

## STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC LAND

- At the June meeting, Forum members received an update report on the progress of the strategic assessment of public land project.
- Members were advised on the completion of a report and supplementary discussion papers on findings of a study into the strategic assessment of surplus and underutilised land owned by State and Local Government.
- The report discussed key issues identified in the study that could be explored by the Forum, namely:
  - The disposal of surplus State Government land to councils for less than full market value where it was intended that the land be used for public or community purposes;
  - Reciprocal arrangements between councils and state agencies for first right of purchase for surplus land;
  - The potential for a regional body or similar (possibly the Regional LGAs) to provide strategic advice, coordination and planning regarding the disposal of surplus land by either local or state agencies in the interests of regional development and the delivery of community and social infrastructure needs;
  - The possibility of a model framework for the development of collaborative approaches between State and Local Government; and
  - Operational issues in respect to the administration and implementation of Premier and Cabinet Circular 114 which sets out Cabinet approved policies and processes for the purchase and disposal of State Government real property (including Crown land).
- Members were advised that the State Government was carrying out a review of the policy and administration requirements of Circular 114, and that the findings contained in the Forum report were fed into that review.
- Cabinet has now approved a revised Circular 114 – Government Real Property Management (attached) that introduces improved processes for the identification, disposal or redevelopment of surplus or under-utilised State Government property. The improved processes respond to a need identified in the South Australia's Strategic Plan and the Strategic Infrastructure Plan for South Australia to improve strategic asset management practices across Government, in particular the more efficient use and maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- The revised Circular 114 includes a number of changes to the management arrangements that are of relevance to Local Government. They are:
  - The ability for a council to express interest in the purchase of surplus State Government property for public or community purposes, prior to disposal on the open market.
  - The transfer of land to Local Government for public or community uses must be at market value, unless Cabinet directs otherwise.
  - The involvement of Local Government in the undertaking of Strategic Land Use Assessments for properties, prior to them being declared surplus.

Relevant councils will also be invited to participate in Geographical Area Land Use Assessments (GALUA), which are targeted reviews of all government property holdings in selected geographic areas to identify opportunities for improved utilisation, redevelopment or disposal.

- To assist in providing advice to Councils on the changes to Circular 114, an information session for Local Government elected members and staff is proposed. Preliminary discussions have taken place between State and LGA officers in relation to this and arrangements will be progressed in the near future.
- The strategic assessment of public land project recommended that Local Government could consider affording reciprocal rights to State Government agencies to purchase surplus local government property, prior to seeking offers from the open market. This concept will be further explored by the relevant State agencies and the Local Government Association (LGA).