

# Mayor's Report to the Community



## General Rate

The Council at its meeting on 20 June passed an increase of 2.02% in general rate revenue for the 2016-2017 financial year. In setting the general rate, the Council has remained mindful of the cost of living pressures facing our community whilst also ensuring that we continue to provide core services at an affordable level. While the Consumer Price Index advises the Annual Rate of Inflation in terms of groceries and other consumables, it is not necessarily indicative of the cost drivers of local government which has a broader range of impacts and extends to activities related to general construction such as road works and infrastructure provision. While CPI (Hobart) is currently 1.3%, it is proposed that the average movement in costs for the average council in Tasmania would be in the vicinity of 1.87%. The challenge has once again been in balancing the competing priorities of required services, the continuation of strategic actions, maintaining a sound financial position and keeping rate increases to an acceptable level.

The rates this year reflect changes in the operations of the Council and increases in costs from suppliers. The major areas of increase are in waste management, roads and parks. 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. Extreme weather events, such as the recent flooding in June, also impact on Council workloads and changes within the Estimates may be necessary as damage costs become known and repair work is prioritised.

## Service rates and charges

The Waste Management Service Charge has increased from \$186 to \$193 per tenement. This \$7 increase is to cover the cost of the regional contracts for the provision of the household garbage collection and kerbside recycling services and is charged to each household that receives a kerbside recycling and garbage collection service. There is also an increase in the Fire Service Levy which is collected by the Council on behalf of the State Government.

## Rating policies

The Council has agreed to continue with the 5% discount for early payment of rates, with payment to be made in full by 31 August 2016 for the discount to apply. 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 \$15,033,000 is planned for this year with a major focus on the asset renewal program to maintain the existing asset base to community expectations. The program is in line with the Council's strategy to ensure that our assets continue to be maintained in a sustainable manner. Major capital works this year include \$2.996m. for urban roads; \$1.075m. for rural roads; \$480,000 for footpaths; \$400,000 for bridges; \$720,000 for car parks; \$300,000 for drainage; \$310,000 for waste management; \$661,000 for parks and

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## Management

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amenities; \$140,000 for aged-persons home unit refurbishments; \$108,000 for Civic Centre improvements, and \$398,000 for recreation ground and sports centre upgrades. The program is also supported by borrowings of \$1,000,000 towards the development of the Dial Regional Sports Complex.

### **Strategic issues**

Our Strategic Plan identifies Council's priorities for 2014-2024 and sets the future direction for the Council in determining how best to direct its resources and efforts to achieve the vision and aspirations of our local community. It summarises the key objectives, strategies and actions that the Council plans to pursue over the coming 10-year period and guides the Council's Annual Plan which details the initiatives and actions to be funded each year in order to achieve the long-term objectives.

Some of the major initiatives and actions in the Annual Plan for 2016-2017 are:

- Commencement of the staged construction of the Dial Regional Sports Complex
- Continue to develop the Central Coast shared pathways network and Cycling Strategy
- Investigate feasibility of further development of the Leven Canyon Floor Walk as a major adventure tourism experience
- Look at opportunities to make our central business districts attractive and vibrant community hubs for locals and visitors alike
- Develop the Ulverstone History Museum/Visitor Information Centre Precinct Plan
- Work in collaboration with the Parks and Wildlife Service to improve interpretation and tracks within the Dial Range
- Investigate regional and sub-regional shared services arrangements
- Redevelopment of the Anzac Park memorials pathway

### **Engaging with you**

This year our new quarterly electronic newsletter has been well received and has kept you informed on Council projects, notices, events and a wide range of activities happening in your community. If you are not receiving the newsletter please contact the Council and ensure that we have your email address so that you don't miss out on future editions. Printed copies are available at Council offices for those unable to access the newsletter electronically.

Social media has also been embraced through the Central Coast Council Facebook page and is growing in popularity for those who like to engage with Council in this way. A Central Coast Events

Facebook page is also actively keeping followers up to date on what's happening in our area. The Council website is currently being redeveloped and we look forward to a new, attractive, easy to use, interactive website being launched soon.

Community morning teas have been held in each of our local communities and these have been well received and highly valued by those in attendance. It is an opportunity to join myself and Councillors for an informal chat on what's happening in the community and to discuss any issues you would like to raise, or just enjoy a cuppa and say hello. Our General Manager and Directors appreciate the opportunity to receive feedback on Council services and I encourage you to come along when they are advertised in your local area and share a cuppa with us.



Councillor Jan Bonde, Mayor

July 2016