

Mayor's Message May '09

The Water and Sewerage Saga

It's a story of Robin Hood gone wrong.

What is happening is that the State Government is taking from established municipalities that have diligently provided water and sewerage services for their residents.

In the process, the Government is turning a good policy objective – to improve the quality of water and sewerage services around Tasmania – into a bad public policy practice.

It is a case of robbing from people in low socio-economic areas like Glenorchy where, over many, many years, people have paid to build their water and sewerage services.

Unless the Government changes its approach, ratepayers in Glenorchy – many of them on low or fixed incomes - will be asked to pay additional water rates and additional general rates on their homes.

Glenorchy ratepayers will not only have had about \$260 million of accumulated water and sewerage assets taken off them, but they will, in effect, be subsidising the same services in other municipalities.

This is simply inequitable.

The Government is trying to walk away from this and blame councils like Hobart and Glenorchy.

However the simple fact is that as a direct result of the State Government's decision to take water and sewerage assets off Glenorchy and place them with a new regional authority called Southern Water, we'll be short \$10.5 million in revenue.

The Government says that we can count on getting about \$8.8 million of that back as a "dividend" from Southern Water, but that is not guaranteed and it still leaves us short.

The Government can try to blame the councils, say the councils jointly own the new water authority and that we'll all be better off in the long-run, but everyone knows it is their plan and it has to take responsibility for the fallout.

Make no mistake, if this is not fixed by Government there will be fallout – it will come in the form of cuts to council services and possibly higher general rates for residents. If we were to suffer the worse case scenario we could need to retrench employees.

This really is a case of robbing from the poor and it's a raw deal for Glenorchy ratepayers.

We opposed the move to centralise control of water and sewerage and we've been fighting ever since to get a better deal for Glenorchy ratepayers from day one.

And you can rest assured we'll keep on fighting right up to the next election and beyond.

Glenorchy Maintains the Anzac Day Tradition

Once again the people of Glenorchy turned out in numbers to show their respect and support for our service men and women, demonstrating that the Anzac spirit is alive and well.

I had the honour and pleasure of representing Glenorchy City Council as Mayor at the Glenorchy RSL's dawn service, at the Claremont RSL's 9am service and at the Glenorchy City service at 11am.

All three events were well attended and it was great to see so many young people in the crowd. Although I was unable to attend in person, I was informed that a big crowd turned out for the Claremont dawn service where the Girl Guides and Scouts served breakfast to about 700 people.

Many people marched from the Glenorchy RSL to the 11am Glenorchy City service at the Memorial Gardens outside the Council Chambers, reflecting the growing strength of Anzac Day and the Anzac Spirit across the country.

Good News on Major Projects

Despite the global economic downturn there is still plenty of good news around.

Over at King George V Oval the new \$2 million grandstand is well underway and we expect it to be completed by mid-July.

Council with the support of the State Government is also examining the feasibility of redeveloping the Glenorchy City Council Civic Precinct. If it goes ahead this project will revitalise the Glenorchy CBD, provide new offices and retail space and provide better links between the shopping centres on either side of Main Road.

It also has the potential to inject millions of dollars into the economy, create jobs and revitalise the CBD at a time when it is most needed.

National Disc Golf Championships in Austins Ferry

Congratulations to the organizers of the National Disc Golf Championships at the Poimena Reserve at Austins Ferry on the 18th and 19th of April. This is the second year that the Poimena Reserve Disc Golf Course has been part of the national tour and the day was a great success with double the number of participants.

Joining local disc golfers were players from Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales and participants rated the course as the best in the country. Tasmania will again host the September 2011 national championships.

Just a reminder that the course is open all year round and it is great way to get exercise. It costs nothing to play the course and all you need is either a proper disc golf disc or a good Frisbee.