

Mayor's Report to the Community



General Rate

The Council at its meeting on 30 June passed an increase of 2.16% in general rate revenue for the 2014-2015 financial year.

The rates this year reflect changes in the operations of the Council and increased costs due to increases in services and costs from suppliers. The major areas of increase are in waste management, drainage and community services. It is important to note that there are continuing pressures on the overheads of the Council, commonly referred to as the cost of doing business. Unless the Council maintains a realistic approach to the development of its Estimates and therefore the levying of its rates, then the overheads will start to bite into the level of works and services traditionally provided by the Council. Again the Council has been challenged in balancing the competing priorities of required services, the continuation of strategic directions/initiatives, maintaining a sound financial position and keeping rate increases to an acceptable level. In the tough economic climate, it's crucial that the Council continues to provide core services at an affordable level, while being very mindful of the cost of living pressures which are facing our community.

This year will see the Council receive the full annual amount of dividends from TasWater. The majority of the dividends will be allocated to capital works and Reserves to support our asset renewal program, with a small amount being provided in operations for payment of water and sewerage charges in our parks, along with increases in service levels identified by the Council. Fees and charges have been increased to reflect the cost of service provision.

Service rates and charges

The Waste Management Service Charge which is charged to each household that receives a kerbside recycling and garbage collection service has increased from \$176 to \$180 per tenement.

There is also a small increase in the Fire Service Levy.

Rating policies

The Council has agreed to continue with the 5% discount where rates are paid in full by 30 September 2014. The Council is also pleased to continue its practice of not charging penalties for late payment of rates. The Council will again offer the availability of approved regular instalments and offers rate remissions of \$35 for eligible pensioners who live alone.

Capital works

A total capital works program of \$9,133,500 is planned for this year. The major component and focus of the capital expenditure is in the asset renewal program, aligning with the Council's strategy to progressively increase funding for these works to ensure our existing physical asset base of almost \$442m. is maintained to community expectations. The asset renewal program for 2014-2015 is \$4,500,750, with major spending of \$2.25m. on rural and urban roads and \$500,000 on bridges.

Major new capital works include \$825,000 for the Leven River seawall and pathway; \$200,000 for the Dial Regional Sports Complex design; \$176,000 for the Ulverstone Wharf pontoon; \$500,000 towards further rehabilitation of the former Penguin Refuse Disposal Site; \$144,000 for parks, including the Sulphur Creek hall playground; and \$163,000 for cultural activities, including the Ulverstone History Museum. This program is not supported by borrowings.

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Strategic issues

This year after community consultation, the Council adopted the new Strategic Plan 2014-2024 which identified the Council's priorities to be delivered through the Council's Annual Plan. It focuses on the distinctiveness of our location, lifestyle and strengths to achieve the aspirations of local communities and to set the direction for the Council in determining how best to direct its resources and efforts. It identifies the key strategic directions, strategies and actions that the Council plans to pursue over the coming 10-year period.

The Annual Plan includes the initiatives and actions to be funded that will contribute to achieving the strategic objectives specified in the Strategic Plan.

Some of the major initiatives and actions in the Annual Plan for 2014-2015 are:


- Progress the development of a bus interchange in Wongi Lane
- Review the Dial Range Recreation Management Plan in conjunction with land managers
- Support the staged development of the Dial Range Mountain Bike Park
- Progress the consolidation of equestrian activities to Batten Park
- Review the Council's Youth Strategy
- Develop a pool of mentors and program of activities to support emerging community leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs
- Identify and promote appropriate land for industrial and commercial use
- Investigate provision of free Wi-Fi in the Ulverstone and Penguin central business districts
- Develop plans for the Johnsons Beach area and Perry-Ling Gardens
- Work with the local health, community and aged-care services sectors to improve local business and employment opportunities

Community safety

The Council recently conducted a Community Safety Survey to understand community priorities in relation to safety and inform the development of a Community Safety Action Plan. The Action Plan will guide the work of the Community Safety Partnership Committee which is made up of representatives from government and non-government agencies, police, businesses and the community who work together to assist in creating a community where residents and visitors feel safe and secure. The survey was completed by 232 adults and students, with 96.5% feeling safe or very safe, an excellent result.

Safety is everyone's business and while the Council attends to matters as we become aware of them, I would like to encourage you to become the eyes and ears of the community and report anything you see which could be improved for greater safety. The survey highlighted dark, unpopulated or isolated locations, like parks at night, as places avoided due to concerns for safety. Lighting was noted as important for feeling safe and the Council would like to work with the community to improve this area where we can.

If you are aware of any areas that are not well lit, please advise the Council. If you notice a street-light that is not working, note the number of the pole and advise Aurora on 13 2004 to have it repaired. Please take the time to tell us about your safety issues either in person, by phone or via our website.



Councillor Jan Bonde, Mayor

July 2014