



CITY OF HOBART

# MINUTES ATTACHMENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OPEN PORTION OF THE MEETING

MONDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2019

AT 7.30 PM

VENUE: LORD MAYOR'S COURT ROOM, TOWN HALL

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## CITY OF HOBART

**The Lord Mayor's address in respect to the 2018/2019 Annual Report**

Welcome to the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Hobart City Council.

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to consider and formally adopt the 2018/2019 Annual Report for the City of Hobart. This report details the activities and financial performance of the Council during the year of review.

On behalf of my elected member colleagues, General Manager and Council staff, I wish to thank you for your interest in the activities of our organisation and for attending tonight's meeting.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the contribution of former Lord Mayor Alderman Ron Christie who was a serving Lord Mayor for part of the year of review and also thank former elected members, Alderman Dr Eva Ruzicka and Alderman Philip Cocker for their commitment to the city in 2018/2019.

I am now pleased to highlight some key achievements throughout the 2018/2019 financial year.

The Council turned over in excess of \$138 million. We invested \$23.1 million in new assets, \$28.9 million in replacement assets and recorded an underlying surplus of \$1.2 million. New borrowings of \$20 million were taken out to assist with capital works project delivery and \$2.1 million in existing debt was repaid. Rates were increased by 2 per cent.

This year was the first year of a new Council working towards the aspirational vision for the City of Hobart. This vision - *Hobart: A community vision for our island capital* was developed by our community as part of the most participatory consultation process ever undertaken by the city:

*Hobart breathes.*

*Connections between nature, history, culture, businesses and each other are the heart of our city.*

*We are brave and caring.*

*We resist mediocrity and sameness.*

*As we grow, we remember what makes this place special.*

*We walk in the fresh air between all the best things in life.*

With the community vision framing what the community values and what they want for the future, the Council adopted a *Capital City Strategic Plan 2019-2029* to guide all aspects of the City's operations for the next decade. The community's vision has also helped guide and inform a range of projects and initiatives throughout the year.

In the year of review, we rolled out year-three of our 10-year capital works program, *Transforming Hobart* designed to build and improve the city's road, parks and playgrounds, suburban shopping precincts, leisure facilities, community buildings and other public infrastructure.

Investing in our local neighbourhoods and communities with improved infrastructure featured this year. Our staff completed the Augusta Road, Lenah Valley shopping village which has resulted in a much-improved streetscape and pedestrian amenity. It now provides a vibrant, accessible and attractive social space for the community. We also commenced work on upgrading the New Town retail precinct and began consulting on the design principles for the Mid-town (Elizabeth Street) upgrade.

Still in the suburbs, we made significant improvements to pedestrian amenity in South Hobart and West Hobart. Two pedestrian crossings were upgraded in Macquarie Street, South Hobart to assist the community, particularly the elderly, safely access the shops and services on both sides of the street. In West Hobart, we worked with the West Hobart community to install a wombat crossing to make the Hill Street area safer for all road users.

We opened a key piece of public infrastructure of immense historical and cultural importance. The completion of the Bridge of Remembrance, as well as being an entry point to the city, now connects two of Hobart's most significant places of remembrance - the Cenotaph and the Soldiers Memorial Avenue. It is wonderful to now have a safe and all-abilities pedestrian link from Hobart to the 230 hectares of Domain parkland.

Legacy Park was also completed and opened and now provides one of the City's best playgrounds with a large adventure play space, an accessible community space for barbecues and picnics, an outdoor amphitheatre, two pizza ovens, public toilets and shelters.

The families of Tolmans Hill were very happy to have the Tolmans Hill Park completed, featuring three mountain bike tracks, playground equipment as well as exercise equipment for adults.

We continued our substantial investment on the mountain. This investment has improved facilities to enable local, national and international visitors to access the mountain's powerful nature-based experiences.

We completed and officially opened the \$2 million Great Short Walk restoration project, which restored the 100-year-old Organ Pipes Track, making it accessible to people of all walking abilities. The perimeter track of the former Exhibition Garden was also restored and opened.

Other infrastructure projects included a new amenities building featuring showers, toilets and dedicated rooms for people with high-needs located at the Argyle Street Car Park

as well as commencing stage 2 of a project on the precinct to better connect Salamanca Place to the waterfront.

As Aldermen and Councillors, we are all proud Hobartians and are passionate about the future of the City of Hobart. Our role is to represent and act as a voice for the Hobart community, make decisions in the best interests of the community and advocate to other levels of government where Council is not the decision-making authority.

There are several examples of the Council supporting issues of community interest throughout 2018/19 including the initiation of a Greater Hobart Homelessness Alliance which successfully lobbied for additional state funding for housing and support as well as seeking to waive Tasmania's housing debt to the Australian government.

We also established the Housing with Dignity Reference Group, comprising people with lived experiences of homelessness to further inform elected members and council staff on matters relating to homelessness and housing stress.

Council also facilitated the holding of public meetings about building heights and the cable car proposal.

On issues of community importance, the Council became the first capital city in Australia to declare a climate emergency and we also supported the international campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.

We continued our war on waste by commencing a process to approve a new by-law to reduce single-use plastics in Hobart.

Of course, among delivering infrastructure projects and representing the interests of our community, we continued to provide essential services such as road maintenance, waste management, public health, planning and parking, as well as programs and services that provide and maintain parks and sporting facilities, public art and community programs for our youth and elderly community members.

The City approves thousands of development and building applications every year that comply with our planning rule book.

In the year of review, the Council approved 75 developments worth an estimated \$169,522,300. These Council-approved developments included 226 residential dwellings. These approvals accounted for just 9.7% of all development applications assessed by the City in the year of review with more than 695 planning decisions delegated to officers.

Further, the ABS' most recent Building Approvals data found that building approvals worth \$398,000,000 were approved in the last year. This is nearly double the value of building approvals of any other Council in Tasmania.

In response to the smart cities agenda, we developed a Smart Cities Framework and Action Plan- Connected Hobart - to provide a roadmap for the City to use technology and data to better service the community's needs, improve liveability, manage resources, drive economic activity and foster innovation. It is the first program of its kind for the city, and its Hobart-specific, place-based, people-first approach is unique in Australia.

In terms of other important strategic documents to guide the work of staff over the coming year, we commenced development of an Aboriginal Commitment and Action Plan to reflect deepening relationships and greater shared ambitions between Aboriginal community members and the City of Hobart.

We maintained our investment in a creative and cultural Hobart by providing funding certainty to the Taste of Tasmania for the coming three years and approving a two-year funding deal for Dark-Mofo.

The 2018/2019 Taste of Tasmania was the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event – a magnificent milestone and epic achievement for this iconic summer event.

The much-anticipated Greater Hobart City Deal was signed off seeing a \$1.6 billion partnership agreement between the four metropolitan councils and the Australian and Tasmanian Governments. The Deal will guide infrastructure investment over the next 10 years and it identifies key projects needing government support such as improved public transport, affordable housing and urban renewal of the rail corridor.

This deal will also realise a new era of city cooperation and greater coordination between all three levels of government. A key commitment of the City Deal was the development of a Greater Hobart Act to provide a framework to support collaborative decision making between the Councils and Government.

Whilst I've highlighted the many achievements of this (and the former Council) in the year of review, I think it's important to note that in any given year, the Council also faces some challenges and pressures.

While the provision of essential services form a significant part of our core business, the modern business of Council is much broader than it has ever been before.

There are many demands on the Council's resources. As a capital city council, we have a responsibility to provide high-quality regional facilities for the wider community; and maintain infrastructure required of a capital city; support the delivery of world-class events, festivals and markets; display community leadership; support our community on issues important them.

The City of Hobart services a population of more than 50,000 residents, thousands of international students and almost 1.1 million tourists in the City each year.

I am pleased to report however, that the Council and council staff will continue to work hard to ensure our long-term financial sustainability, to maintain the infrastructure required of a capital city and to deliver over 300 services to our community.

Finally, I would like to thank my elected member colleagues for their contribution and passion in serving the community of Hobart. I would also like to place on record my thanks to the General Manager, his executive team and all the staff of the City of Hobart for their commitment and dedication to making Hobart a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

**Thank you.**