

Message from your Council - 29 May 2020

Key issues:

- Council's 10-year Strategic Plan – mapping out a future path for Glamorgan Spring Bay with a focus on delivering core services to ratepayers and residents.
- Core services include the maintenance and development of local roads, pavements and other vital infrastructure, stormwater and waste management, as well as continuing to support and advocate for adequate healthcare professionals and providers.
- Commitment to improved management of Council finances and assets for the long-term benefit of the region.
- Limited funds available so some hard decisions have to be made to meet our statutory obligations.

10-year Strategic Plan

Council endorsed its 10-year Strategic Plan 2020-2029 at a meeting on 26 May 2020.

The Plan was developed following input from the community who participated in workshops advertised and hosted by the Council at Bicheno, Coles Bay, Swansea and Orford in October 2019.

A draft plan was available for comment and feedback in April 2020 with responses assisting Council in the preparation of the final document.

The Plan outlines the Council's primary functions and activities, its guiding principles and the key foundations underpinning future success. It also includes critical priorities for the coming year.

The Plan aligns with the independent review of Council's operations, policies and procedures requested by the Minister for Local Government and completed by consultants Lynn Mason and Greg Preece earlier this year.

The plan is available on Council's website www.gsbc.tas.gov.au.

Message to Community

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, like many businesses and organisations across Tasmania, is dealing with a range of challenges right now.

The COVID-19 virus is having an impact across the World. For our Council it means reduced revenue, a one-year general rate freeze and working for a community that is doing it extremely tough.

Council also has to address its current financial position and plan for the future while resolving outstanding issues and responding to the findings of the independent review.

The good news is that we are well on our way to full compliance with our statutory obligations. However, we have some difficult decisions to make as we look to finalise our budget for 2020-21.

The first was announced last week. Council will divest itself of its 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. The decision will save Council around \$360,000 annually.

Understandably, this decision has caused concern within the tourism industry in particular. However, as a council with limited funds we cannot keep doing everything we have been doing and must focus on delivering core services to ratepayers and residents.

Council recognises the impact of the decision on the local tourism industry, as well as the dedicated Centre staff. This is why there will be a five-month transition period for Council to work with staff and key stakeholders to understand the industry's needs and expectations.

We will meet with East Coast Tourism Tasmania and the Department of State Growth in the next week to work on a partnership that will engage with local operators and chart a way forward to ensure their businesses and the region in general are marketed to visitors.

Council will also be investigating ways to better promote all businesses in the region as part of a wider marketing push. In the coming weeks there will be further announcements from Council as we continue to focus on meeting the expectations of our ratepayers and residents, ensuring our limited resources have the greatest possible positive impact across the municipality and building our financial capacity to fulfil our statutory obligations.

Council will ensure these updates are communicated across the region. For further information on these and all matters related to Council, go the website www.gsbc.tas.gov.au.

Mayor Debbie Wisby