Report by Kim Reading, Personal Assistant to Director Corporate Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council nominate representatives to attend the Local Government NSW Annual Conference 2013 to be held from 1 – 3 October 2013 at the Sydney Town Hall.

2. That Council endorse the Motions to be submitted to the Local Government NSW Annual Conference 2013 as set out in the report.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. For Council to determine its representation and voting delegates at the Local Government NSW Annual Conference 2013.

2. To advise Council of the proposed motions to be submitted.

REVIEW

The inaugural Local Government NSW Conference provides the opportunity for discussion of issues of local importance. The conference determines policy and provides direction to the Executive, which implements the Local Government NSW policy directives.

Strathfield Council has an entitlement of three delegates for voting purposes and the General Manager as observer.

Background

Over 500 delegates from member councils, as well as representatives of county councils and associate member councils, meet to discuss and set policy for the coming year.

The Conference brings Councillors together to debate and formalise policies for the coming year and identify, discuss and make recommendations for future challenges and opportunities for NSW Local Government.

As in previous years, delegates will hear from a range of highly specialist key note speakers as well as the opportunity to meet, network and engage with fellow Councillors.

The Local Government NSW Conference allows councils to make submissions that are voted upon at the Council meeting to determine what resolutions are to be presented to the NSW government.

Council is asked to determine its delegation for voting purposes at the 2013 annual conference. For Councillors’ information, in 2012 representation from Council was as follows:

Delegates

Cr Gulian Vaccari - Mayor
Cr Andrew Soulos – Deputy Mayor
Observers

Cr Stephanie Kokkolis
Cr Sang Ok
General Manager
Communications & Cultural Services Coordinator

As part of the Local Government NSW Annual Conference participating Councils have been requested to provide submissions for consideration during the Conference no later than 19 July 2013.

The following submissions are proposed:

Services for Self-Funded Retirees

Background

Self funded Retirees support their living expenses from a limited pool of funds that are subject to market forces. As such market downturns and losses impact heavily. For these retirees there is no relief from cost of living increases to essential services and they are denied access to many of the other supports that are means tested. As such they are an emerging group of newly impoverished Australians.

Motion

1. That the Association write to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing advocating community consultation with regard to issues impacting self funded retirees.

2. That the Association request the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing develop strategies to manage issues impacting self funded retirees.

3. That the Association request the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing investigate equitable and meaningful support for self funded retirees in the Australian community.

Regionalisation of funding

Background

With a growing trend towards the regionalisation of funding and grants, disadvantaged communities within mid to high range LGA’s are less likely to receive the additional State/Federal funding and access to resources they require due to the impact of “averaging” across an LGA. Within the SEIFA index on each LGA there will sometimes be extreme ranges of disadvantage.

Motion

That the Association develop a White Paper evaluating the impact of regionalisation of funding on disadvantaged communities within relatively affluent Local Government Areas.
Cost Shifting

Background

Local Government is bearing an increased amount of financial responsibility for what are fundamentally State and Federal expenses. Examples of what are currently considered as cost shifting are Citizenship Ceremonies, the collection of levies such as the Fire Levy and Community Safety initiatives. Rate payers are being burdened by these additional expenses which then compromise Councils ability to provide additional services to their immediate communities.

Motion

That the Association note the impact of cost shifting on local councils and write to Premier Barry O'Farrell requesting the provision of additional subsidies to reduce the impact of cost shifting on local councils and members of the community.

Illegal dumping

Background

Illegal dumping has escalated recently due to the rise in the fees for legally disposing of waste at authorised waste facilities. Although there are substantial fines for illegal dumping offences, people consider that illegally dumping waste to avoid paying the fees is a chance they will take.

As a consequence Councils are utilising rate payers money to dispose of other persons’ illegal waste, which is diverting funds from providing essential services to the community. This comes at a considerable cost, when taking into account the staff and equipment required to collect and transfer the waste to an authorised facility each time an illegal dump occurs.

Motion

That the Association request the NSW State Government implement a state-wide or national program to combat illegal dumping, which includes providing direct assistance via funding or tipping fee subsidies for Councils disposing of illegal dumps at approved facilities.

Building Regulation and Certification

Background

Local Government is well aware of the problems associated with the private certification process and the negative impact private certification can have on the local community, specifically the neighbours adjoining and surrounding particular developments and work sites. In addition, this creates further work for Councils in dealing with the associated complaints and compliance issues.

The NSW Planning White Paper recommends increasing the range and quantity of development types that can be privately accredited and also is aiming for a broader range of technical professionals to become accredited and engaged in the scheme (e.g. designers and specialist engineers etc).
Motion

That the Association make representations to the NSW State Government requiring greater accountability and control over the private certification process and that accreditation should be limited to experienced technical professionals only and not further expanded in order to improve the delivery and standard of development throughout NSW. Private certifiers should be appointed to developments from an independent panel overseen by the Department of Planning or an appropriate peak body.

REFERRAL FROM OTHER DEPARTMENT

All departments of Council were consulted concerning this matter.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Proposed Expenditure: $880pp

Funding is available in the current budget for Councillors' Conferences and Training as set out below. The General Manager's attendance is financed from a separate budget allocation.

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<tr>
<th>Budget Item</th>
<th>Approved Budget</th>
<th>Expenditure to Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Councillors Conferences, Seminars and Training</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
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Report approved by:

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<th>Neale Redman</th>
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<td>Director Corporate Services</td>
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