

LIMESTONE COAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

'Better Together'

ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK

The Limestone Coast Local Government Association has undertaken an organisational restructure, shifting its focus to advocacy with a narrower and better-defined set of priorities that are more clearly aligned to the organisation's purpose.

As the peak body representing Local Government in the Limestone Coast, it stands to reason that the LCLGA should take a lead to advocate for constituent councils and their communities as one united voice on common issues. This document creates a framework for advocacy of the LCLGA; an agreed set of principles that underpin actions undertaken by the LCLGA with the goal of collectively building strong, sustainable communities. It should be read in conjunction with the Strategic Plan, which outlines specific actions and outcomes planned over a 5 year period.

Historical context – our 'Why'

The first association of Local Government in the region was the South Eastern Chairmen's Association in 1885.

The purpose of the newly formed association 140 years ago was to advocate to the State Government, as a united voice, more powerful than any one Council could be alone.

The formation of the united body came a decade following the failed attempt at establishing a new Colony of 'Princeland'. Tyranny of distance to the capital cities of South Australia and Victoria had seen communities to the East of Adelaide and West of Melbourne feel as though their economic contribution to the State was made without fair reciprocal benefits.

In this context, the LCLGA remains an important mechanism, in addition to our lower house parliamentary representatives, to raise the profile of the region as a collective voice of local government. The continued economic contribution that is made to the State and the Nation from the Limestone Coast despite our relatively small population and small land mass should be duly recognised, valued and supported to its full potential.

The LCLGA Today – our 'How'

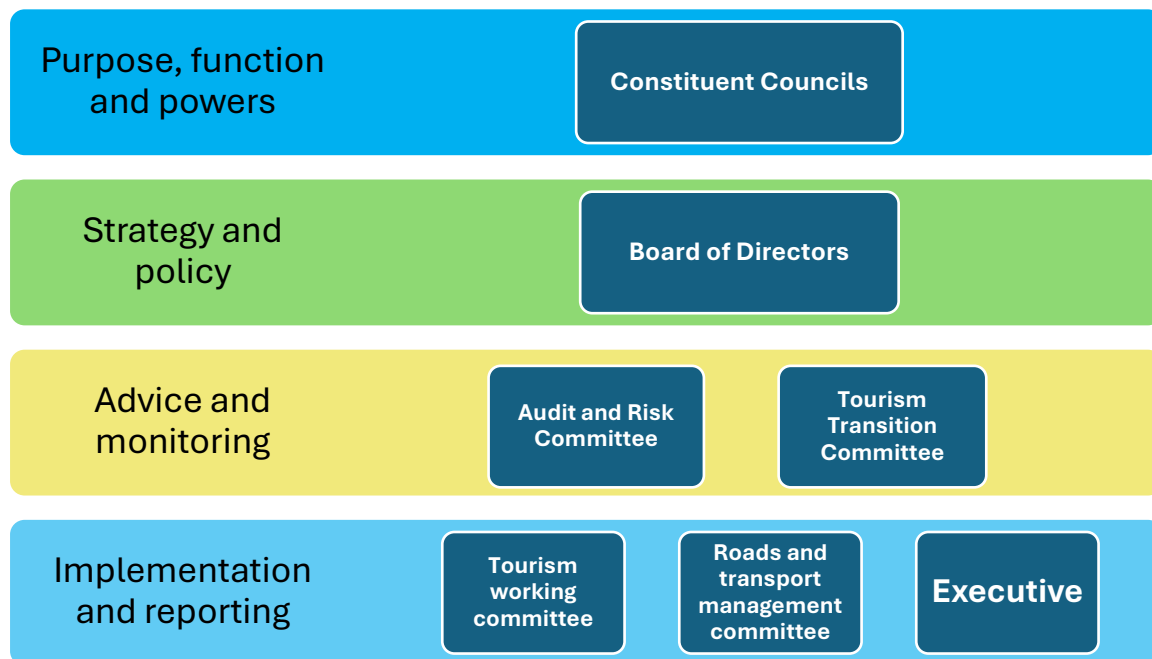
As a regional subsidiary, the LCLGA is subject to the direction of its constituent councils through its Charter. The Board of Directors (being the six constituent Mayors) has responsibility for setting the strategic direction, adopting policy and making decisions.

Advice to the Board is provided via LCLGA sub-committees.

The Executive is responsible for the implementation of these decisions, working within the parameters of an agreed and documented strategic plan and within a budget set and agreed to by the Board.

The Executive is 1.6 FTEs, with 0.6 being allocated to operational management of Tourism activities in the LCLGA’s capacity as the endorsed Regional Tourism Organisation.

1 FTE is allocated to the administrative support to the Board, day to day operations of the Association and advocacy activities.



What is Advocacy for the Limestone Coast Local Government Association

Advocacy for and on behalf of the LCLGA and constituent councils can be defined as the practice of promoting, supporting and advancing the interests and priorities of the Limestone Coast community through evidence-based influence, relationship building, communication and collaboration.

Advocacy can be formal or informal, collaborative or confrontational depending on the circumstance.

What does success look like?

Success is not always tangible.

The purpose of advocacy is to generate change. By generating the context for decisions and behaviours to change we influence outcomes, often difficult to quantify.

Advocacy can be direct or channelled through stakeholders and third parties to decision makers. The ultimate success is when decision makers claim the changes as their own ideas.

“The greatest victory is that which requires no battle” *Sun Tsu, The Art of War. 5th Century. BC.*

Focused priorities

With scarcity of resources, advocacy efforts must be strategically prioritised to achieve the greatest benefit for the widest section of community. Action should be taken when the objective is clear, risks are mitigated and evidence is collected.

Issues isolated to one local government area will be managed by individual councils.

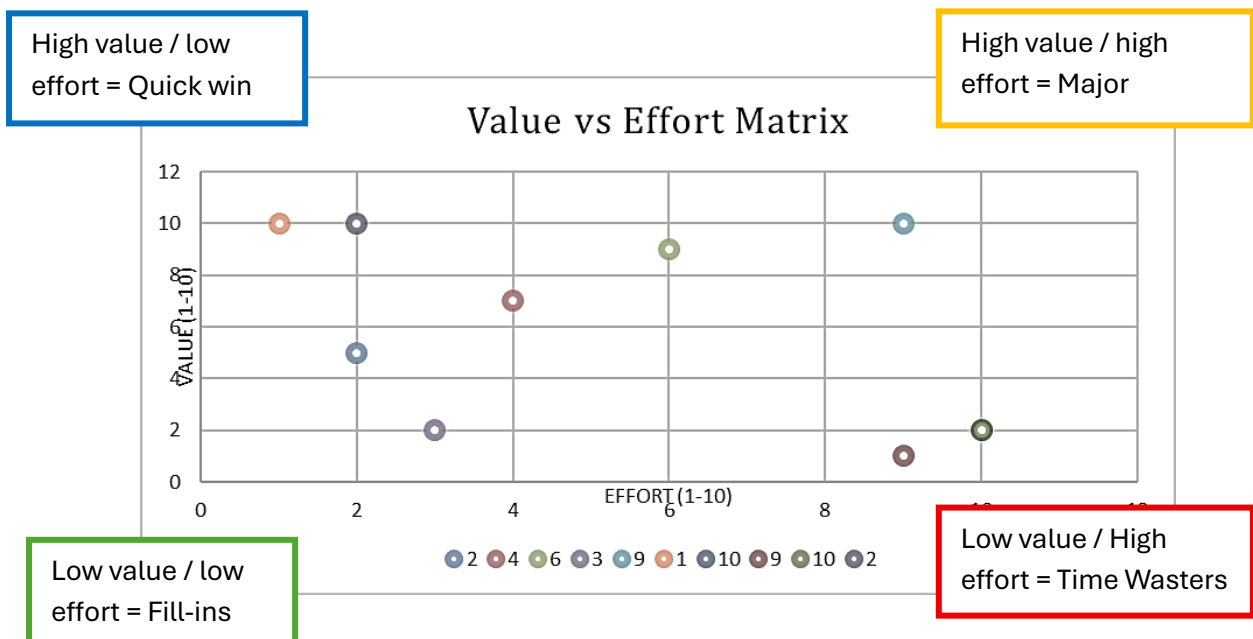
When an issue or opportunity impacts more than one local government area and a locally based solution is identified, the LCLGA can provide advice and coordination, acknowledging that collaboration is a core benefit of association.

Where an issue or opportunity is identified as regional (impacting more than two councils) and requires external action from a third party (i.e. State or Federal Government), the LCLGA will take the lead on co-ordinated advocacy approach, working in line with the strategic direction of the Board to achieve an outcome of shared benefit. Councils will support the LCLGA Executive by sharing data, key contacts and information to build the case.

Where an issue may be isolated to one or two local government areas but the desired outcome is key to regional benefit, LCLGA will include the issue into a broader regional advocacy strategy and coordinate consistent high-level messaging to assist each member council with a regionally consistent narrative.

In considering the LCLGA role in advocating on an issue the following should be considered.

- Does it benefit more than one Local Government Area?
- Is it aligned with our core value proposition and strategic plan?
- Should others be doing this instead?
- Do we have the resources?
- Where does it sit in the Value vs Effort matrix?



Actions and accountability

Issues and opportunities deemed to be of the greatest importance to the region are determined by the Board and set out in the 5-year strategic plan, which is reviewed annually.

Within the scope of these priorities, advocacy activities must be agile and adaptive to external environments. Opportunity to influence outcomes often arise with little notice and can be missed if action is delayed.

While the LCLGA is underpinned by strong governance and accountability, approval processes should be designed to be responsive to the fast pace of politics and legislative processes.

Key Principles

Identify the Issue or Opportunity: A problem or opportunity is identified and its impact on community is clearly articulated.

Develop an evidence-base: Using key data and evidence the case for action is strengthened, and reputation as a trusted partner upheld.

Solutions are identified: desired outcome is identified and matched with mechanisms to achieve results (where possible).

Collaboration is Key: Community stakeholders (outside LCLGA) are identified and engaged in the process to strengthen voice and mitigate risks.

Craft the message and make the case: Evidence is translated into compelling stories and messages to raise awareness of the issue or opportunity and inspire action linked with government policy priorities.

Consistency: The narrative is consistent across all constituent council voices to ensure that we are clear and united in our ask and why. We must all sing from the same song book.

Strong relationships and shared responsibility: relationships based on respect must be established with local, state and federal level stakeholders. Proactive responsibility within local government should be taken first and foremost before requesting the help of others.

Brand recognition: The Limestone Coast Local Government Association should be recognised as a trusted partner with a well-respected history of engagement at a local, state and national level. Every interaction should demonstrate mutual respect, an understanding of the policy making process and the available levers at each level of Government.

Confrontational advocacy: While sometimes necessary, confrontational advocacy should be avoided, as it comes at a cost. Long term positioning and reputational risk should be assessed against the benefit before confrontational actions are taken to advocate.

Successful outcomes are celebrated: Ongoing advocacy as an Association means actions don't end with outcomes. Giving credit where credit is due and praising decision makers on change is part of building long term relationships for future success.

How do we advocate

- ✓ Making strategic representations in person and in writing to federal and state governments
- ✓ Regularly meeting with Members of Parliament, Ministers, key political staff and industry leaders
- ✓ Actively engaging with all political candidates during election processes (State and Federal)
- ✓ Brokering partnerships and strategic alliances with other local and regional organisations, community leaders and relevant bodies
- ✓ Actively working with peak organisations and supporting their advocacy efforts when they are aligned with ours.
- ✓ Submitting grant applications to secure funding to deliver businesses cases, feasibility studies and masterplans where needed to support our advocacy efforts.

Who we work with

