



Burnie Community News

31 March 2007

Issue No 1

Making a Customer Request

Council regularly undertakes inspections of its assets, including roads and footpaths. However items can become damaged or broken in between inspections. Residents can help Council maintain things in shipshape condition by telling us if you notice something that needs fixing. If you notice a broken park bench, a toilet cubicle door that will not lock or come across some dumped rubbish, please let us know. Please call the Customer Services Centre on **6430 5700** or log on to our web site at **www.burnie.net**, select City Services then Service Request Form. You are asked to provide a contact number to assist staff in locating the problem – it can be hard to identify which bench in the park, for example, when it is such a large area. Please be our eyes and together we can work to keep our City and surrounds looking good.

Where to contact us

Many of your general enquiries and telephone payments can be dealt with by our helpful Customer Services staff – contact the Customer Services Centre on **6430 5700**.

Child Care Centres

Alexander Beetle House **6430 5727**
Wisteria Lane **6430 5728**
Milpara Early Learning Centre **6433 4792**

Out of School Hours Care

Vacation Care **6431 6773**
Before School Hours Care **6431 6773**
After School Hours Care **6430 5727**

Cultural Precinct

Arts & Function Centre (Civic Centre) **6430 5850**
Burnie Regional Art Gallery **6430 5875**
Pioneer Village Museum **6430 5746**

Aquatic Centre **6431 4768**
Inclusion Support Agency (formerly SUPS) **6430 5786**

Tasmanian Travel and Information Centre **6434 6111**

Web site: **www.burnie.net**

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Introducing our new Community Newsletter

During a recent resident survey about Council services, residents indicated an excellent satisfaction rate with most of Council's services. However, many people seemed to think that we could better inform the community about what Council is doing. In response to this feedback, Council has decided to produce a community newsletter to make sure that everyone has access to information about Council activities and services. Please let us have your feedback on the newsletter at burnie@burnie.net to help us decide what to put in future editions.

One of the biggest issues to confront Council at the moment is the State Government's proposed Water and Sewerage Reform. This is a major threat to Burnie's strategic advantage in water supply and to its recent investment of over \$16 million dollars in sewerage infrastructure for the next generation of residents. Therefore, the bulk of this issue is devoted to this subject, focussing on water.

The entrance markers are certainly gaining the attention of residents and visitors alike. To assist a full understanding of the Signage Strategy, more information can be found in this newsletter.



It is with great sadness that I pay tribute to the late Alderman Jan Blizzard, who passed away earlier this month following a short illness. Communication was one of Jan's great strengths and she was a firm supporter of the concept to produce a community newsletter. Her voice around the table will be greatly missed by myself and my fellow Aldermen.

Following a recount of ballot papers, Ald Robert Bentley joins us around the table and I welcome him to the role. Robert will be known to many of you already in his driver trainer and Burnie Band roles and I look forward to the contribution he will make to our decision-making.

Alwyn Boyd, Mayor

Entrance Markers

The Entry Markers at Cooe and Mount Road have certainly generated a lot of comment from the community since being installed. Many people have asked what the markers are supposed to represent and what they are intended to do.

The Markers are the first stage of a three stage Signage Strategy to direct tourists into the City. The second stage involves a review and installation of tourism and highway signage, and is about to commence. A third stage, being the installation of small scale directional and interpretive signage to tourism attractions in the City, will be completed before the start of the next tourism season.

The Signage Strategy was designed by Inspiring Place and aims to build on the City's industrial heritage, natural attractions and its creativity. The Entry Markers are aimed at creating a "wow" factor and to make a statement of arrival. From the comments of visitors to the City, the Markers have certainly achieved this aim.

Each entrance marker suggests a variation of the key themes. In the case of the Cooe elements, the splayed walls are likened to the pages in an opening book, revealing the beach and coast line beyond. The spectrum of colours celebrates the beach lifestyle.

Following community feedback and issues with the maritime safety authority the large stack that was proposed for the eastern entrance to the City is no longer being installed. Council is currently reviewing a number of other designs for a Marker in this area.

Rates Reminder

A reminder that the final rate instalment for 2006/07 is due for payment by 30 April 2007.



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Water and Sewerage Reform

The Tasmanian Premier, Paul Lennon MHA, announced on the 26 September 2006 the creation of a Ministerial Water and Sewerage Taskforce. The Taskforce is comprised of the Treasurer (Chair) the Hon Michael Aird MLC, the Minister for Primary Industries and Water the Hon David Llewellyn MHA and the Minister for Tourism, Arts and the Environment the Hon Paula Wriedt MHA.

On the 22 December 2006 the Taskforce released a discussion paper titled "Reform of Tasmania's Water and Sewerage Sector" that identified 12 issues upon which submissions were sought from Councils by 23 February 2007. Burnie City Council has provided a detailed submission and this together with the Reform discussion paper is available on Council's website at www.burnie.net.

The major issue coming out of the discussion paper was the Government's need for structural reform; that is, the possible formation of a new Statewide or Regional Water and Sewerage Authority. If the Government chose to undertake these reforms, the consequences for Burnie would be:

- Loss of water and sewerage infrastructure paid for by the residents of Burnie. In the last few years over \$16 million has been invested by Council in a new state of the art sewerage treatment plant and associated infrastructure. A total Written Down Value of \$160 million would be transferred to this new body.
- Likely increase in water and sewerage charges to pay for the upgrade of other councils' systems, which do not comply with current standards or do not even exist. Burnie residents here enjoy fully compliant systems unlike most other councils.
- Likely increase in general rates as cost inefficiencies will occur due to the loss of some 30% of Council's business activities.
- Water and Sewerage services being transferred to a body other than Burnie City Council to manage.
- Loss of assets that Burnie City Council has invested heavily in, to the new body, which have been substantially been paid for by Burnie residents. Other councils' residents will benefit from the asset base being transferred to a body other than the Burnie City Council to manage.

This is the first group in a series of articles to raise the community's awareness of Burnie City Council's water and sewerage operations and the potential consequences for Burnie of the suggested State Reform. The focus of the following articles is on water.

History

The first water supply to Burnie dates back before the twentieth (20th) century and was from a spring at the foothills of Emu Bay. A gravity fed system station on the Emu River at Fernglade during the 1930's.

The Emu River and Romaine Creek systems were both replaced in 1956 by the construction of the Pet Dam at Ridgley, on the Pet River, which had a maximum height of 8.3 metres. The Romaine system was partly used until 1978.

The Pet Dam was Burnie's first substantial water storage, of 1,360 Megalitres (300 million gallons), and was a gravity fed water supply. The Pet Dam storage was found insufficient in the 1960's and the dam was raised by six (6) metres in 1966 to provide for a storage capacity of 4,230 Megalitres, (930 million gallons).

In the 1970s, the demand for water had increased beyond the design capacity of the system, resulting in water restrictions during the dry season. This resulted in the construction of the Guide Dam at Highclere on the Guide River. The storage reservoir, of maximum height fifteen (15) metres, had a storage capacity of 1,800 Megalitres, (396 million gallons), and was completed in 1982.

A 450mm diameter pipeline, 5,700 metres long, gravitates water from the Guide Dam at Highclere to the Pet River, and was completed in 1982. A 450mm diameter pipe also augmented the Pet River Dam to Burnie line and was constructed in 1984.

Also, during the 1970s, Council was approached to join the North West Regional Water Scheme (now operated by Cradle Coast Water). However, Council decided to retain its independence due to its simple gravity fed, low cost water system supplying the Burnie community.

Water quality issues of colour, turbidity also periods of elevated iron and manganese that were outside the required standards and caused dirty water complaints and the staining of washing, led to the construction in 1993 of the Burnie Water Treatment Plant (BWTP) at Ridgley adjacent to the Pet Dam. Council received a Local Government Infrastructure Award for the design and construction of an efficient water treatment plant.

This plant was designed to produce water in accordance with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) and continues to provide water within the current guidelines. Council also continues to invest in the water system to maintain its capacity to deliver high quality, low cost treated water to the residents and businesses in Burnie. In fact, water is arguably Burnie's largest competitive advantage for its future development.



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Water Quality

Water works result crystal clear

Burnie's water is cleaner than ever thanks to several years of remediation work along the Pet River catchment. Burnie's water treatment plant now uses 25 per cent less chemicals than it did five years ago due to efforts in fencing off streams and rehabilitating banks. Water treatment operator Rodney Dick said the water was regularly tested, and it was getting better all the time thanks to work by Landcare and the Burnie City Council.

"We cut our chemical consumption by about 25 per cent by keeping the cows out of the water leading into the dam" he said. "Our water's pretty clean." Approximately 80km of stock-proof fencing, 171 water troughs, 5 in-stream watering points and thousands of native plants have been added to the catchment area since 2000.

Fencing out livestock has helped reduce the amount of soil erosion in the catchment - previously, bogged-up water holes had contaminated the water supply. When it rained, these holes were flushed out, resulting in huge plumes of red mud going into Burnie's water supply reservoir.

Burnie residents need not worry about dwindling water supplies during the current dry spell Mr Dick said. "If it didn't rain ever, we'd have two years' supply in our dams" he said.

(Extract from *The Advocate* newspaper 30 March 2007.)

Performance

Four measures have been included in the graph below to show Burnie's relative performance compared with the State Average for all councils and the worst performance recorded for each measure.

Quality Outcome of Water Quality Tests measures the percentage of tests made that met environmental standards. Burnie scored 100% meaning all tests met the standards.

Reliability Number of Breaks in Reticulation Systems per 100 km provides an indication of the condition and reliability of the systems. Burnie's score is extremely low indicating the excellent condition of the Burnie water system.

Availability Number of Days of Water Restrictions provides an indication of the capacity of the system to meet the community's needs. Burnie has never imposed water restrictions since the commissioning of its current water system, while in the worst case one council imposed restrictions for all 365 days of the year.

Affordability Unit Cost per Kilolitre measures the cost to Council of providing water to the community. Burnie's cost at 84 cents is 13% lower than the state average and a massive 55% lower than the worst case.

