**NOTES FROM THE MAYOR**

**COUNCIL DEFERRED THE MOTION ON WASTE**

I want to thank all of our Community who wrote, phoned or signed a petition regarding the waste strategy options that were on the agenda for the Ordinary Council Meeting of 28th April. You brought your thoughts and opinions to Council clearly and respectfully and all of Council appreciated that. The waste strategy that was put in place in 2018 is to be reviewed and your comments will be taken into consideration.

**AT PRESENT COUNCIL IS WORKING ON THE MOST** efficient and effective ways of conducting community engagement in a time of social distancing. It is tricky, but I assure you that it will happen – probably in a range of ways. Council has learned a huge lesson from this – one that we have taken very seriously, thanks to our Community.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON THE 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Local Government Act legislates that each Council must have a Strategic Plan that will envisage what the Community sees for the Island over the next ten years. Obviously, community engagement is vital for such planning to be effective. Before coronavirus, we were planning forums, as well as surveys and other media. We are giving a great deal of thought and planning to how it will happen in this period of social distancing. On Tuesday 5th May there will be a Council workshop that will focus most of its time and energy on this extremely important issue. I will keep you in the loop.

**WHO WOULD HAVE PREDICTED SUCH A PERIOD IN HISTORY?**

As you all know, we are still in a challenging time for health and for the economy. There have been such times before in history, the Spanish Flu episode in 2018 being the most significant. But the world’s population is now much bigger, and travel has been a significant aspect of today’s lifestyle. We are fortunate that in Australia, unlike some other countries, many people can live and move with an abundance of space around them. That is certainly the case on our Islands. Staying at least 1.5 metres away from everyone else has required conscious effort but people have managed it well. Once again, thanks to the Community of the Flinders Municipality for doing the right thing.

**SOME PROTOCOLS COULD BE LESSENED SOON**

However, it is likely that social distancing will be with us for some time yet. It has been a good strategy to curb the spread of the virus. Please keep it in your conscious mind, even when things are relaxed in the not-too-distant future. Please know that we can only begin to relax protocols when Premier Gutwein determines it.

**MY THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN WITH THE BUSINESS PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM THIS TIME**

I must say that the big burden on Flinders Island has been with the businesses that focus directly on tourism. Tourism has been impossible in order that islanders stay safe. But I am aware that many of you out there have borne the weight of that.

**NOW IS THE TIME THAT COUNCIL MUST FOCUS ON RECOVERY**

We cannot wait until the virus has disappeared until we think of the future. This is the time when Council and businesses must focus on recovery.

**COUNCIL HAS AGREED TO A RECOVERY PACKAGE**

Last year, Council promised that there would be a CPI-based rate rise only. The State Government has requested that as many councils as possible plan to support the Community if they possibly can. As you know, Council’s financial status is challenging, however Council believes that community support measures should be offered. Therefore, Council approved the following measures:

* *There will be no penalties, charges, interest or debt collection for late rates-payments, and extended payment periods (with such measures in place) until 30 June 2020;*
* *Council will consider rent relief and other strategies on council-owned buildings where tenants are experiencing financial hardship, until 30 June 2020. This will be done on a case-by-case basis on written application;*
* *Council agrees to a common approach to hardship/assistance policies with LGAT to develop a model policy based on engagement with councils, which can be adapted to local needs if required;*

**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 26 May 2020 at 9.30am**.

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

The Agenda will be available for perusal from Thursday 21 May 2020 on the Council Website [www.flinders.tas.gov.au](http://www.flinders.tas.gov.au).

Warren Groves | **GENERAL MANAGER**

* *Community grants will be refocused as appropriate to support local business and not-for-profit recovery or conversion to a digital environment or circular economy until 30 June 2021;*
* *As a means of supporting local business recovery and injecting funds into communities in a timely manner, Council will strive to settle creditor invoices within a maximum 14-day timeframe (or sooner), irrespective of normal trading terms; and*
* *Council supports a 0% increase on general rates for 2020-21, but fees and charges may be indexed by CPI.*

**THERE COULD NOT BE A BETTER TIME TO:**

Buy local! Our businesses have worked hard to support the Community in fighting this huge health cloud that has been hanging over us. Let’s support them in turn by consciously buying local when at all possible.

**ANNIE REVIE, MAYOR -Tel 0477 557 338**

**Email:** **annie.revie@flinders.tas.gov.au**

**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**](https://www.health.gov.au)For general information about coronavirus call the National Coronavirus Information Line on **1800 020 080 (24 hours, 7 days)**

**Whitemark Tip Hours**Sunday 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Monday 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Tuesday 7.00am to 10.00am
Wednesday 8.30am to 11.30am
Thursday 7.00am to 10.00am
Friday 1.30pm to 4.30pm
**Giving Shed – CLOSED**

**\*\*Changes to Community Grant Program\*\***

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, Council will be giving preference to Community Grant Program applications from local businesses and not-for-profit organisations applying for funding to assist with COVID-19 recovery projects, such as conversion to a digital environment or recycling / reuse of resources.

Applications received will be considered by Council as part of the budget process for the next financial year. Written applications, using the forms available from the Council Office or the Council website

<http://www.flinders.tas.gov.au/community-grants-and-awards> , **have been extended to C.O.B. Monday** **25 May 2020** and should be addressed to: General Manager Flinders Council PO Box 40 Whitemark TAS 7255 or send to vicki.warden@flinders.tas.gov.au