

A Natural Escape...

Positioning the Tasman for the Future



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Mayor's Message

Our community, although not without its challenges as noted in the overview below, is a strong and sustainable one. We are growing strongly and consistently, with an approximate growth rate of 2.6% in the 2016 Census and a similar growth forecast from this Census.

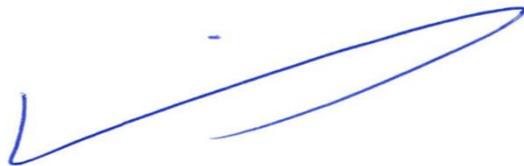
As a Council we pride ourselves on having no borrowings and sustaining a small surplus over numerous years.

Our lifestyle is relaxed, often attracting those looking for a sea change or an alternative to the bustle of larger places. We are a tight knit community, who through a combination of isolation and the need to respond to disaster, are resilient and self-reliant. It may be this self-reliance that prevents us from benefiting (as many other communities have) from government largesse over the years. We were fortunate to receive funding for the Tasman Civic Centre upgrades with a focus on emergency preparedness, this funding is much appreciated, but does not address a number of priorities put forward here.

Since adopting our new Strategic Plan in August 2021 we have been able to refocus our efforts as a Council with a new direction, this looks to building upon the already strong foundations of our community and our natural resources, while consolidating our community infrastructure to provide facilities that serve both our resident population and visitor economy.

The projects outlined below are in various stages, from 'shovel ready' through to concept and discussion stage. While all are important to our community, we have selected five (5) priority projects, and have provided further detail on these projects. We would of course be very happy to discuss other projects or funding opportunities with you at your convenience.

On behalf of the Tasman Council, I look forward to talking with you about our strategic projects at your earliest convenience.



Kelly Spaulding

Mayor

Introduction

Tasman Council looks forward to working cooperatively with the Australian Government to cement collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and openness.

In creating this strategy we have been mindful of our capacity to deliver on projects and the collaborations that will be required to ensure that each project successfully achieves its outcomes.

The priority projects we have identified will each act as key drivers in one of the following areas:

- Economic growth and employment;
- Community connectivity and sustainability; or
- Increased emergency capacity.

Other projects, while still being important to the Council, may require further investigation and are generally at a feasibility or commencement stage. The exception to this is the Tasman Civic Centre, which has detailed planning documentation available and is 'shovel ready'.

We have ensured that all projects are consistent with the Council's Strategic Plan which was created in consultation with the community and other stakeholders.

Many projects include a number of separate stages, each of which can be seen as a discreet 'sub-project' contributing to a broader whole. Importantly, projects also support and complement each other, providing a multiplier effect for the community and economy of the Tasman Municipality.

Overview

Our Community

We are a small community of just under 2,500 permanent residents, with a population density of 0.04 persons per hectare and a land area of 66,963 hectares. By Tasmanian standards we are an isolated community, with Sorell as the nearest larger retail centre. While our population figures are predominantly stable, we are growing, with 65 new residents noted in the 2016 Census and an expected similar amount in the 2020 Census. We have a higher than average percentage of people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and a higher median age than the Tasmanian State average. Our community has pockets of disadvantage, with the 2016 Census indicating a SEIFA score of 917 as compared to the Tasmanian score of 958¹. During the summer months our population more than triples, as people with holiday homes flock to our stunning coastline. This brings a welcome economic boost, but at times may cause friction between ratepayers/residents and visitors, and places our infrastructure under stress.

The people of the Tasman are resilient and self-reliant. We support each other and come together in times of need, as seen during the 2013 bushfires, Port Arthur Massacre and other emergency situations.

Tourism and agriculture are our main economic drivers, and just like the rest of the country, we've been impacted by the COVID pandemic.

¹ <https://profile.id.com.au/tasmania/seifa-disadvantage>

A large proportion of our Municipality is State Reserve or National Park, and while we appreciate the beauty of where we live, it also means that our development potential can be limited. We are home to the World Heritage listed Port Arthur Historic Site and the Coal Mines Historic Site. Our pristine waters provide salmon and oysters to the world, along with a small fishing fleet that supplies local and Sydney Fish Markets with some of the nation's freshest fish.

Our Vision

Our vision is clearly articulated in our Strategic Plan. The Tasman is a sustainable dynamic and liveable community founded on our people, our natural and cultural attributes.

Council's mission is to ensure that the Tasman is an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest.

We will achieve this through collaborative arrangements with government and other stakeholders, and through working with our community. Our focus is on ensuring that we are sustainable both financially and in regard to our community assets, people and environment.

Our Strategy

Our Strategic Plan makes special note of community's strong desire to see us 'better connected' whether this is a physical connection – through walking paths, multi-use trails and roads or social and digital connections. The projects outlined here, all provide for that connection; to place, to each other and/ or to the outside world.

Specifically within the Settlements, Structure, Purpose & Connections section of the Tasman Council Strategic Plan 2021 – 2031, there is reference to:

- *High quality infrastructure to promote amenity, visitor expenditure and private investment (specifically in relation to Eaglehawk Neck and Port Arthur)*
- *Local parks and community, including visitor amenities and access to existing facilities such as boat ramps.*
- *Local pedestrian, bike connections (both specifically in relation to Murdunna, Taranna, White Beach, Premaydena/Saltwater River)*
- *Consolidation of services to increase local usage and flow-on connections/expenditure*
- *Consolidation of major facilities to use standards (specifically in relation to Nubeena)*

While these references look specifically at built environment, the Action Approaches (actions 3.1 and 3.2) in the People & their Wellbeing section of our plan refer to creating all important links between people.

The Tourism, Visitation & Recreation section of our Plan speaks broadly of the need to consolidate facilities and ensure that they are of high standard, designed to meet contemporary needs, minimise maintenance costs and impacts on residents. This is echoed in the Physical Services, Infrastructure & Facilities section of our Plan.

Our Relationships

Our Strategic Plan focuses on collaborative relationships, recognising that Council is only one of the stakeholders in the community. We also aim to collaborate effectively with both government and non-government organisations to prosecute our vision.

We recognise that as a small, isolated community we must work together to achieve our goals and are fortunate to have a resourceful community to partner with.

Our Priority Projects

1. Roads To Support Our Growth

The Tasman Municipality consists of two distinct peninsulas, the Forestier and Turrakana / Tasman Peninsula, as such, we are a long thin strip of land that encourages settlement along the coastline. The Arthur Highway which runs from north of the Municipality through to Port Arthur is a Tasmanian Government road, in addition to this there are many local roads, which are controlled by the Tasman Council.

Our local roads have been built to accommodate our resident population, but are put under undue stress, with tourism continuing to be a major economic driver for our community. As home to one of the State's most visited and widely recognised tourist attractions, the World Heritage Listed Port Arthur Historic Site along with internationally renowned attractions such as the Three Capes Walk, and many privately operated tours and attractions, our roads need to accommodate much more than our resident population.



Arthur Highway between Fortescue Bay and Port Arthur

Yet the Arthur Highway which services our region is in still considered to be a Category 3 road (*Roads to our Future: State Road Hierarchy*). These roads are considered to be of lesser importance than Category 1 and 2 roads, and focus on sub-regional tourist movement, inter regional freight and local commercial interaction. The State is also responsible for a number of other feeder roads, including sections of Nubeena Road, which creates a touring loop through its connection to the Arthur Highway.

The Arthur Highway is characterised by poor road alignment, with limited opportunities for overtaking and signage that is often not replaced or maintained in a timely manner. While recently created stopping and overtaking bays are welcomed, many visitors do not know what these are or how to use them. Recent investment in these roads has been welcomed by all road users, there is still much work to be done to ensure the safety and comfort of both residents and visitors. While residents are often well prepared for hazards, such as animals, winding and undulating surfaces and poor road conditions, visitors are less cognisant of the inherent risks in these sections of road.

As visitation to our region remains strong (despite the limitations of COVID) it is now the prime opportunity to look at the creation and promotion of a 'touring loop' from Taranna, through Nubeena, Port Arthur and back to Taranna. This concept, not dissimilar to the Great Eastern Drive, or Western Wilds would assist in

promoting the region and provide an avenue for local businesses to collaborate to support each other's endeavours.

While we recognise that these are State Government roads, there is an opportunity for the Australian Government to provide assistance in supporting the development of a strategic road system which has been largely overlooked in recent times.

Strategic Actions:

Council is seeking to have the Arthur Highway recognised as a Category 2 road, and base this argument on the fact that there is no alternative route. This means that all vehicles including heavy vehicle traffic (such as trucks from fish and chicken farms, and forestry operations) as well as tourist buses and individuals who wish to visit or live in the region must use the Arthur Highway. With 'one road in, one road out', it is essential that this single connector is of a quality to ensure that it is safe for all road users.

Visitors do not limit themselves to driving on the Arthur Highway when visiting the Tasman Municipality. Our accessible coastline, natural attractions and dispersed township encourage exploration and adventure.

With this comes wear and tear on our local roads.

In addition to the Arthur Highway, a number of our local roads bear the brunt of this use, these are predominantly:

- Blow Hole Road, which connects Eaglehawk Neck, Tasman Arch, the Tasman Blowhole, Devils Kitchen and Cape Raoul, all well visited natural attractions.
- Safety Cove Road, which provides access to Remarkable Cave and Crescent Bay Track ,
- Stormlea Road which is the entrance to the popular Shipstern Bluff big surf spot and part of the Three (3) Capes Walk and,
- Salt Water River Road, the connection to the Coal Mines Historic Site, another World Heritage attractor in our Municipality.

These roads not only serve local residents of the Tasman Municipality, but also offer connections to major tourist attractions which are owned and operated by State entities.

The condition of and the Council's ability to maintain Blow Hole Road in particular is of concern, with the State Government proposing to build a suspension bridge over Tasman Arch as an added tourism attraction, likely to significantly increase visitation.

Current Tasmanian Visitor Survey Information (available at <http://www.tvsanalyser.com.au/>) indicates visitation of 65,000 up to the end of June 2021 (it should be noted that this includes some of the lowest visitation in the State due to COVID restrictions). With the added attraction of the proposed suspension bridge lifting visitation, significant additional pressure will be applied to a road originally designed to access holiday homes and beaches.

Other roads, such as those mentioned above have also experienced dramatic increases in the volume of traffic since their creation. Council's maintenance of roads meets the expectations of our residents and ratepayers. The additional pressures put on these roads due to increased visitation should not be the responsibility of our ratepayers who are by far outnumbered by visitors to the region.

With this in mind, Council seeks funding for these priority road projects in the form of a 'roads package' to be negotiated with the Australian and State Governments. This may include the reclassification of

the Arthur Highway, its extension to become a 'touring loop' and/or one off funding packages for those connector roads which service State run and owned visitor attractions. The provision of safer roads, also assists in case of emergency, providing a safer avenue of escape, should it be needed.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss funding models and options with you to ensure the safety and comfort of visitors, residents and ratepayers in the Tasman Municipality.

2. NBN and Telecommunications

Access to reliable internet and mobile phone services is taken for granted by most of the developed world, and has never been more important than it is now.

It allows people to run home businesses, helps maintain people's connections and provides the opportunity for people to remain productive during COVID and is now used as an emergency notification and management tool.

Yet in the Tasman Municipality this is not the norm.

There are still many places that have little or no mobile phone coverage. Much of the Municipality has very limited and unreliable internet access or poor download speeds.

Discussions with the NBN regarding the NBN Regional Co-Investment Fund have not been fruitful. Information provided by the NBN clearly showed that an upgrade to their system through the extension fibre from north of Dunalley did not 'stack up'. While representatives from the NBN have been very helpful, this does little to assist those who are disadvantaged by a third world digital service.

Recent information to hand suggests that the Australian Government through the Telstra Regional Connectivity Program will provide fast and reliable internet connections to the Tasman District School. If this is possible, then there may be an avenue for other connections to occur as fibre is rolled into the community. This would provide some assistance for the residents of Nubeena, but would not address the larger issues faced by the rest of the community.

Alternatively a solution would be to invest in the long term infrastructure and technology to ensure stable connectivity. If connectivity is not able to be established because of the topography of the region, alternative solutions could be sought and an education campaign initiated to provide clear and accurate information.

Strategic Actions:

Council seeks an urgent review of current internet and mobile phone service availability and upgrades where possible.

If not possible, assistance is sought to provide information to the community about the limitations of current services, why this occurs and how people can operate in a digital world without consistent and stable IT solutions.

3. Potable Water and Waste Water

As the result of the topography of the Tasman Municipality, there is limited availability of potable water to residents, ratepayers and visitors.

Most homes and businesses rely on tank water, which with predicted climatic change, is becoming more precarious.

Anecdotally, this impacts on the experience of visitors, many of whom have never been exposed to tank water and some of whom suffer the consequences of this, leaving them with a poor impression of the Tasman.

Private water storage through dams and reservoirs caters mostly for agricultural activities and some rural homes.

We are the only Municipality in Tasmania to not have access to any form of bulk water storage, or to be connected to TasWater. The exception in our Municipality is a small water scheme which services the Port Arthur Historic Site, some of the surrounding businesses and the medical centre and aged care facility at Nubeena.

All homes in the Tasman rely on onsite waste water and sewerage treatment with the exception being a small scheme that services Port Arthur and the medical centre. This situation poses potential health risk to residents, limitations on business investment and development in the region and is a potential long term environmental threat.

Businesses see the current situation as a risk, and an additional impost, not only financially but in terms of location and environmental considerations for business looking to invest in the community.

As the effects of climatic change are felt, water catchment from rainfall is becoming increasingly unreliable, creating the need for residents and business to buy in water. This is expensive and not a sustainable solution.

Access to a reliable source of water would also be of assistance in the case of an emergency situation. In severe weather incidents, and the 2013 bushfire incident, many homes were left without access to any water due to extended power outages, which in turn meant that pumps on tanks would not run, and therefore any water stored in tanks was difficult to access for household use. A centralised water supply would not only assist in this instance, but may also be used for firefighting purposes in an extreme emergency, assisting in limiting the impacts of fires on business and the community.

Strategic Actions:

An investigation into the viability of the provision a water treatment plant to service the needs of business, ratepayers and residents in some of the bigger townships is long overdue. This would enable future planning to be undertaken and finally settle the niggling concerns of our community that the Tasman Municipality has been 'left off the map' in regard to what many consider to be an everyday necessity in a developed country.

The results of an investigation will provide certainty for business, households and potential developers alike, allowing business planning and investment decisions to be made with known evidence.

4. Connecting Our Community

One of our main strategic focuses is the enhancement of our existing network of walking tracks and trails, this will help to physically connect places, but also provide avenues to decrease social isolation.

Each of the projects outlined below is a discreet investment that will have individual benefit. When looked at as a whole, they will improve the connectivity of the Municipality for residents and provide an additional attractor for visitors, who we know flock to 'the peninsula' to enjoy its scenic coastline and natural assets.

To support this strategy, we have drawn on the feedback from the Strategic Plan consultations and the priorities in the Plan. This will be supplemented by a Community Infrastructure Strategy, with more detailed project specifications while still focusing on the below priority projects.

Cost estimates for individual projects can be provided as required.

The below projects offer an ideal opportunity to build upon and strengthen the Council's collaborations with the community through consultation and other landowners such as the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service with whom we have a strong working relationship.

Eaglehawk Neck

a) Completion of Blowhole Road walking path

Over the last few years, Council has commenced the construction of a walking path along Blowhole Road. It is envisaged that this path may eventually form part of the network of paths and trails proposed by ENACT (Eaglehawk Neck Action Community Taskforce), an active local community association.

The current path starts just south of the intersection of Caribbean Court and Blow Hole Road, and extends through to the middle of Doo Town, near Blowhole Creek. It provides a safe way for many residents, ratepayers and visitors to transverse the area and allows access (via tracks through Crown Land) to the beach and other tourist attractions.

Once complete, the path will allow connect to an existing path at the Tasman Blowhole, near the recently installed turning circle and a well formed walking trail to the beach.



Images show sections of Blowhole Road where path is to be completed, looking both South (left) and North (right). Note bridge across Blowhole Creek and minimal verges.

However, the path from the turning circle to the middle of Doo Town remains incomplete, with the final approximately 700m posing numerous challenges. There are a number of land ownership issues, where historically shacks and houses may have encroached on the road reserve, and the path will

need to pass through part of the Eaglehawk Neck Historic Site and other Parks and Wildlife Service owned land in order to reach its destination. The installation of a small footbridge to allow the safe crossing of Blowhole Creek will also be essential, noting that this area is under the tenure of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

These challenges, which may include engineering solutions to the creation of a footbridge, a possible road crossing and potential compulsory acquisition of land (or compensation for affected landowners) and tree removal will significantly increase the estimated \$25,000 cost of the path itself.

Council is seeking assistance to complete engineering designs, facilitation of any land acquisition and funding assistance to complete this project which will markedly increase community safety and visitor amenity to the area.

Council sees this as a vital asset to our community and a priority project.

b) Completion of stage 1 of walking trails at Pirates Bay

Working closely with ENACT, we have committed to the completion of Stage 1 of an ambitious network of walking trails and paths connecting various parts of the community.

Stage 1 will see a trail built from the northern part of the Eaglehawk Neck settlement (near the Lufra Hotel and Tessellated Pavement car park) down the hill to Pirates Bay and across land owned by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service. This will be augmented in the future with other connectors, and the possible extension of other Council walkways and trails in the area.

The current proposal is partly funded through a Tasmanian Community Fund Grant, and a contribution by the Tasman Council. It is anticipated that there will be a shortfall in the funds available due to rising costs since the design was first created, and the need to undertake substantial works to a very steep section of path.



Draft Stage 1 Plan for Walkways at Eaglehawk Neck

Murdunna

Following the devastation of the 2013 Dunalley Bushfires, the Murdunna community came together to build a number of walking tracks which closely follow the coast line providing linkages to rocky beaches, boat ramps and jetties.

Connectivity for residents will be improved, and access to beaches and other areas vastly improved for the many holiday makers who frequent the area.

The current walking track commences at the Sommers Bay Road, and extends for approximately 1.5 km along the coast line. In addition a second trail extends approximately 2km north towards Grave Island, and is a popular recreational trail.

Council has been approached to extend the walking trails for the full length of Sommers Bay Road and its adjoining roads, thus providing a comprehensive network of walking trails along the coast.

In addition, a recent Tasman Tomorrow collaboration with Monash University has delivered an ambitious project to include a night sky viewing platform in Murdunna.

Murdunna, the name given to the area by the Pydarerme people of the Paredarerme language group, and is accepted as meaning 'Place of Stars'. Murdunna provides an ideal opportunity for visitors to come and view the Aurora Australis and other features of the night sky. While this design is still in the concept stage, it includes a walking trail with 'conversation pods' that can also be used as places for the community to gather in times of emergency, and a large viewing rotunda set over the water.

It is estimated that c. \$1Million would fund up to 10km of accessible walking trails and paths, with additional funds required to design, cost and build the night sky viewing platform and other linkages.

White Beach

White Beach is a growing community located south west of Nubeena. There is not a well-defined walking trail with people using the verge of the road and White Beach shoreline for several kilometres, which poses a hazard for both road users and walkers.

A walking path extends from the northern boundary of Nubeena for approximately 3km, terminating near the southern boundary of the town. Council's vision is to connect this with White Beach resulting in a well formed walking trail for residents and visitors, and increasing safety and active recreation opportunities.

In addition, a project under consideration is a walkway that would circumvent the road, and cut across Parsons Bay over wetlands and entrance to Parsons Bay Creek. This would provide additional access but would in itself become an attraction, as this area is well recognised as a bird haven and scenic point with already high visitor numbers.

Judd Park

Located in central Nubeena and close to the town centre and school, Judd Park currently offers a small skate park, children's play area, BBQs and waterfront access. It connects with a number of other walking trails in Nubeena.

We will re-develop a central youth orientated space to provide an attractive and safe place as a centre for families and young people to come together.

We are seeking funding to develop and commence implementation of a plan to better utilise this space, including improved access to the WWI commemorative walk, upgraded public amenities, children's play area (with the provision of all ability and interactive play features) and an improved skate park/pump track designed in consultation with the community's young people. Improved parking and road alignment also forms part of this project, facilitating the expansion of the main shopping area without impacting on the amenity of residents.

These improvements along with upgraded walking tracks and paths allowing better accessibility will result in a community hub with the capability to host small gatherings.

Seed funding of \$750,000 would allow for substantial commencement of this project, and would build upon the current Regional Local Community Infrastructure Program funding which has been allocated to the area.

Other Project Summaries

Nubeena Development Plan

Nubeena is the main service centre for our community with a population of just under 500 permanent residents, it services up to 10,000 people during the summer months placing pressure on its limited resources.

The town includes a school (kinder to y12 and a small Trades Training Centre), 2 supermarkets, bottle shops, a police station, medical practice, aged care facility, nearby eateries and a number of other small retail businesses. The Tasman Civic Centre and sporting complex also doubles as an Emergency Evacuation Centre and venue for receptions and community gatherings.

Like many small coastal towns, it was not planned, but expanded organically over a period of time, with a combination of business and residential development catering for the resident population. Situated on a small bay, with easy access to tidal beaches, it is a mecca for families and tourists in the summer.

Council envisages connecting Judd Park via an existing walking path to White Beach trail and the southern supermarket, but is also keenly aware that in order to ensure the ongoing growth and prosperity of the region the existing business district and service centre must be expanded.

Council is seeking funding for a master plan (including costings and designs) that will provide a blue print for future development and balance the competing demands of resident population and visitors with the need to ensure that the coastal environment does not suffer further degradation.

The extension and upgrade of the existing walking trails and Judd Park can also be included in this, or considered as a separate project.

This multifaceted project will provide ongoing economic and social benefit to the community and provide the impetus for further investment in the region.

An accessible network of walking paths will provide our community with an increased sense of safety in the event of an emergency and will improve social connectivity and access to the foreshore should evacuation by water be required. Improved access will provide scope to encourage visitation and expand destination appeal to the area and will provide additional opportunities for artists, photographers and bird watchers who already frequently visit the area.

Specific smaller scale projects can be identified and included in the scope of the Master plan allowing the Council and other stakeholders to invest in vital infrastructure as funds become available.

Taranna Co-location of Services

We are very pleased to have recently endorsed a report that will facilitate an investigation into the co-location of the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (Parks), Tasmanian Fire Service, State Emergency Service and possibly other emergency service providers at the Taranna Community Centre.

The Centre, which was built by the community commencing in 1978 and completed in around 1988 is located on approximately 854 m² of land, with a Rotary shed and public toilet occupying approximately an additional 72m² of land. There is also a tennis court, BBQ, small fenced area and children's playground on site, with these well utilised facilities having been built by the community over a number of years.

The current location of the Parks service no longer meets the needs of a contemporary organisation. Initial discussions indicate that their Depot and Field Office could be co-located with emergency services, in a model similar to that used in neighbouring Municipalities providing multiple benefits to the community and those housed there.

Benefits of co-location include:

- Potential to share plant and equipment with all services, including Council.
- Better and safer road access for emergency service vehicles and Parks vehicles.
- The site will be more useable in terms of logistics and functionality.
- The co-location of services provides additional security to the site, and will enhance community connectivity and provide additional services to the site.
- Provide the opportunity for a consolidated response in case of an emergency, with potential for the site to become a 'safe place' and for emergency evacuations to occur.
- Site will be able to be used as a back-up evacuation site if Nubeena is not accessible, and has easy access to both road and sea, as well as provision for helicopter landing if needed.
- Tas Fire Service and SES have advised that their volunteer base in the area is shrinking and that they will be able to use the centralised site to consolidate a stronger presence rather than a number of small volunteer bases that may not be able to meet needs.
- Improved and expanded service presence in the community thus delivering higher profile and better support to the community.

Initial consultation has taken place with site users, who are positive about the proposed change. Further discussions will be entered into with various agencies.

Tasman Civic Centre

The Tasman Civic Centre was designed and built by the community over a number of years, with the intention of it being the centrepiece for community activities for the Municipality. It includes a full sized multi-sport court, provision for a stage, change rooms, a large storage areas and extensive mezzanine that remains uncompleted. It has a football/cricket oval and soon to be demolished very old cricket club rooms.

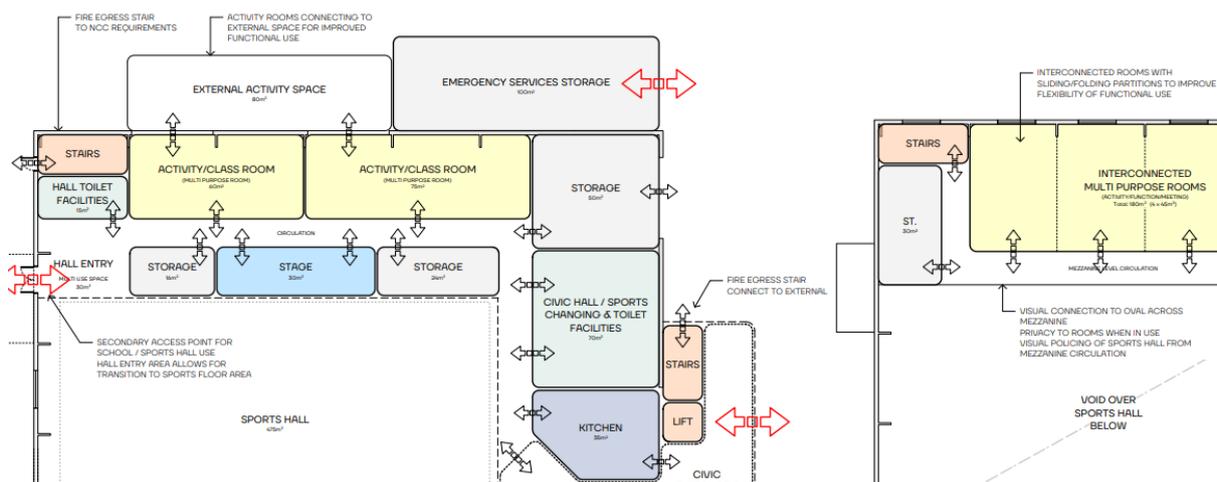
As the only venue with a sizeable capacity in the Municipality it is often used for community events, celebrations and funerals. It is used by the Tasman District School for students' end of year events and ongoing sporting activities, and has multiple community uses.

In times of emergency, the Tasman Civic Centre is the designated Emergency Evacuation Centre, as it provides space for the community to gather safely and has an area that can (if necessary) be used for horses, dogs and pets.

We recognise that despite the best attempts of the community, the Centre will not reach its full potential without significant further investment.

Council is grateful for funding of \$1Million through the Australian Government Community Development Grants Program, this funding is directed at increasing the emergency management capacity of the Civic Centre. However, the current funding will not address other aspects of the required upgrade of the aging building.

Council has produced concept plans and designs that will allow the disused areas of the mezzanine area and ground floor to be utilised as multi-purpose meeting areas. The concept includes a lift to ensure accessibility for all members of the public; design of purpose built meeting rooms complete with IT capacity to allow community access to online meetings (there is currently no community facility with access of this nature in the Municipality); a redesign of the kitchen to facilitate an outdoor servery; inclusion of cricket clubrooms in the design; a new façade with community meeting space and landscaping and overall improved access for both community events and emergency requirements.



Section of concept design for Tasman Civic Centre

A Tunnel at Dunalley

The only connection between the Tasman Municipality and the 'rest of the State' is the opening bridge across the Dunalley Canal.

This poses many concerns for the Tasman community, as when the bridge is open we see long lines of traffic backed up to cross the canal. In the instance of an emergency, whether it is a single incident or larger community wide emergency such as a bushfire, any delays at the bridge could be catastrophic, and result in loss of life, or destruction of community and personal assets.

If the bridge across the Dunalley Canal becomes inoperable, or is closed for any length of time due to maintenance or unforeseen circumstances, supply to the Tasman Municipality is cut. This has major effects on our community, including inability to purchase household basics and limits business confidence and economic activity.

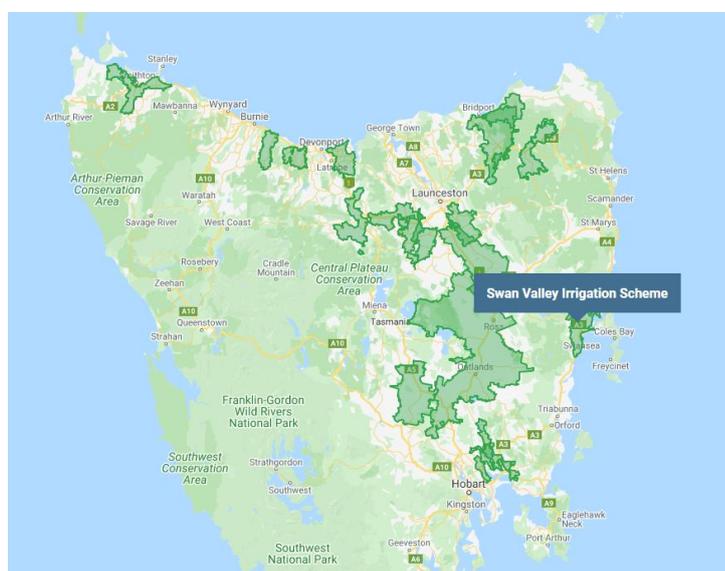
With a proposal for a marina at Dunalley, there is a likelihood that there will be additional traffic delays as the bridge is opened more frequently to allow boating traffic.

An alternative route would provide confidence to our community and ensure its safety.

One solution to this would be a tunnel from Dunalley under the canal. This would allow smooth traffic flow and ameliorate the real possibility that the Tasman Municipality could be cut off from supply. While this may sound fanciful, it is an opportunity to start the conversation about providing a more sustainable access to the Tasman Municipality and ensuring the safety of its residents and visitors.

Agricultural Irrigation Scheme

There are currently eighteen (18) active Irrigation Schemes operating in Tasmania, with improvements and modifications to schemes continuing to bring benefits to communities. The map below shows the current active Tasmanian Irrigation Schemes.



1Map of current irrigation schemes from Tasmanian Irrigation website (December 2021)

Irrigation schemes have provided multiple community and economic benefits, including increased employment opportunities through increased and diversified agricultural production and increases Tasmania's Gross Domestic Product; all of which have an ongoing benefit to both the local community and the broader Tasmanian Community.

Communities such as those through the midlands of Tasmania, which have traditionally not been able to consider large scale cherry production (for example) now have flourishing cherry orchards due to the scheme. Similarly, fruit, vegetable and production through the Coal River and Sorell areas have flourished as a result of access to Tasmanian Irrigation schemes.

The Tasmanian Irrigation website notes that there are an additional ten (10) schemes planned, in diverse locations across the State. The Tasman Municipality does not appear to have been considered for any future investment in this vital infrastructure.

Agricultural producers in the Tasman Peninsula, with no such access are forced to rely on 'on farm' water storage, which due to limited access to naturally occurring water courses, relies heavily on rainfall. This limits both the long and short term capacity of primary producers and hampers expansion and innovation into production which requires access to consistent water.

Council seeks ongoing discussions to determine the feasibility of irrigation schemes in the Municipality.

Commuter and Tourist Ferries to Nubeena

There has been considerable excitement regarding the commuter ferry service between Hobart and the eastern shore. Equally, there is an opportunity to develop a similar service between Hobart and Nubeena utilising the existing port facilities at Nubeena. While this may initially sound far-fetched, there are many benefits to this proposal.

Visitation to the Tasman Municipality remains high (even in the wake of COVID-19 restrictions) and is predominantly focused on Port Arthur, it relies on visitors having access to a personal or rental vehicle and tour services. The provision of a ferry service would aid the dispersal of visitors to the Municipality, and would provide an opportunity for increased economic activity amongst local tour operators, for example whale watching and local tours. This would provide potential additional income in the shoulder season for these activities, allowing businesses to pivot and securing their future viability in a more uncertain climate.

A regular ferry service would also provide a public transport option to the Tasman Municipality which is currently not well serviced by public transport. This makes it difficult for those who do not have access to a private vehicle to access services outside our community.

The addition of a ferry service would also support a more sustainable commuter culture between the Tasman Municipality and Hobart and would provide a viable alternative to road transport in case of a natural disaster such as the Dunalley bushfires. In 2013 the generosity of the community provided community evacuation and transport due to roads being cut off by fire, while there is no doubt that our community would again rally if required, it is important to put in place more strategic options for community evacuation and transport in an emergency situation.

Green Energy Production

In light of ongoing media coverage both in Tasmania and nationally, it is clear that the community expectations are strong in regard to the availability and production of green energy.

While once considered an alternative energy source, there is now a growing expectation that energy production will increasingly be more reliant on green energy sources such as wind, solar, green hydrogen and other environmentally sustainable production methods.

In recent years we have seen significant commitment to the introduction of green energy projects in Tasmania, many of them notably in remote or isolated locations, such as significant investment in wind technology on Flinders and King Islands and at Woolnorth and Mussleroe Bay and the installation of solar batteries to meet energy needs during peak holiday periods on Bruny Island. There is continued support for and investment in the proposed hydrogen project at Bell Bay and new technology developing in the 'green hydrogen' space.

The Tasman Municipality has no electricity storage facility, and currently relies on two (2) cables at the Dunalley Canal to ensure a reliable supply to the community. Yet, with our prodigious wind and generally temperate climate we are well placed to embrace both solar and wind electricity production.

An investment into the future sustainability of the Tasman Municipality, looking toward a net zero emissions target builds on the Tasman as 'A Natural Escape' and would, in the case of battery storage of generated power assist in ensuring that the otherwise precarious electricity supply to the Municipality has some security. This is particularly essential during the summer period, when (similar

to Bruny Island) the population swells by several thousand people. In addition this would provide potential employment and economic benefits to our community and would assist in meeting the Australian Government's commitment to long term emissions reduction and net zero emission by 2050.

Council seeks ongoing discussions to ensure consideration of the municipal area in future green energy considerations.

Mountain Biking at Taranna

An active group of enthusiastic community members are considering the possibilities of a Mountain Bike or Pump track in the Tasman Municipality. Their initial investigations have identified a tract of land at Taranna as a potential site. The majority of the land is owned by the Council, with other adjacent land being held as part of a Permeant Timber Production Zone or by the Crown.

Discussions have now reached a point where an operating model, design (to ensure that it meets current safety and access requirements), and considerations such as economic modelling, concept and operational planning and community consultation are required to inform a feasibility study that will provide an evidence base for future actions. While this community project has not been formally presented to the Council at this stage, funding is being sought to assist the community to further progress their initial thoughts to a more formalised concept.

Conclusion

The array of projects presented here are a starting point for a further conversation about opportunities available to work with the Tasman Council to help position our community for the future. They provide both 'big ticket' and smaller developments, all of which will add value to our community and our economy and help to position the Tasman for the future.

