

Issue No. 5

The SSS Taskforce met on Wednesday, 4th April and discussed a number of issues:

- Appointment of consultants to lead the Expert Teams;
- The Gap Analysis of work that remains in order to address the remaining SSS Panel recommendations; and
- The funding secured to enable the Forum on the 20th April to be free of charge.

**"Where there is no vision the people perish."
(Proverbs 29:18)**

The Taskforce recognised the importance of the April 20th Forum in establishing the path the sector will take in identifying and carrying out reform of Local Government.

The Association has been able to secure funding that will allow attendance at the Forum to be free of charge. Registrations are necessary and will close on **Friday, April 13**.

There are limited places for this popular event, so be sure to register early!

The appointment of Consultants to project manage the Expert Teams was discussed, and the Taskforce is currently approaching a number of consultants for these roles.

The role of the Expert teams will be to ensure that the issues relating to their particular area of focus are adequately addressed. They will prepare a report that will form a chapter of the **Local Government Futures White Paper**.

"This sector, if it is to decide its own future, needs a sense of urgency about reform. It needs a plan for how it will look in five, in ten and in twenty years." Cr Ian West

The Taskforce has already received a number of nominations to be in the Expert Teams and will look to the April 20th forum for more interest.

A Gap Analysis has been completed identifying the gap between individual recommendations and the work that has already been undertaken by the Association. This Analysis was originally carried out on those recommendations that were categorised as a high priority and has now been

extended to include media and low priority recommendations.

The barriers to reform that have been identified by past SSS work were recognised when completing the Gap analysis. These barriers need to be overcome if Local Government is to determine its own future:

- Lack of resources
- Skills shortages
- Lack of Co-ordination
- Compliance Issues
- Lack of tangible benefits
- Financial capacity
- Geographical location and remoteness
- Increased bureaucracy
- Lack of access to new technology

Active barriers to reform are identified as coming from perceived difficulties and challenges associated with reform, including:

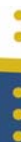
- Poor levels of trust with State and Federal Governments
- Increased bureaucracy
- Lack of trust or rivalry with neighbouring Councils
- Loss of Councils' individual identity and autonomy
- Fear of amalgamation

The Taskforce has acknowledged these critical barriers to reform and believes they must be overcome if Local Government is to establish its own future.

"Local Government is looking for real direction from this Taskforce. It is hoped with help from the Industry Groups and Expert Teams we will be able to create a viable future for Local Government." Cr Bill Mitchell

Feedback from member Councils has indicated some areas to be considered:

"There is a (regulatory) anomaly whereby we must include depreciation on our



operating statement however we exclude it from our rate setting statement”

“Some Councils do not have a choice on the level of service delivery provided. For example in our Shire, we have to provide a doctor, support two Silver Chain Centres

and contribute towards a hospital in another Shire. This is not a matter of choice, it is a necessity.”

The SSS Taskforce Bulletin needs your feedback and comments – please direct them in the first instance to kmurray@walga.asn.au .

We call it a ‘temperature check’. We’ll reproduce your feedback and views so that your Local Government colleagues also know what the temperature is like in the Local Government sector on these issues.

The next Taskforce meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 2

Prior to this meeting the Taskforce will attend the Forum *The Journey – From Cost Shifting to Sustainability* on **Friday, April 20.**

For further information, please contact Public Relations Officer, Kate Murray on 9213 2083 or email kmurray@walga.asn.au

