

Mayor's Report to the Community



General Rate

The Council at its meeting on 22 June 2020 passed a 0% increase in general rate revenue for the 2020-2021 financial year. In choosing to keep the rates, fees and charges at the same as last year, the Council has been mindful of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic uncertainty and possible hardships our community may face in the months ahead. While the full financial impact of COVID-19 on our Council remains uncertain, we have endeavoured to once again deliver a responsible budget which balances the competing priorities of services we must provide, services we would like to provide and the continuation of strategic actions whilst also maintaining a sound financial position. Councillors also agreed to waive any increase in Councillor allowances which may apply to the 2020-21 financial year as a small way of contributing to improved budgetary outcomes.

Service rates and charges

The Waste Management Service Charge remains the same as last year at \$263 per tenement and is charged to each household that receives a kerbside recycling, FOGO and waste collection service. There is also no 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 2020 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 \$35.2m is planned for this year. This is a large program for the Council due to major strategic works that are planned to happen over the year. Major capital works this year include \$10.06m to complete the Cultural Precinct, \$7.736m for the Coastal Pathway and \$6.5m for the Penguin Foreshore. Other capital works include \$2.14m for urban roads, \$1.8m for rural roads; \$460,000 for footpaths; \$1.08m for bridges; \$253,000 for car parks; \$457,000 for drainage; \$356,000 for waste management; \$1.584m for parks; \$173,000 for aged-persons home refurbishments and \$218,000 for recreation ground and sports centre upgrades. The program is also supported by borrowings of \$9.2m to contribute to the Cultural Precinct and the Coastal Pathway.

Councillors

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Strategic issues

Our Strategic Plan identifies the 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 ten-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 2020-2021 are:

- Construction of the Cultural Precinct (Ulverstone History Museum, Visitor Centre, Art Gallery and Planetarium).
- Complete the Penguin Foreshore remediation and protection project.
- Undertake a review of Main Road, Penguin Foreshore and Hiscutt Park precincts.
- Complete planning of the former Penguin Recreation Ground redevelopment and investigate funding/developer opportunities.
- Continue to develop the Central Coast shared pathways network – completing Turners Beach to Leith shared pathway, the safe road-use project along Penguin Road between Robertsons Road and Seaside Crescent and progress completion of the Penguin to Sulphur Creek and Ulverstone to Penguin sections of the Shared Pathway.

- Create further placemaking opportunities in Penguin and Ulverstone to make our central business districts vibrant community hubs for locals and visitors alike.
- Finalise and commence implementation of the Perry-Ling Gardens Master Plan.
- Conduct a '7 Day Makeover' in Turners Beach.
- Implement Stage 1 of the Reconciliation Action Plan.

Financial Hardship Assistance Policy

The Council has adopted a Financial Hardship Assistance Policy to support the local community through and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Prepared in consultation with the Local Government Association of Tasmania, it not only includes no increase in rates, fees and charges for the 2020-2021 financial year but also aims to provide flexibility in rate payments for those experiencing hardship due to the virus. People who are seeking assistance provided under the Financial Hardship Assistance Policy should refer to the Council's website or contact the Council directly.



Councillor Jan Bonde, Mayor

July 2020