



**The Lord Mayor presents the
2020/2021 Annual Report
Monday 22 November 2021 at 7:30pm
The Ballroom, Hobart Town Hall**

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Hobart City Council. An opportunity to reflect on the events, challenges and achievements of 2020/21 financial year.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect much of what we did and were able to do this year. The ongoing pandemic has had major impacts on the Hobart community and economy. Although we have been fortunate to avoid large case numbers and extended lockdowns, it has been a hard road for many.

The year started with us in the midst of the pandemic and the last part of the year was dedicated to our community's social and economic recovery.

We took a leadership position to respond to community recovery needs, including for businesses and the local economy. The various measures included:

- \$607,000 to assist ratepayers business and residential experiencing extreme financial hardship;
- \$36,700 in rent relief for tenants of city-owned properties experiencing financial hardship; and
- A community, creative and business support grants program which saw us investing just over \$1 million in the good ideas and initiatives of the community.
 - The grants program saw 299 applications received. Of these, 160 submissions were from applicants who hadn't previously received a grant.
 - 146 applications were approved

- The **total cost** of the projects supported exceeded \$4.67M
- Over 150,000 were estimated to attend and participate in the funded activities
 - 6,482 people were estimated to be involved as participants
 - 145,196 people were estimated to attend
 - 2081 estimated volunteer roles
 - 670 estimated paid positions

This support was in addition to the rates freeze for all ratepayers. It was the first freeze on rates and fees and charges in 22 years.

Putting this into dollar terms, this translates to approximately \$1.764M in rates revenue that would have been raised, if, say, a 2% rate increase was agreed on rather than 0%.

The Council ended the year with a small deficit of \$25,000. This was from a turnover of \$141 million.

We invested \$8.46 million in new assets, \$12.96 million in replacement of worn out assets and recorded an underlying deficit of just \$25,000. New borrowings of \$15 million were taken out and \$4.17 million in existing debt was repaid.

Taking on debt that is manageable, sustainable and for capital works that are of strategic significance and for intergenerational benefit, is legitimate and responsible financial management.

The Council will however remain vigilant in identifying areas in which it can improve its endeavours to provide effective and economically responsible services to the community.

The City has continued to see a lot of interest in development in Hobart despite the pandemic. In 2020/21, 841 permits were issued to the value of \$330.7 million.

It is important to note of course that in some cases, planning approvals can take time to translate into building approvals and ultimately dwellings. In terms of building approvals, we issued 662 permits to the value of \$198.9 million.

This year we undertook some important strategic planning work.

We started work on a 20-year plan to guide future development in central Hobart. The Central Hobart Precincts Plan will guide future growth in a way that will strengthen what's great about

Hobart and build on its position as a vibrant, flourishing, sustainable and globally appealing capital city.

We continued working with the other Greater Hobart Councils of Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough and the Tasmanian and Australian Governments to progress the Hobart City Deal and the Greater Hobart Act Work Plan.

As a group, we developed a draft Vision for Greater Hobart 2050:

“We will live in the world’s best small capital city; a city built for people that is connected, friendly and safe. Greater Hobart is thriving and an inspiring place to live, where we all work together to make a positive contribution to our extraordinary environment”

We also commenced a MetroPlan for Greater Hobart. The Metro Plan will ensure a coordinated approach to shaping the future of growth and change in Greater Hobart to 2050 and will include a Settlement Strategy, an Infrastructure and Services Plan and an Economic Development Strategy.

Our capital works program saw the completion of, or substantial progress made, on a range of projects, including traffic management projects, road resurfacing, new paths and trails, improvements to stormwater drainage and lighting, upgrades to buildings and facilities, new security infrastructure and upgrades to parks and playgrounds.

Some of the more significant projects completed included:

- The \$1.3 million leisure pool refurbishment and new kids’ pool and at the Doone Kennedy Hobart Aquatic Centre – featuring slides, a tipping bucket, water jets and soft-fall flooring. Approximately 700,000 people use the facility each year.
- Fern Tree Park – the \$2 million makeover (partly funded by the Australian Government) of this historic park in Fern Tree included a natural playground, new toilets and a bus shelter.
- Big Bend fire trail upgrade – this 4km critical firefighting and evacuation route on kunanyi/Mt Wellington received an upgrade to the trail surface and improvements to drainage.
- Elizabeth Street Bus Mall – following the opening of the Mövenpick hotel, the final stage of works saw the mall returned to two-way movement, widening of the footpath, new paving and a new bus shelter.
- Argyle Street Car Park lift upgrade – both lifts were upgraded for an improved and faster service.

- Domain roundabout – to improve road safety and modernising the facilities of the Queens Domain, government funding allowed the upgrade at the Upper Domain Road and Cleary's Gate Road intersection.

Throughout the year, there were 93 Council Committee meetings held with Committee recommendations flowing through to 25 Full Council meetings. Some of the more significant Council decisions included:

- Council endorsed **The Sustainable Hobart Action Plan**, Hobart's plan for taking action on climate change in the period 2020-2025. The Plan includes 42 actions to reduce Hobart's energy use and emissions, improve resilience against natural disasters and promote innovative energy and transport solutions.

The Plan includes work to increase electric vehicle infrastructure and thanks to the assistance of the Tasmanian Government, we were able to install a new fast-charge station at the Dunn Place car park. This installation builds on the existing trickle-charge bays at the Hobart Central Car Park installed in September 2020.

- To improve the safety of our City's commercial, retail and urban areas, the Council agreed to **introduce safer speed limits into Hobart's CBD to 40 km/h**. We also agreed to 40 km/h speeds in neighbourhood shopping areas. This brings us in line with other capital and major cities in Australia and has created a safer city road network.

We did this with support from the Road Safety Advisory Council, RACT, Tasmanian Transport Association and Metro Tasmania. By focusing on people and by building safer streets, we are creating a more liveable city.

- After 31 years of running and growing the Taste of Tasmania into the largest event of its kind in Australia, Council made the decision to **transition the Taste to new ownership**. The Council will continue to play a valuable role as a partner or sponsor, which is a far more appropriate role for a council to play in an event of such significance. We look forward to our residents and visitors enjoying the 2021/22 Taste-style event showcasing produce from across Tasmania at a wonderful time of the year in Hobart.

Some other notable work that Council undertook included:

- The **trailing of Reconophalt sustainable** asphalt mix to refurbish a road in Lenah Valley. More than 150,000 plastic bags were diverted from landfill and mixed with recycled printer cartridges and crushed glass. It was the first time using the product and we'll be watching it closely to see how well it performs with the aim of incorporating it into other road projects in the future.
- We launched the **CityTalks** event series in partnership with the University of Tasmania. The webinar series is aimed at inspiring ideas and innovation for Hobart's future. Three talks were held in the reporting year with the topics of how cities are reshaping their streets in response to COVID-19, the economic value of Hobart's heritage buildings and the economic and social impacts of urban sprawl.
- An arts project to encourage public conversation about the future of the William Crowther Statue in Franklin Square was launched during the year. *Crowther Reinterpreted*, is a series of four temporary public art works by local artists, each offering a response to the statue of William Crowther. The four commissions presented diverse perspectives to acknowledge, question, provoke discussion and increase awareness about the story of Crowther and Lanne.
- The Council's highly-successful Bushcare Program continued with more than 457 volunteers taking part in Bushcare activities during 2020/21. All up, Bushcarers contributed 4,470 hours of work to the value of more than \$150,000 to help maintain and conserve our bushland habitat, restoring degraded areas by planting native trees and shrubs, and removing invasive weeds that would otherwise choke local flora and threaten wildlife.
- Council held a bus shelter design competition and award-winning design firm Supermanoeuvre took out the challenge with a design that can be altered to suit different locations, through a program that places the shelter at the location for site-specific design adjustments. Supermanoeuvre will now work with City of Hobart staff to develop a shovel-ready design.

In closing, I extend a sincere thank you to the residents, community groups, local businesses and volunteers of the City of Hobart. Your contribution to our vibrant and diverse City is very much appreciated

I also wish to thank my elected member colleagues for their commitment to the City over the past year.

To our former General Manager, Nick Heath, who we farewelled in April this year, thank you for outstanding contribution to local government and the Hobart community in a career that spanned more than 30 years.

To the CEO, her Executive Team and staff, thank you for your commitment and dedication. I feel proud of what we have all achieved and the great things we have done over the last 12 months and I look forward to the year ahead.

Thank you for your interest in the activities of the Council and for attending tonight's meeting. Please stay on and enjoy some refreshments.

Thank you.