

## FinPro Member Update – Edition 9, 2022

### President's Message

Good morning,

I've always looked at people who can juggle well with amazement; it's a skill I don't feel I have, but then, reflecting right now on working in Local Government and in finance, maybe we are all expert jugglers now!

This week we have emailed a senior member of each Council's finance team with a survey request. This is part of our joint project with the MAV where we are looking at the financial sustainability of all Councils. We hope that our final report will provide a clearer picture of our sector's sustainability, our challenges and some possible recommendations to Government in the lead up to the State election. We are pleased to partner with the MAV and hope that this work can have some long term, positive impacts for our members.

It is now less than a month until we return to in person for our PD day and I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there. We have a great range of speakers and topics and I encourage you and your teams to get out of the office/home and come into the Melbourne CBD and catch up with your fellow FinPro friends.

Next Wednesday I will be attending the Victorian Local Government Skills Roundtable, representing FinPro, where we will unpack and then start to develop solutions to assist the Council job vacancy and skill shortage crisis. If you have any suggestions on how to combat this crisis, please feel free to drop me an email: [bthomas@hepburn.vic.gov.au](mailto:bthomas@hepburn.vic.gov.au)

Enjoy your weekend



Cheers, Bradley

**Bradley Thomas**  
President – FinPro and CEO, Hepburn Shire

### Membership

We welcome the following new members to our FinPro family:

- **Olivia Owen** has joined the team at Latrobe City as Management Accounting Officer.
- **Logan Tuohey** has joined the team at Gannawarra Shire as their Financial Accountant.

### Congratulations

Well done to the team at **Frankston City Council** for taking out the Delegates Choice Award for the 2021 – 2025 Council Plan and Budget at the recent Corporate Planners Network Awards Event.

At a time when everyone is striving to do their best and meet all the varied requirements there are, it is really worth celebrating when that hard work is recognised. Well done **Kim Jaensch**, **Simone Wickes** and the team at Frankston.

## Upcoming Event:

**FinPro Seminar – in person on 3 June 2022** - Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre.

This will be our first live event since February 2020 and we are very excited to see everyone, to learn and to network.

We have a jam-packed agenda, including the following speakers:

- Sarah Harbidge, Executive Director at LGV
- Noelle Kelleher – CFO at Vision Super
- Travis Derricott – Sector Director Financial Audit at VAGO
- David Edgerton – Director at APV Valuers & Asset Management
- Lord Mayor Sally Capp – Melbourne City Council, and
- Keenan Jackson – Urban Economist & Economic Consultant at .id (informed decisions)

**[Click here for more information and to register](#)**

## Other events

**Wednesday 26 – Friday 28 October 2022** - FinPro Conference –at RACV Cape Schanck

**FinPro AGM – Friday 2 December** at Leonda by the Yarra. **Keynote Speaker – Dylan Alcott AO**

## Technical Updates

### **Local Government Act Implementation Update**

The new Local Government Act 2020 is the most ambitious reform to the local government sector in over 30 years. The Act will improve local government democracy, accountability, and service delivery for all Victorians. [Link to LGV Local Government Act 2020 Website](#)

## LGV BULLETIN: 26/2022

**The following Bulletin was issued on 3 May to the sector and is shared here for information.**

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE REPORTING STEERING COMMITTEE - NOMINATIONS

The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) and Know Your Council (KYC) website were launched in 2015 and remain the core performance reporting platform for councils across Victoria.

The framework is subject to governance oversight by a steering committee of representatives from the local government sector, peak bodies and Local Government Victoria (LGV) with a view to the ongoing review and improvement of the LGPRF.

The Steering Committee comprises 19 members, including sector peak bodies and thirteen council CEOs. Committee meetings are held online via Microsoft Teams twice annually.

Local Government Victoria is seeking nominations from the Rural, Western and Metro/Northern council groups, for three Steering Committee vacancies. The committee is currently overseeing work on the introduction of targets, revisions to indicators and process resulting from the 2021 technical working group reviews and system enhancements to streamline reporting.

Should you be interested in joining the LGPRF Steering Committee and playing an active role in guiding the LGPRF during this next phase of development, please register your interest by emailing the secretariat at [knowyourcouncil@ecodev.vic.gov.au](mailto:knowyourcouncil@ecodev.vic.gov.au) by **COB Friday 13 May 2022**.

Any queries can be directed to Leighton Vivian, Senior Manager Sector Innovation, Performance & Resilience on 9623 1214 or the email address above.

Regards

**Sara Harbidge, Executive Director, Local Government Victoria**

## Local Government Finance Project

As indicated in Bradley's opening message, FinPro, in partnership with the MAV, has commenced a project on the financial state of the sector. Mark Davies, who will be well known to you all, is assisting us. The project will undertake a review of the impact of rate capping and other key revenue factors on the viability of the sector since its introduction in 2016-17. It will also assess the financial outlook for the sector over the next five to ten years.

The project will be drawing on existing data sets and financial plans prepared by councils.

The FinPro representatives on this project are Binda Gokhale and Nathan Morsillo.

An email with a survey and also information request was sent to ONE person from each Council Finance team on Monday 9 May. We have asked that responses be sent in by Friday 20 May. If you are unsure whether your council has received this request, please do not hesitate to contact Gab at [gabrielle@finpro.org.au](mailto:gabrielle@finpro.org.au). Each Council's response to this request is crucial in the formation of the report.

## VAGO – New Audit Reports Tabled 11 May 2022

Dave Barry, Acting Victorian Auditor-General, tabled two reports in Parliament this week.

- Offsetting Native Vegetation Loss on Private Land
- Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants

The second report will be of particular interest to our members and the summary, provided by VAGO is included here for member information. Please refer to the VAGO website for further information.

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### Fraud Control Over Local Government Grants

Are fraud and corruption controls over local government grants are well designed and operating as intended?

#### Key Facts



46 Victorian councils spent more than

**\$45m**

on grants in 2020–21\*



**5/6**

audited councils do not have an overarching grant policy



**50%**

of councillors from audited councils have not completed fraud training even though they approved 70% of grants in 2020

*Note:* \*33 of 79 councils did not report their total grant spending in their 2020–21 annual reports.

*Source:* VAGO, based on information from councils.

[View the report](#)

[View the video summary](#)

### Why this audit is important

In 2020–21, Victorian councils distributed more than \$45 million in grants to individuals, businesses and community groups.

It is important that councils have effective controls for their grant programs to prevent fraud and give their communities confidence that public money is spent as intended.

### What we recommended

We made 9 recommendations to all Victorian councils about strengthening their fraud controls and improving their guidance and training for grant-related fraud.

We also made one recommendation to Loddon Shire Council about reviewing its community planning grant process.

### What we concluded

Councils' fraud controls for their grant programs are not always well-designed and operating as intended. In some cases, they are missing.

Councils are not consistently identifying conflicts of interest, assessing applications against criteria, documenting their decisions, checking how funds are used or evaluating their grant programs' outcomes.

This unnecessarily increases the risk of fraud and makes it harder for the audited councils to show that their grant programs are transparent, equitable and benefit the community.

## Current positions advertised on the FinPro Website

### Revenue and Property Officer

- Port Phillip City Council
- Details [here](#)
- Applications close 20 May 2022

### Property Debtors Officer

- Glen Eira City Council
- Details [here](#)
- Applications close 22 May 2022

## Thank-you to our 2022 Corporate Partners

- \* APV Valuers and Asset Management
- \* Commonwealth Bank
- \* CT Management
- \* .id informed decisions
- \* Ibis Information Systems
- \* MAGIQ Software
- \* LG Solutions
- \* Maia Financial
- \* New Era Management
- \* Treasury Corporation of Victoria
- \* VOTAR Partners
- \* Westpac

## Thank-you to our 2021 Leadership Program Sector Partner:

Vision Super

## FinPro Executive Team 2022

<b>President</b>	Bradley Thomas (Hepburn SC)
<b>Vice-President – Chair Professional Development</b>	Belinda Johnson (Southern Grampians SC)
<b>PD Committee Members</b>	Alan Wilson (Melbourne CC) Charles Nganga (Casey CC) Melissa Baker (South Gippsland SC) Aaron Gerrard (Whittlesea CC)
<b>Vice-President – Chair Technical</b>	Tony Rocca (Maroondah CC)
<b>Technical Committee Members</b>	Danny Wain (Monash CC) Fiona Rae (Golden Plains SC) Nathan Morsillo (Greater Bendigo CC) Simone Wickes (Frankston CC) Wei Chen (Yarra CC)
<b>Chair Advocacy and Vision</b>	Binda Gokhale (Wyndham CC)
<b>Secretary / Treasurer</b>	Gabrielle Gordon

## FinPro Contact Details

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