

Lockyer Valley Regional Council

Local Transition Committee

Communication Plan

October 2007

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION AND INTENT	3
2. BACKGROUND.....	3
3. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS.....	3
4. COMMUNICATION GOALS	3
5. BRANDING.....	3
6. MEDIA RELATIONS.....	4
7. DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION.....	4
8. NOTICE OF MEETINGS AND AGENDAS	4
9. MINUTES OF MEETINGS	4
10. LOCKYER VALLEY LTC AND LOCKYER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL WEBSITES	5
11. EMAIL ADDRESSES.....	5
12. COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	5
<i>12.1. Council Workforces.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>12.2. Council Management</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>12.3. Union Representatives.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>12.4. Elected Members of Existing Councils</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>12.5. Relevant State Departments</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>12.6. Other Stakeholder Organisations</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>12.7. Media Outlets</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>12.8. Community Members.....</i>	<i>7</i>
APPENDIX ONE	8
<i>Local Transition Committee Contact Listing</i>	<i>8</i>

1. Introduction and Intent

The Lockyer Valley Regional Council Local Transition Committee (LTC) has been established to guide the local level change process for transition to the Lockyer Valley Regional Council following the local government elections on 15 March 2008. This "Communication Plan" aims to inform all stakeholders of the reform process in a timely and effective manner.

2. Background

On the 10th August 2007 the Beattie Government passed the Local Government Reform Implementation Bill 2007. Recommendations by the Local Government Reform Commission included the amalgamation of Gatton and Laidley Shire Councils.

Item 4.2 of the guidelines require LTC's to "inform the community and councils within their sphere of concern to ensure a full understanding of the processes of establishing the new local government or changed arrangements". This communication provides clear direction for ensuring that all stakeholders are effectively informed and provided with adequate avenues for input.

3. Legislative Requirements

Local Transition Committees have legislative responsibilities in relation to communication under the Local Government Reform Implementation Bill 2007 Section 159YU (d).

4. Communication Goals

The key objectives for this "Communication Plan" are:

- To achieve broad community awareness of the LTC, its role and related activities;
- To achieve a high level of understanding amongst Council staff of the LTC, its role and related activities;
- To provide stakeholders with regular updates on key stages or milestones of the LTC process;
- To brand the LTC process as a "partnership" that actively involves both Councils as well as staff advocates (unions);
- To effectively manage any issues / concerns by ensuring such matters are addressed in a responsive and responsible manner;
- To highlight and encourage opportunities for community / staff input; and
- To position the LTC process as being transparent, open and cooperative.

5. Branding

All communication disseminated from the LTC directly to stakeholders is to carry the Local Transition Committee masthead.

6. Media Relations

The LTC Chair, or in his absence the Interim CEO, are the only persons who are to speak to the media on behalf of the LTC. Approved press releases are to be forwarded to all relevant media outlets and LTC members, as well as to each Council's CEO as soon as possible following its release. Media releases will be signed off by the LTC Chair and the Interim CEO.

It is recognised by the LTC that representatives of individual Councils have responsibility to inform their own communities and stakeholders regarding amalgamation matters that are not directly linked to the LTC.

7. Distribution of Information

Information will be distributed to committee members in a timely manner. The preferred method of distribution is email however when this is not possible committee members will have information posted or the respective Council will be responsible for passing on the information to a member without email access.

8. Notice of Meetings and Agendas

Wherever possible, notification of an LTC meeting will be made at least **five** days before the scheduled meeting. There may be cases where an urgent matter requires consideration by the Committee and the required notice is not possible.

Notification of a meeting will be made to all committee members, proxy union members and Chief Executive Officers. Respective Councils will be responsible for passing notice of meeting and distributing agendas to members where no email contact is available unless that member has requested that agendas etc. be posted directly to their home address.

Wherever possible, meeting agendas will be distributed at least **five** days prior to a meeting of the LTC so that all members have sufficient time to consider the matters to be discussed.

9. Minutes of Meetings

Minutes of LTC meetings will be confirmed at the following meeting of the LTC (or the respective sub-committee) and final copies will be forwarded to each Council and will be posted on the LTC website when operational. Councils are to make copies of the minutes available on individual council websites.

Unconfirmed minutes of meetings will be distributed to all members and proxy members who attended the meeting within FIVE days of a meeting. Unconfirmed minutes will be posted on the LTC website within SEVEN days of the meeting.

Councils are to provide copies of their meeting minutes to the Interim CEO.

10. Lockyer Valley LTC and Lockyer Valley Regional Council Websites

The LTC website will be available for all members of the public to access and will include (but not be limited to) the following information:

- Publication of minutes of meetings of the LTC;
- Newsletters and other information updates;
- Contact details for members of the Local Transition Committee;
- Links to relevant Departmental website and the two existing councils;
- Information on the March 2008 election;
- Area for staff to access information relating specifically to the workforces;
- Frequently asked questions in relation to amalgamation to Lockyer Valley Regional Council.

It is proposed the Lockyer Valley Regional Council website will be operational shortly before the March elections.

11. Email Addresses

An independent email address for the interim CEO (coconnor@lockyervalley.qld.gov.au) has been established to avoid confusion for correspondents and maintain independence from the existing councils.

12. Communication Strategies for Stakeholder Groups

12.1. Council Workforces

It is vital to ensure that all Council employees are kept informed of, and involved in, the reform process and understand how it will affect them. Having input into the change process will assist in ensuring as smooth a transition as possible to the new council. A number of strategies are identified to ensure staff participation and communication:

- Where practical, the Interim CEO's first point of Council contact for all operational matters in relation to the reform process shall be via the Council CEOs;
- The Council CEOs are required to take all reasonable action to give help to the interim CEO including directing employees to assist the interim CEO, providing access to facilities and supplying information as required in a timely manner;
- Development of the Employment Sub-committee to provide advice to the Local Transition Committee about staffing matters and to develop a draft Industrial Relations Plan;
- A monthly letter to all employees of the two councils will provide general information on the reform process as it progresses;

- Workforce and working group meetings across the two existing councils will be attended by the interim CEO on an ongoing basis and will provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues and receive more detailed information on matters affecting them;
- A link on the LTC website for staff will also provide relevant information to employees and direct them to other on-line resources from other agencies (eg Department);
- An open communication policy by the interim CEO whereby any staff member may contact him to discuss particular issues or concerns in relation to the reform process;

12.2. Council Management

Council management will play a key role in the transition to the new local government. Management at all levels of each council need to be kept well informed and be able to contribute to the reform process. In addition to the above general strategies for council workforces, this will be addressed by:

- The establishment of various project teams which will provide management and senior officers of all councils with opportunities to participate in the change management process within their area of expertise;
- Direct consultation and individual meetings with the interim CEO;
- Briefings to managers and senior staff on relevant issues;
- Reporting by management to the Committee as requested by the interim CEO or LTC;
- Invitation to management and senior officers to attend LTC meetings as observers where related issues are to be considered.

12.3. Union Representatives

It is acknowledged that unions perform an important role in representing employees and in assisting councils with the reform process. Accordingly, relevant unions will be kept informed of the reform process.

The key union contacts as nominated in the 'transition guidelines' are the Australian Services Union, Australian Workers Union and the Queensland Council of Unions.

12.4. Elected Members of Existing Councils

In order to keep elected members of existing councils well informed of the reform process and the work of the LTC, the interim Chief Executive Officer will provide a regular update to each Council. Where invited, the interim CEO will attend Council meetings on a regular basis to provide an update, seek feedback and answer questions.

12.5. Relevant State Departments

The Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation will remain the key contact for the State Government. Ms Lisa McGerty has been appointed as the primary contact for the Department for the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and the Local Transition Committee. Regular updates, minutes and copies of media releases etc. will be forwarded to Ms McGerty on a regular basis.

Other State Government departments who will need to be kept informed on various issues in relation to the reform process as they arise may include:

- Department of Main Roads
- Department of Natural Resources and Water
- Department of Emergency Services

12.6. Other Stakeholder Organisations

A range of key stakeholder organisations will need to be kept informed / consulted on some issues relating to the reform process. These organisations include, but are not limited to:

- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ)
- Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA)
- Local Government Reform State Transition Committee
- Service Providers to the existing local government authorities
- Creditors and debtors of the existing local government authorities

Additional As Agreed Upon By the Committee

12.7. Media Outlets

The media will be issued with regular media releases to ensure the community is kept well informed of the progress of the committee. The committee has previously agreed that the key media contacts for the reform process will be:

- *Gatton Star* (Roger Gorrel)
- *Toowoomba Chronicle* (Elizabeth Pullen)
- *Qld Times* (Andrew Korner)

12.8. Community Members

The general community as a whole must also be kept well informed of the transition to the new council. The following strategies will be employed to ensure the community is informed:

- Dissemination of information by the media will play a critical role in keeping residents of the two councils well informed;
- Maintenance of a relevant and up to date website;
- Availability of information brochures from all Council offices;
- Publication of contact details of Committee members to answer any public enquiries.

Appendix One

Local Transition Committee Contact Listing

Name	Position	Day Telephone	Mobile Telephone	Fax	Email Address
Cr Steve Jones	Chair	07 5462 0300	0408 981 736	07 5462 3269	mayor@gatton.qld.gov.au
Mr Colin O'Connor	Interim Chief Executive Officer	07 5462 0301	0429 620 301	07 5462 3269	coconnor@lockyervalley.qld.gov.au
Cr Janice Holstein	Member - GSC	0417 303 582	0417 303 582	07 4637 4023	withcottimes@bigpond.com
Cr Richard Lee	Member - LSC	07 5465 3551	0417 653 551		richardle@laidley.qld.gov.au
Cr Geoff Lester	Member - LSC	07 5466 5222			
Mr Damien Griffin	Member - QCU	07 3236 2355	0415 293 335	07 3236 2230	queries@qld.cfmeu.asn.au 46 Baguley Street Warwick Qld 4370
Mrs Judith Collie	Member - ASU	07 5462 0327		07 5462 3269	collie@gatton.qld.gov.au
Mr Wayne Pitkin	Member - AWU	07 5466 8846		07 5466 8861	waynepi@laidley.qld.gov.au
Cr Joe Bennett	Proxy - GSC	0418 700 794	0418 700 794	07 5462 4634	n/a
Cr Dave Neuendorf	Proxy - GSC	0408 745 428	0408 745 428	07 4697 5269	dave.neuendorf@lilydale1.com.au
Cr Lois Spann	Proxy - LSC	07 5465 1755	0402 311 472	07 5465 1755	lrs Spann@bigpond.net.au
Mr Martin Cash	Proxy - ASU	0407 738 053	0407 738 053	07 5466 8861	martinca@laidley.qld.gov.au
Mr Chris Simpson	Proxy - AWU	07 4632 9855	0419 765 954	07 4638 2541	Chris.simpson@awu.org.au
Mr Pat Byrnes	Proxy - QCU	0418 746 677	0418 746 677	07 5466 8861	patby@laidley.qld.gov.au