

Local Government Planners Association

Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015



perth, western australia

forward

The Local Government Planners Association was established in 1981 and incorporated 1984. It is administered by an executive committee elected every year. Since establishment, the Association has strived for a balance of six key objectives – the balance of delivery on those six objectives has been heavily weighted towards professional development and fellowship opportunities.

Maintaining relevance in the rapidly evolving planning profession requires an introspective review of the operations and aspirations of the Association. Coupled with an outdated and increasingly irrelevant Constitution, the need for a unifying and readily actionable strategic plan is urgent.

This strategic plan is a bold vision to rejuvenate the LGPA and confirm its role as the principal planning affiliate association for local government planners in WA. In essence, the strategic plan seeks to:

- build and maintain a credible professional profile;
- build membership, including services delivered to members;
- maintain regular, relevant education opportunities; and
- maintain fellowship opportunities.

Recognising the resource, finance and personnel constraints on the Association, the strategic plan has been prepared as a concise and actionable document. Tracking of its progress will be undertaken by the executive committee and reporting will be provided annually via the AGM.

Executive Committee





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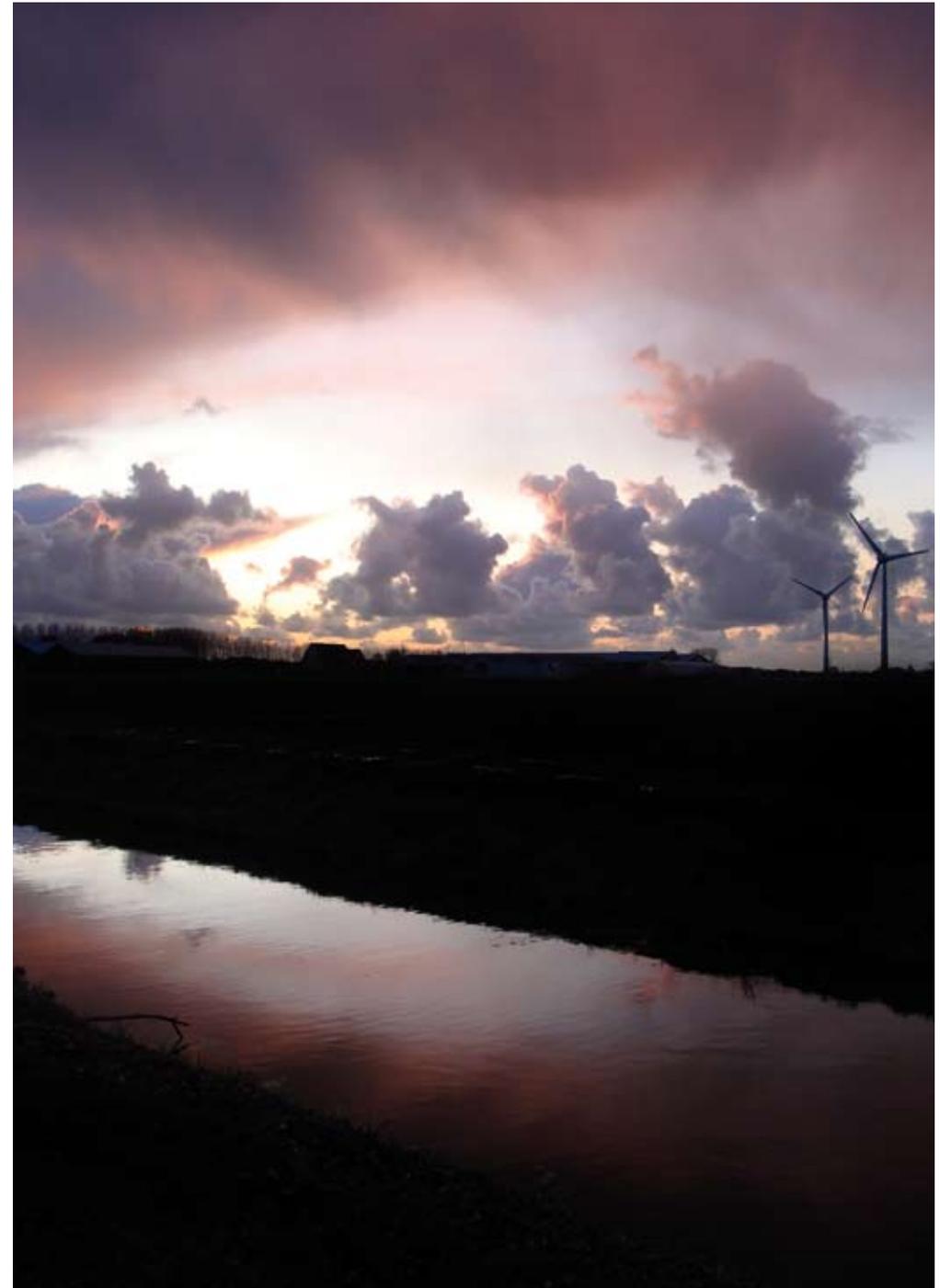
context

The executive committee election in June 2008 saw a marked change in the make-up of the LGPA executive committee, which had remained particularly stable for many years under the steady guidance of a small group of committed local government planners.

With that change, new aspirations were distilled into an enthusiastic executive committee. New opportunities were identified, perspectives on old barriers changed, and a new suite of strengths for the LGPA was inherited.

One of the first challenges set by the 'new' LGPA executive committee was to review the Association's Constitution, some 12 years old.

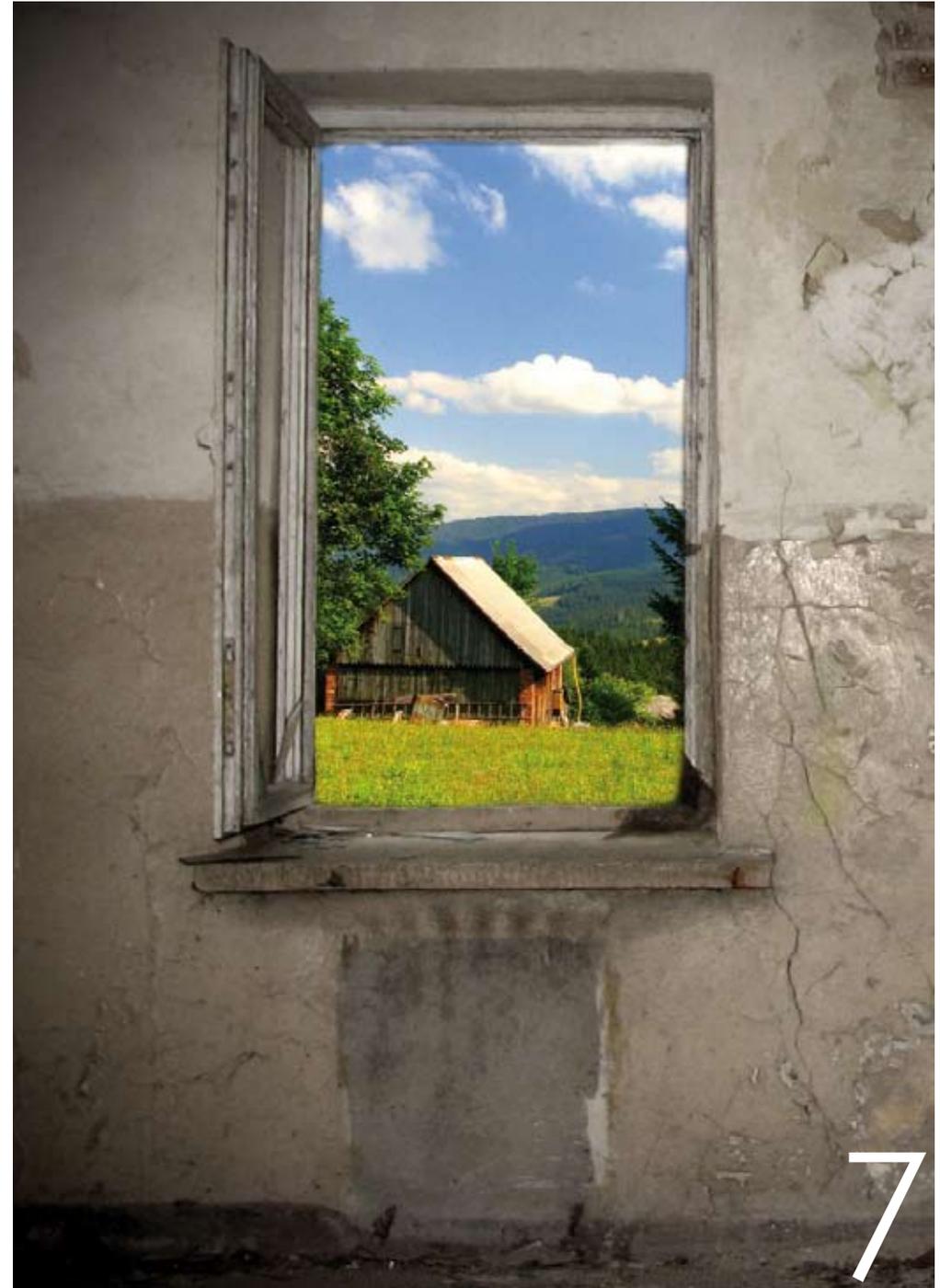
Like all good planners, the Executive Committee first decided to set its strategic vision (this plan), before plunging into a review of its Constitution.



purpose

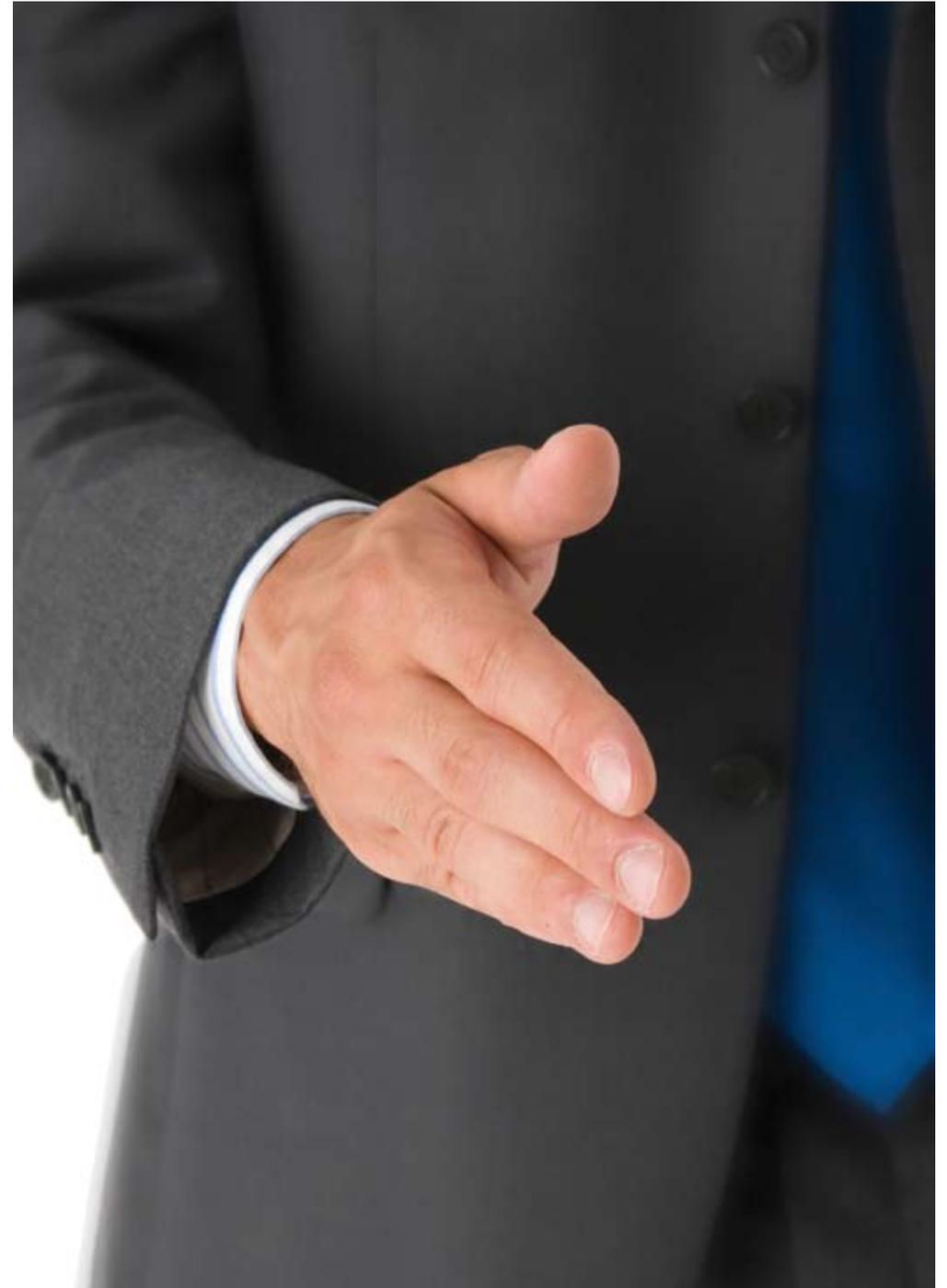
This Plan collaboratively arrives at a common vision for the LGPA, via an introspective review of its operations over the preceding decade. Specifically, the strategic plan:

- provides the framework to guide the ongoing operations of the executive committee, promoting an increased focus on core activities;
- provides the framework for a review of the LGPA Constitution (1997);
- provides the framework for discrete actions, to realise the vision of the LGPA;
- signals to its member base a renewed vigour and commitment to local government planning;
- signals the relevance and validity of LGPA membership to its potential member base; and
- will build and guide professionalism of the LGPA.



who are we now?

Ben Rose - Town of Claremont
Cameron Leckey - City of Fremantle (Vice President)
Fiona Grgich - Mcleods Barristers & Solicitors
Jarrod Ross - City of Swan (Treasurer)
Jeremy Hofland - City of Gosnells (President)
Kate Gibson - City of Swan (Secretary)
Nathan Ritchie - RobertsDay
Stephen Tan - City of Swan
Tristan Fernandes - City of Rockingham



where are we now?

The following two tables provide a 'snapshot' of the Association's present status. The information in these tables has been important in reviewing the Association's focus and priorities over the preceding several years. In analysing the Association's focus and priorities, a clearer vision for the future can be drawn.

Table 1: Core Indicators

Core Indicator	Total	Comment
Membership (as at October 2009)	37	Male: 22 LG: 23 Metro: 34 Female: 15 Consultant / other: 14 Rural / regional: 3
Finances (as at October 2009)	\$21,228.89	\$2,645 in outstanding payments
		Financial position at about this level for previous 12-18 months
Assets	Laptop Data projector Advertising banner	The LGPA has minimal operating requirements / costs and doesn't require permanent administration facilities.
		LGPA has depended on good will of the LGs employing the Executive Committee members. Continuation of this informal arrangement is not an issue presently, however, if the LGPA membership base increases, this will require addressing.
Functions (per year)	4 x breakfast seminars 1-2 x social functions 1-2 x 'special seminars' (e.g. Network City review) 1 x Annual General Meeting Monthly cycling network (Cleats and Cranks)	Attendance rates at breakfast seminars have increased over the past two years to about 100 per session – reflective of the preferred timing (early a.m. seminars), venue (central city) and topic selection (topical, LG specific issues).
Other	Website	Increased interest in social functions, targeted particularly at younger member base.
	Affiliations and relationships	Special seminars typically reactive to changes in State planning policy.
		Basic website with minimal 'live' information.
		Upgrading proposed in late 2009 to enable online registration and payment for events.
		Various collaborative projects with UWA.

The Association's Constitution (1997) prescribes six key objectives. Table 2 tracks adherence to these objectives in an open, transparent and unreserved manner.

Table 2: Review of Constitutional objectives

Constitution Objectives	Comment
1. Represent the views and interests of the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prescribed or clearly recognised 'outlet' for representing the views and interests of the profession, hence a limited focus on this objective by the executive committee. • Minimal submissions on local, State and/or Federal consultation documents, although has been an increased focus on this task during 2009 (e.g. Directions 2031, SPP on Activity Centres). • Representation is predominantly limited to the views and interests of the executive committee and requires dedicated effort and resources of individuals.
2. Encourage training and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training - one training program has been attempted (2009). In partnership with UWA and the City of Fremantle, the Association coordinated introductory training on LG statutory planning processes for UWA student planners. This was undertaken as a 'one-off' training event, however, could become a regular training fixture (e.g. one session per semester) if university resourcing is secured. • Education - principal focus of the Association is 'educational breakfast seminars'. Topics are carefully selected to ensure primary relevance to LG planning issues. Breakfast seminars attract good attendance rates and feedback from attendees.
3. Arbitration and advice for Local Government planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbitration – formal, professional arbitration has not been required by any member. The Association does not have the capacity to fulfill this objective. • Advice – professional networks amongst members (and more broadly amongst the planning profession) enable provision of advice on an individual basis. However, the Association does not promote itself as an advisory agent for its members.

Constitution Objectives	Comment
4. Promote development and enhancement of the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This overlaps with objectives 1 and 2. • No prescribed or clearly recognised 'outlet' for promoting development and enhancement of the profession, hence a limited focus on this objective by the executive committee. • Some support for other industry groups such as Western Planner (planning publication) and UWA (urban and regional planning faculty).
5. Support full cooperation with PIA and interstate LGPAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIA – objective to subsume LGPA as a specific 'chapter' (obviously resisted by LGPA) to provide one peak planning affiliate association. No cooperation requested from PIA on specific events, actions or undertakings, although would likely be forthcoming under the present executive committee. • Interstate LGPAs – non existent.
6. Provide recreation and social interaction for Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several recreation / social interaction events are coordinated each year. Sundowners, one-off events (Oktoberfest, Swan Valley supra-golf etc), AGM Dinner and Cleats & Cranks cycling group all attract a modest attendance, although are gaining in popularity. All events are hosted within the Perth metropolitan area.

While the LGPA stands strong in the provision of education and recreation opportunities for its member base, there is an obvious lack of observance to the majority of Constitutional objectives. This is not a product of any focussed unwillingness to achieve these objectives, but is more-so a result of a divergence from them as a priority due to limited resources (chiefly funds and personnel) and capacity.

The Association's Constitution is now over 12 years old. It is increasingly irrelevant to the endeavours and aspirations of the executive committee and is deserved of a significant review.

where are we going?

Reflecting upon the contents of the 'Where are we now?' section, it is difficult to suggest that the Association is heading anywhere different than where it's been over the last decade. That is; quarterly breakfast seminars, several social functions each year and an ad-hoc approach to everything else (governed by waxing and waning interests and available time of executive committee members).

The LGPA is at risk of this pattern continuing, unless there is a unified vision, and commitment to achieve that vision.

Tables 1 and 2 highlight stagnation of the Association; there is almost nothing in those tables which indicates anything different from previous years. The one point of difference, however, is an increasingly stable financial position.



where do we want to be?

In preparing this strategic plan, a survey of aspirations for the Association, involving past and present executive committee members, was conducted. Key themes emerged from this survey:

- A desire for more members, including representation from across metropolitan and rural/regional LGs
- Maintain regular professional development opportunities, focused on LG planning issues
- 'Presence' within the planning profession
- Increased policy positioning on LG planning issues
- Maintain fellowship opportunities through social and recreation activities
- Advocating for LG planning as not just a 'valid' profession, but a 'coveted' profession
- Maintain the Association as an individual organisation (i.e. not subsumed by PIA)
- Stronger financial position as leverage to achieve broader aspirations
- Stronger regional and rural interaction with member base
- Maintain cost effectiveness for members (i.e. 'bang for your buck')

From the outset, the strategic plan was required to be robust, yet simple to use. This recognised the limited time and resources (of executive committee members) available to track progress of the plan. The executive committee did not subscribe to the plethora of strategic management jargon (vision statements, mission statements, operating principles, values etc). Rather, a concise and actionable approach was adopted. In short, the Association's aspirations are:

- To build and maintain a credible professional profile
- To build membership, including services delivered to members
- To maintain regular, relevant education opportunities
- To maintain fellowship opportunities



how will we get there?

Table 3: Achieving the vision

Objectives	Strategy	Action
Profile	Increase media presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key media 'players' and establish contacts • Release media statements on key planning issues • Invite media to attend topical functions (Network City function as an example)
	Improve LGPA marketing and branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that LGPA branding is used consistently and appropriately (banners, letterheads, PowerPoint) • Annual release of small corporate gift with membership renewal (scale ruler example)
	Promote local government planning as a profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure LGPA representation at major planning events • Establish a database of LG planning positions within WA
	Establish partnerships with similar professional organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and consolidate relationship with PIA • Explore opportunities with other LG representative organisations • Examine opportunities to involve and represent state government planners and planning
Membership	Improve services for existing membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use member / attendee evaluation to improve delivery of education and social events • Ensure equitable member access to services and events (particularly for rural / regional members)
	Broaden scope of membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research demographics of existing membership to identify key target groups (i.e. regional, male/female, age etc) • Examine opportunities to involve regional local governments • Examine opportunities to involve elected members and associate professionals (building surveyors, compliance officers, community development etc)
	Strengthen governance and administrative functions of the executive committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite the Constitution to ensure that it accurately reflects LGPA's strategic direction • Develop effective web-based member information and event management systems • Develop and maintain an electronic database for membership and finances • Ensure record keeping and financial reporting is current and accurate • Maintain a stable executive committee • Report on progress of Strategic Plan at AGM each year

Objectives	Strategy	Action
Education	Regular, relevant seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to host 4-5 breakfast seminars each year • Identify and deliver 2 additional educational functions on topical planning issues per annum
	Continue to foster relationships and provide support to tertiary institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to foster relationship with UWA through guest lecturing, as required. • Write to other academic providers (ECU, Curtin, Murdoch) and advise them of our existence and willingness to be involved in their program • Encourage more emphasis on LG planning within the syllabus
	Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present articles on topical planning issues through Western Planner or equivalent • Encourage and support younger members to present at forums and conferences
	Provide support to regional planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a 'sounding board' of LGPA members who are suitably experienced and willing to provide support to regional planners • Liaise with regional LGs inviting them to provide suggestions on how LGPA can support them
	Establish mentoring partnerships between planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate opportunities to establish mentoring partnerships between experienced planners and younger practising planners (25-35 year age group) • Investigate opportunities to establish mentoring partnerships between younger practising planners and student/graduate planners
Fellowship	Continue to host networking functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a minimum of 3 sundowners per annum – coinciding with significant planning events/ occurrences as a promotion tool (release of LGPA website, release of DPI policy) • Have an LGPA presence at related functions (e.g. PIA, UDIA, API etc) • Continue to promote and host AGM and Christmas party
	Encourage and promote social interest groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to promote Cleats and Cranks cycling group • Explore opportunities for other social interest groups

LGPA (2010). Local Government Planners Association Strategic Plan 2010-2015,
Perth Australia. LGPA, January 2010.

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