

NOTES FROM THE MAYOR

WHEN CAN WE TRAVEL OFF THE ISLAND?

I am well aware that many people would like an answer to this question. Many people seem to think that it is for Council to answer. The MEMC – (Municipal Emergency Management Committee) indeed put a request to the Premier, many weeks ago, that travel to Flinders and the Furneaux Islands be restricted to protect the Community from coronavirus. This municipality has a large percentage of its population who are potentially particularly vulnerable to this virus.

NOW THAT RESTRICTIONS ARE BEING RELAXED

The MEMC have been asking State Government when people may travel again to and from mainland Tasmania. I am hoping that we will have the question answered soon. The date will be identified on the Council Website and Community Notice Board as soon as we know it.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY PACKAGE

In a recent Island News, I wrote about the recovery package that Council will be providing for the Community. There are a few features, but the main one is that there will be no rate rise at all for the 2020/21 year. This is a small but important aide to community recovery from the horrific health and economic situation that all of us, along with the rest of the world, have had to deal with.

COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL SITUATION

The recovery package, mentioned above, is good for the Community. However, it does make a deeper hole in Council's already challenging finances. Even Council's bank interest will shrink for the coming year. Normally Council can count on approximately \$45,000 or so income per year from bank interest. As a result of the economical crisis, bank interest is only one quarter percent – that does not enable much of a return!

So Council's financial situation is tight and will continue to be so for a while. Council will be working smarter to bring in the important services we all need.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

...The tough get going! Council will likely be back to the basics for the immediate future –

but then we are not alone. I personally believe that there is much more to Council, in a small municipality such as Flinders, than is sometimes believed. Availability of money is a significant part of course, but there is much more. The culture and the resilience of this Community is strong. Council will be focusing on innovative thinking as much as possible to enable a sustainable future:

- to maintain and improve the lifestyles we all enjoy;
- to provide as quality services as possible;
- to foster creativity so that positive projects can still happen; and
- To enable the Community to flourish.

WHAT DO WE ENVISION FOR THE ISLANDS OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

I almost can 'hear' many of you thinking: what is the point of imagining what we want in ten years when Council has very little money?

Well, that is a very big point indeed!

First of all, if we have not prioritised what is important to us – how on earth will we ever create a positive future? Setting priorities is critical not only when you have money – but also when you are short of it. It is particularly important then in order to identify what has to be kept as opposed to what might be discarded.

So – when our Strategic Plan framework comes out to the Community in the next couple of months or so, please take part. All ideas suggested will be grouped and analysed and rigorously prioritised.

THE TELSTRA PROJECT IS COMPLETE

All of the towers are now in place, including on Cape Barren Island. This project has been finalised, although all the administrative work is still being done so that we can receive the money from the Federal Government. Not all the money is paid until the work is complete! But we now have 4G across the main Islands, with the accompanying ability to live stream and do all the other technological things we want to do. This means that many people can live on Flinders and work remotely from elsewhere, just like anyone else.

THE TASWATER PROJECT

This project is to increase the capacity of the Henderson Dam, so that the water treatment plant can maintain a constant supply all year round. The project had to be placed on hold

due to the coronavirus. As soon as travel restrictions to and from the Islands have been eased, TasWater will notify us of when the work will begin.

THE SAFE HARBOUR PROJECT IS MOVING ALONG

I have let you know recently that, although the Federal Government has committed the \$3 m funding, Council has to apply formally. There are conditions that must support the application:

- Council must show evidence of Community support for the project;
- Council must provide evidence of how the project may benefit the economy; and
- Council must show evidence of some market research that will demonstrate how the project will succeed.

In the next few days, you will receive in the mail a survey asking you to read two short statements. One will identify the main potential benefits of the project. The other will identify potential risks to Council of building and owning the project. Please consider the statements carefully. Then answer YES or NO to whether you support the project. The results of this survey will accompany Council's application.

In addition, Council has identified a number of engineering firms and invited them to express interest in designing and building the structure. There is a total of \$3 million to cover all work. Those who express interest will be invited to design and build a breakwater, as well as other accompanying structures that will support the purpose. These **MIGHT** include: one or two berths and / or pontoons. **But the cost must be within the budget.**

Council will let you know as we move through the process.

THE STATE OF THE ROADS

I hear on the grapevine and read on social media that quite a few people are unhappy about the state of some of the roads. There are a number of important projects pending: addressing the waste problem; maintaining our roads; and exploring how Council will manage the airport so that it does not drain the finances each year. They all require money.

Council have 2 graders to maintain all of the gravel roads on the Island. Grading must be done when roads are damp and are therefore reliant on rainfall. Road gangs manage potholing on a rotational basis – all your road issues will eventually be addressed as part of the road maintenance schedule.

We – all of us – have a great deal of thinking to do! It would be wonderful if we could have everything! But realism is important.

BUY LOCAL WHEN YOU CAN – SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS!

ANNIE REVIE, MAYOR

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ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the next Ordinary Meeting of Flinders Council will be held at the Flinders Arts and Entertainment Centre, Whitemark, Flinders Island on:

Tuesday 23 June 2020 at 9.30am.

Public Question Time will be held between 9.30 – 10.00am.

The Agenda will be available for perusal from Thursday 18 June 2020 on the Council Website www.flinders.tas.gov.au.

Warren Groves | **GENERAL MANAGER**

STAY INFORMED

Visit the Tasmanian Department of Health coronavirus website at <http://www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus> or the Australian Government Department of Health website at <https://www.health.gov.au>

For general information about coronavirus call the National Coronavirus Information Line on **1800 020 080 (24 hours, 7 days)**