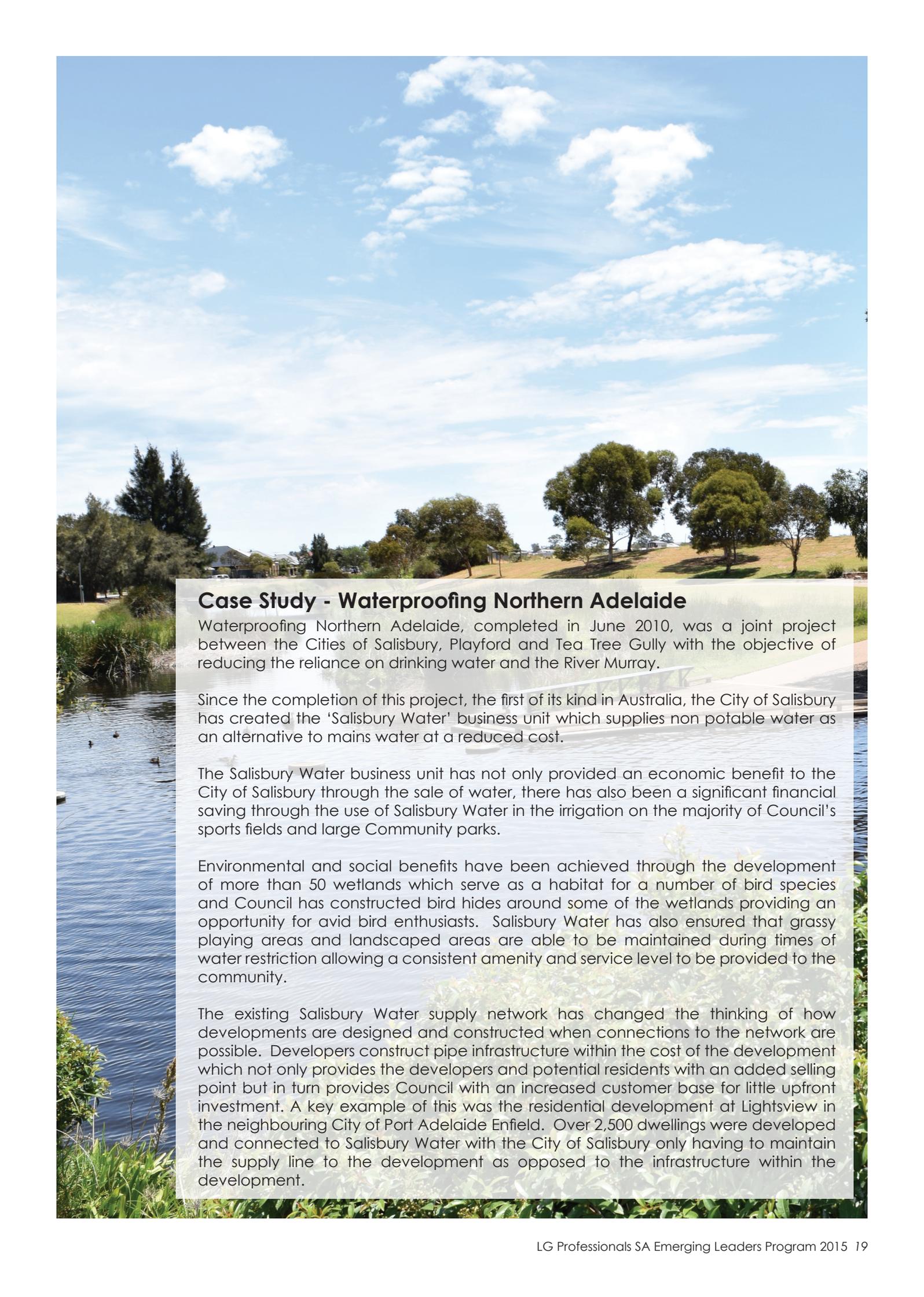
Salisbury Water has proven that a Local Government can not only successfully operate as a business to supply an alternative water supply to its own residents but to also branch out beyond its own borders to provide a service to residents in nearby Councils.

Local Government should review the internal and external services that could be provided to other organisations through a business unit. Local Government undertakes unique work such as stormwater management, stormwater harvesting and planning approvals. Local Governments could develop business units to provide services to other Local Governments at a cost for mutual benefit, and in some cases has greater knowledge than the private sector.

For example the City of Salisbury's Planning Department provides a development assessment and approval service for other Councils such as the City of Charles Sturt. This is a key service to provide to smaller Councils that may not have the financial resources or workload to employ their own staff.

## **As a Business, Local Government will:**

- **Explore opportunities to manage resources and generate additional income to alleviate pressure on rates, as well as demonstrate greater value**
- **Assist local business through mentoring and partnering arrangements to develop the local economy**
- **Generate tourism opportunities to increase investment in their local area**



## Case Study - Waterproofing Northern Adelaide

Waterproofing Northern Adelaide, completed in June 2010, was a joint project between the Cities of Salisbury, Playford and Tea Tree Gully with the objective of reducing the reliance on drinking water and the River Murray.

Since the completion of this project, the first of its kind in Australia, the City of Salisbury has created the 'Salisbury Water' business unit which supplies non potable water as an alternative to mains water at a reduced cost.

The Salisbury Water business unit has not only provided an economic benefit to the City of Salisbury through the sale of water, there has also been a significant financial saving through the use of Salisbury Water in the irrigation on the majority of Council's sports fields and large Community parks.

Environmental and social benefits have been achieved through the development of more than 50 wetlands which serve as a habitat for a number of bird species and Council has constructed bird hides around some of the wetlands providing an opportunity for avid bird enthusiasts. Salisbury Water has also ensured that grassy playing areas and landscaped areas are able to be maintained during times of water restriction allowing a consistent amenity and service level to be provided to the community.

The existing Salisbury Water supply network has changed the thinking of how developments are designed and constructed when connections to the network are possible. Developers construct pipe infrastructure within the cost of the development which not only provides the developers and potential residents with an added selling point but in turn provides Council with an increased customer base for little upfront investment. A key example of this was the residential development at Lightsview in the neighbouring City of Port Adelaide Enfield. Over 2,500 dwellings were developed and connected to Salisbury Water with the City of Salisbury only having to maintain the supply line to the development as opposed to the infrastructure within the development.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS AN ENABLER



**Economic prosperity is an important factor in the sustainability of all Local Government areas, both urban and rural, and Local Government plays a key role in assisting and enabling economic development. This can be achieved through enabling business development, with the subsequent creation of jobs and income within the community.**

## How does Local Government Enable?

Local Government can assist economic growth and development through their involvement in numerous spheres including:

- Education and skills - eg. library and programs run by them;
- Infrastructure - eg. strategic integrated transport planning and facilitating the supply of employment lands;
- Natural environment - support biodiversity and amenity;
- Lifestyle - such as facilitating access to affordable housing and promoting a sustainable standard of living and healthy lifestyle;
- Culture and social cohesion - engage community with a strong sense of vitality, pride and belonging eg. provision of community facilities;
- Connectivity and Innovation - This could include promoting business / university / research linkages; and
- Good governance - accountable, transparent and consistent decision making and implementation.

## Enabling Economic Development for the Transformation of SA

Local Government is much more than a provider of 'Roads, Rates and Rubbish' as highlighted above. However, there is opportunity for Local Government to do more. Whilst some Councils are already active in this space, given the challenges currently being faced by the overall State economy, it is important that this occurs.

A national research project and survey completed by SGS Economics and Planning(\*) found that there are four overlapping areas of activity:

**Promoter** - establish and promote a locale's unique identity and attractiveness to visitors and investors, including attractive streetscapes and public spaces, local festivals or events.

**Facilitator** - foster business networks, clusters and incubation initiatives, as well as inter- and intra-community connections.

**Coordinator** - meet business and community needs by identifying partners, funding and lobbying opportunities for regional infrastructure needs, local industry and workforce development, and community services.

**Planner** - ensure a conducive business and people environment, through effective planning, regulation and service provision that provides greater certainty to investors, including efficient approvals process and regulatory environment, infrastructure partnerships and operations.

\*Jonathan Taylor - Local Government as an Enabler of Social and Economic Development – Local Government and Economic Development in Australia, Commonwealth Local Government Forum Pacific Local Government Symposium 2010.

## As an Enabler, Local Government will:

- **Maximise opportunities across Council to support economic development, business attraction, innovation, job creation and retention of wealth**
- **Engage in the four key areas of economic development, acting as a Promoter, Facilitator, Coordinator and/or Planner**



## **Enabler Case Study - Simplified Outdoor Dining Policy**

The City of Charles Sturt has recognised that increased use of places and spaces, and in particular, outdoor dining areas, contributes to enhancing a sense of identity, vibrancy, security and relaxation and is important for the economic prosperity of the City. It was also recognised that the processes that are in place to manage the public realm need to support the community to make things happen and where possible provide opportunities to be proactive in facilitating place making opportunities.

Council undertook a review of the application form associated with outdoor dining policy with the aim being to streamline the process. The Outdoor Dining Policy was also amended to include the positive contribution that outdoor dining plays, so that this is considered during the application and approval process. The previous 40 page guideline has now been replaced with a 2 page information sheet, which is much simpler for applicants to understand, and the application form has been simplified for the benefit of the applicants and staff, with a much quicker approval process.

As a result, a more facilitative culture is developing within the City of Charles Sturt, which is underpinned by the attitude of identifying ways to make things happen, rather than identifying reasons why it cannot.

# CONCLUSION



***“I am dealing with South Australia’s community leaders on a daily basis. Everyday I work with people who are passionate about making South Australia better. The sector has a fantastic and diverse skill set and the challenges and opportunities are rich and varied.”***

*Mr Matt Pinnegar (Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of South Australia)*

Local Government has a leading role in the transformation of South Australia. For the community, Local Government is their most frequent point of contact and their most recognisable form of Government.

Local Government must ensure that in the transformation of South Australia, they are a relevant player in achieving the best outcomes. Through being more agile, open and innovative, Local Government is uniquely positioned to bridge between the needs of the local community and the broader drivers of State and Federal Government.

Local Government must have an active agenda in driving transformation. It should not limit itself to the “roads, rates and rubbish” services, but demonstrate leadership in setting a direction that is best for the long term needs of the community. Leadership should be shared between Elected Members and the roles and responsibilities of the local administration to implement that direction.

The 5 key roles identified in this report outline the aspirations for Local Government in contributing to the transformation of South Australia. Each role adds to the significance and relevance of Local Government, its connection to the community as well as State and National connections.

Each role is also interrelated and reliant on a holistic approach. As the case studies demonstrate, to undertake one role (ie. Collaborator), you must also reflect the other 4 roles (Advocate, Enabler, Relationship Builder and Business).

## **As a Leader, Local Government will:**

- **Be more agile, open and innovative, moving away from a “business as usual” approach**
- **Be bold and show leadership in setting direction that is best for the long term needs of the community**
- **Have an active agenda to drive transformation, that engages with and provides benefit to all**

## **As an Advocate, Local Government will:**

- **Open doors to new markets for local businesses that were previously unavailable or inaccessible to them**
- **Be the voice for individuals who are not heard by higher authorities and fight for a desired outcome**
- **Collectively advocate on behalf of individual Councils, to support colleagues and provide more consistent leadership towards common goals**



**As a Collaborator, Local Government will:**

- Build partnerships to deliver better outcomes for the community more efficiently
- Promote collaboration to improve working relationships and sharing of knowledge - within Council and with the community
- Support greater sharing of resources between Councils to improve the quality of services available to businesses and the community

**As a Relationship Builder, Local Government will:**

- Promote active community engagement, expanding its reach, influence and staff expertise
- Exercise leadership, intervention, stewardship and participation in economic strategy, policy and initiatives to support local businesses
- Develop strategic relationships to create new opportunities not available through other levels of Government

**As a Business, Local Government will:**

- Explore opportunities to manage resources and generate additional income to alleviate pressure on rates, as well as demonstrate greater value
- Assist local business through mentoring and partnering arrangements to develop the local economy
- Generate tourism opportunities to increase investment in their local area

**As an Enabler, Local Government will:**

- Maximise opportunities across Council to support economic development, business attraction, innovation, job creation and retention of wealth
- Engage in the four key areas of economic development, acting as a Promoter, Facilitator, Coordinator and/or Planner

# EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM CLASS OF 2015



Hayden Cook  
*Campbelltown City Council*



Ella Winnall  
*Berri Barmera Council*



Howard Aspey  
*Whyalla City Council*



Daniel Ahrens  
*City of West Torrens*



Alex Fedcesin  
*Adelaide Hills Council*



Alison Hilton  
*City of Onkaparinga*



Merissa Decelis  
*City of Charles Sturt*



Ashley Bowden  
*City of Onkaparinga*



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*Mount Barker District Council*



James Corletto  
*City of Salisbury*



Matthew Sanderson  
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Nicole Roberts  
*City of Onkaparinga*



Ana Nevjestic  
*City of West Torrens*



Allison Alexander  
*City of Onkaparinga*



Donna Hattam  
*City of Tea Tree Gully*



Paul Rogers  
*District Council of Kimba*



Justin Rice  
*City of Port Adelaide Enfield*



Ryan Glowik  
*City of Tea Tree Gully*



Angela Papatheodorakis  
*City of Port Adelaide Enfield*



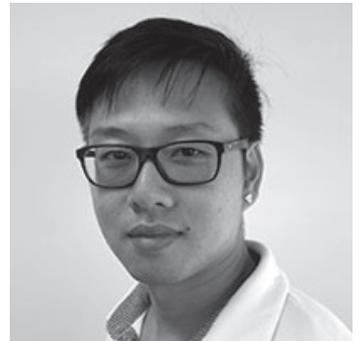
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Tomas Alves  
*City of Salisbury/Charles Sturt*



Scott McLuskey  
*City of Prospect*



Sam Zhang  
*City of Salisbury*



Dave Hutchinson  
*Mount Barker District Council*



Frank Annese  
*City of West Torrens*



Scott Balmer  
*Mount Barker District Council*



Ben Willsmore  
*City of Unley/City of Norwood  
Payneham & St Peters*

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