

# Council happenings . . .

with Mayor  
Glenn Wall

## Planning Legislation Changes

On 3 April 2008, the NSW Government released two draft exposure Bills outlining wide ranging changes to the State's planning system. The draft exposure Bills contain over 200 pages of legislative amendments to three main Acts; the Environmental, Planning and Assessment Act; the Building Professional Board Act and the Strata Management Act; and a number of minor amendments to other Acts.

Following this release, the Local Government and Shires Associations (LGSA) have undertaken an internal Community Impact Assessment to determine the potential impacts on NSW communities. The Local Government and Shires Associations are the voice for communities and councils across NSW.

The findings of the community impact assessment are concerning and the LGSA has launched a website [www.keepitlocal.org.au](http://www.keepitlocal.org.au) to highlight their concerns with the reforms and I would encourage residents to visit that site to explore in more detail the concerns of the LGSA.

The proposed laws significantly tip the balance away from the local community and deliver more power into the hands of the State Government and private companies.

The changes are extensive and will leave communities short-changed on services and reduce the right of residents to comment on local developments. With services and facilities used by local residents across NSW under threat and communities could be short changed by dramatic decreases in funding for services of up to 65%.

Council's major concern is that community voices could be lost from local development and that the financial implications of this reform have not been adequately addressed by the State Government. Council in conjunction with the LGSA will continue to argue that control over development should remain in community hands.

## NSW Aboriginal Land Council Education Revolution

The NSW Aboriginal Land Council has launched a \$30m Education Endowment Scholarship. The Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Chairperson of NSWALC officially launched the education endowment scholarship in Sydney on December 2007.

The scholarship fund will aim to provide ongoing support and benefits for Aboriginal people across the entire spectrum of educational opportunities, including mature age students. NSWALC believe this support should not replace existing benefits available to Aboriginal people in NSW, but should supplement the available resources through special initiatives and by generating greater community involvement in assisting those who wish to pursue their education.

Awards under the scheme would be open to all Aboriginal people in NSW with preference given to members of Local Aboriginal Land Councils. It will provide opportunities for study at schools, higher learning institutions, colleges and universities. Scholarship monies provided would vary with the circumstances of the individual.

The eligibility criteria will include financial need, academic performance, connection with the Aboriginal community, commitment to the field of study and leadership potential. A supplementary focus of the scheme, in conjunction with educational institutions and business, it would also connect Aboriginal people with a job and career opportunities in key areas of Aboriginal development.

For further information please contact NSW Aboriginal Land Council, on 9689 4444 or visit [www.alc.org.au](http://www.alc.org.au)  
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