Mayor Mike Gaffney relaxes in the comfort of his living room

Birth date - 30 November 1959 (Sagittarius)

How long have you lived in the Latrobe district and what do you like about the area?

My family moved to Port Sorell when I was twelve. My dad was the Manager of the Port Sorell Sport and Recreation Camps and many readers of this article may have been there as part of a school, church, music or recreational group. After completing my teaching degree (Launceston), I then taught at Murray High (Queenstown) and at Bridgewater High before heading back to the North West Coast. My wife, Mel, and I purchased our home in Latrobe in 1991 (Bank of Australasia, circa 1876).

You’re obviously an athletic person, what’s your secret?

There’s no secret, just lifestyle choices. I have always been involved in sports, recreational activities and keeping relatively fit...and it’s not always easy!

What do you like to do on your days off?

Hmmm...I can’t remember the last day I had off! However, I’m developing a keen interest in lawn bowls and Mel and I really enjoy going to an antique auction every now and then.

What makes you laugh?

I’m reasonably spontaneous and enjoy spirited conversation, dry humour, sharp minds and a quick wit - I don’t laugh a lot (grin).

What annoys you?

Small mindedness, bigotry, discriminatory and bullying behaviour, political pork barrelling and stubbing my toe!

How did you initially become involved in Local Government?

Mel and I had returned form a twelve-month teaching exchange in London. I was thirty-four and steering away from top level sports and associated time commitments and Mel didn’t want me hanging around the house, becoming lazy and getting under her feet. So it’s Mel’s fault that I’m in Local Government! (Gosh - I hope she doesn’t read this edition).

When did you become a:


How has your experience as LGAT President been so far?

Enlightening, challenging, exceptionally varied and overall, very enjoyable. I’ve met many interesting, positive and passionate people. It’s been a learning curve, particularly representing LGAT at the national level as a director of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

What do you aim to see accomplished during your time as President?

The relationship between Local Government sustainability and the impact of the water and sewerage reform is of great interest to me. Being LGAT President during this period has created challenges and opportunities. It is imperative that we (councils) roll up our sleeves, think innovatively and creatively, and get on with the business of being effective and enthusiastic representatives of our communities.

As President, you frequently work with LGAT CEO Allan Garcia. Just between you and I, what do you really think of him?

Allan for Pope!

If you weren’t the LGAT President, how would you be spending your days?

Teaching. Due to the workload, travel and time commitment of the Presidency, I chose to take leave from the Education Department. It would not have been possible to fulfill the obligations of being Latrobe Mayor, LGAT President and as an AST 3 Secondary School Teacher. Mel teaches at Don College but also runs a business on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. I now know quite a bit about perfumes, shawls, jewelry and lotions. There is also a men’s section! I often work the shop and it’s actually a bit of fun.

What has been the most memorable moment of your Local Government career?

Being elected Mayor for the first time at the age of forty-three. My mum and dad were so proud.

What’s your most embarrassing moment?

I don’t embarrass easily but my most embarrassing moments have nothing to do with Local Government (chuckle).

What’s the best advice anyone has ever given you?

Never answer the statement “Just between you and I”...honestly.

Name one word to describe you?

Hmmm...tough one...considerate.
New Leadership for Local Government Division

The Local Government Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet has new leadership. The division has a new Director, Jessie Byrne, and a Director, Partnership Agreements, Greg Brown.

Ms Byrne has a long history in the public sector, including Director, Office of Trade with the South Australian Department of Trade and Economic Development, and senior roles in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including within the Australian Embassy in Tel Aviv. Since her appointment, Jessie has been amazed by the breadth of challenges facing the Local Government sector. “The work Local Government does is critical to the health of the community,” Jessie said. “There are already great examples of best practice in local councils across the state, so some of our work will be to spread the word and provide support to councils.”

Greg Brown comes to the partnerships job following eight years as Manager of the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. He was pivotal in the handing over of land to the Aboriginal community, the development of the Stolen Generations Compensation Legislation, and in negotiations to return Aboriginal remains from the British Natural History Museum to Tasmanian soil. Greg also worked in Michelle O’Byrne’s office when she was responsible for the Local Government portfolio. A major priority for Greg is reviewing the partnerships program, continuing the dialogue with Local Government, building on achievements from partnership agreements, and learning from the past to ensure the program remains appropriate and delivers the desired results. Jessie Byrne and Greg Brown join Alistair Scott who will continue on in his role as Director of Local Government Development.

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Ros Abercrombie
EVENTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
HOBART CITY COUNCIL

With ten years festival direction and event management experience, a Masters of Business in Event Management, and a BA Hons in Social Anthropology, it has taken Ros Abercrombie just eight months to be recognised as a Star Performer as the Hobart City Council’s Taste Festival Producer.

Working as part of a team to coordinate Hobart’s Summer Festival, Ros oversees all aspects of the development, management, implementation and delivery of the Taste Festival, which includes project planning and development, funding, sponsorship, budgeting, tenders, supplier and provider management, marketing, promotions, media liaison and event delivery. Ros said people would miss the Taste Festival and the Hobart waterfront over summer if we didn’t do our job!

“This job provides a challenge to design and deliver an eight-day community festival, a specifically Tasmanian Taste with something for everyone to enjoy.

The Taste needs to have everything; food and beverage, entertainment, rovers, parties, community celebrations and it needs to come together in a space where everything is brought in. The bump in and construction is massive,” she said.

“One of the great things about working within Local Government in an event capacity is having access to cross divisional resources and skills. We can work with traffic engineers, planners, CAD map designers and IT officers, all situated just down the corridor. This creates a great sense of ownership.”

Hobart City Council General Manager, Brent Armstrong, said Ros has exceptional experience and talent in this field and is certain that she will bring a fresh, new energy to this year’s festival. “We are very lucky to have someone with Ros’ vision and energy to direct Hobart’s most popular summer event and tourist drawcard,” he added.

Richard Jamieson
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

Richard Jamieson joined the Launceston City Council as Town Planner four years ago having gained valuable experience in various planning roles in the UK and in Tasmania.

Richard’s job is to develop strategic land use policy for the Council and currently, he is managing the review of Council’s planning scheme. This is a once in 10-year opportunity where Council and the community can challenge assumptions about how the city should develop, and put in place a renewed vision for the future,“ Richard said.

“I am confident that the work we do has a positive influence. Ultimately, through creating debate and community discussion on planning issues, we can change people’s perceptions of a place and their expectations of development,” he said. “I expect that our revised planning scheme will create many new opportunities for development in the city and hopefully, over time, it will help make it a more attractive, liveable and economically successful place.

Richard considers one of the most satisfying things about working in Local Government is that you can help shape the future of the city. “As a Town Planner, there is a direct link between the work you do and the social, economic and environmental outcomes for the city,” he said.

Launceston City Council General Manager, Frank Dixon, said Richard is a highly respected member of the Planning Department. “Richard’s experience and knowledge of planning related issues is invaluable and he has shown great leadership in coordinating a major review of the city’s planning scheme, involving high levels of community engagement,” Mr Dixon added.
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Transport Industries Skills Centre Inc trading as Driver Safety Services

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