



MEDIA RELEASE

Organisation: Glamorgan Spring Bay Council
Subject: Council Focuses on Core Activities
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The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council will focus on vital infrastructure, providing essential core services and responding to the findings of a recent independent report as part of its long-term strategic planning.

Council yesterday agreed on a 10-year strategic plan that will take the municipality forward. The plan includes priorities to meet the challenges of the current year.

In March Council committed to a rates freeze for the 2020-21 year as a result of the Covid-19 virus.

Council is implementing measures to ensure the Council operates within its budget.

The first is to divest itself of the Council's three Visitor Information Centres in Bicheno, Triabunna and Swansea by 31 October 2020. The centres are currently closed as a result of the Covid-19 virus. Council will now work with key stakeholders and Centre staff to work out a transition plan.

Mayor Debbie Wisby said Council had looked at a range of options for the centres and decided divestment was the preferred option, as it would save Council around \$360,000 annually, which could then be redirected to core services.

"We are determined to lift our game as a Council in terms of financial management, asset management and ensuring that we provide the essential services expected by our ratepayers, residents and the Tasmanian Government," Mayor Wisby said.

"This means making some hard decisions. "

"The information centres and the people who work there have provided valuable service over the years. However, with more and more visitors moving to online information and booking services, Council believes it is no longer a strategic use of its limited funds."

"Working collaboratively is critical to ensure the needs of the tourism operators and the industry is understood and transition planning is addressing these needs. We have organised a meeting with

East Coast Tourism Tasmania and the Department of State Growth in the next fortnight to ensure we can work in partnership in the coming weeks to provide the outcomes needed.”

“Council will also be investigating ways to better promote all businesses in the region.”

Mayor Wisby said Council’s decision would impact on 10 staff. Council will work with staff and their Union on possible options, including internal job opportunities.

The East Coast Heritage Museum attached to the Swansea Centre is not impacted by this decision and will reopen once Covid-19-related restrictions are lifted.

Council is continuing to review all its operations to identify activities that are not essential to ensure it has the financial capacity to fulfil its statutory obligations. Further announcements are expected to be made as part of the release of the Council’s 2020-21 Budget next month.

Mayor Wisby said Council was well on its way to full compliance with its statutory obligations. Council recently endorsed its Statement of Expectations and a commitment to continual improvement. This followed an independent review proposed by Government of Council operations, policies and procedures and conducted by consultants Lynn Mason and Greg Preece earlier this year.

The final 10-year Strategic Plan (2020-29) is available on the council’s website www.gsbc.tas.gov.au.

The Plan was developed following input from the community who participated in workshops hosted by the Council at Bicheno, Swansea, Orford, and Coles Bay in October 2019, with a draft available for comment and feedback in April 2020.

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For more information please contact: Mayor Debbie Wisby, 0439579652