

## Mayor's Report – April 2018

The Local Government Board Review is underway for the Voluntary Amalgamation and Shared Service Options for Sorell and Tasman Councils with written submissions due to close at 5pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

I hope residents and ratepayers take the opportunity to have their say in this due diligence and public consultation process.

If you have not seen the Consultation Paper, the scope of the review will focus on three options:

- no change to Sorell and Tasman (*current and future viability {10 and 20 year outlook} of the Sorell and Tasman Council*);
- further resource-sharing options (*potential to improve viability through further shared service arrangements*); and
- a merge of Sorell and Tasman (*merger of Sorell and Tasman Councils into one local council*).

It is disappointing to see and hear comments being made about what may or may not happen if a merger proceeds and also what the basis or assumptions of these comments are. I'm not sure how many people have sought the 20 year long term financial plans of both Councils or asked any questions around the key asset management and financial data that underpin these plans or queried the General Manager to get this information.

One such comment being made is that all Tasman Council staff will lose their positions. This would not happen and it is possible that there will be more positions, training and professional development opportunities available for those that want to pursue them. Other comments being made are in regard to the Tasman halls and sports grounds and that they will be lost or disposed of. Again, this is not correct. There are community requirements around access to recreational facilities driven by the socio-economic profile of our municipality that will not change. If there are vulnerable recreational assets through lack of use or requiring significant maintenance / upgrade spending then this may well be a current issue facing Tasman Council that needs consideration and action now. With the growing expectation of residents, ratepayers and visitors around services and quality of assets that any Council should be able to meet in 2018, how content is our population to have rate revenue spent on underutilised recreational facilities that could go to other services and assets? This question applies equally whether it is for Tasman Council or a merged Council to contemplate.

It is a great opportunity for our community and employees to have their say through an independent process and the passion shown by some is a healthy indication that local government is relevant and adds value to communities, however, please consider the benefits of expressing your own opinion that is based on a reasoned view of facts.

Questions are also being asked as to why Council have voted to merge with Sorell. I wish to reinforce again that Tasman Council have not voted on any of the above options and will not do so until the Local Government Board Review is complete and the Minister has provided Council with the report. Our decision, after considering the report and all relevant matters, should be around July or August 2018.

The Council will be making a submission to the Board that will not indicate a preference for any one of the options but instead, put a number of matters to the Board for consideration that will inform and assist their deliberations around what is the best local government structure to put in place that is capable of sustainably serving our region into the future.

If you haven't noticed, the State Government elections are over so Tasman Council will now be pursuing the returning Liberal Party for their promised infrastructure funding for Stormlea Road, Fortescue Bay Road, the strip of highway across the Neck at Eaglehawk Neck and not forgetting the major transport corridor upgrades and planning through Sorell which impact many of us and our visitors. There were other promises made to organisations in Tasman and I am sure that they will also be pursuing their promised funds. With the threat of poker machines being removed from pubs and clubs now not proceeding, Council are eagerly waiting to hear a start date for the Federal Group's Port Arthur Historic Site resort.

And just in case you couldn't get enough of the last election, the upper house seat of the new Prosser electorate will be contested during May.



**Roseanne Heyward**  
**Mayor**