Five Minutes with Mayor Carmel Torenius
Sorell Council

Birth date - 29 December 1950
How long have you lived in the Sorell district and what do you like best about the area?
Since 1972, when I was posted to Dunalley School as a teacher. I like the diversity of its residents, the diversity of the area and the opportunities it has to offer.

What do you like to do on your days off?
Go to a nursery, buy plants for my garden then get them in the ground while I have a chance.

Favourite song
Nights in White Satin by the Moody Blues.

Favourite TV show
My family (comedy) – for some strange reason I can relate to it and have a good laugh. Also The Collectors.

What do you like to indulge in when no one is looking?
Toast with hundreds and thousands sprinkled on it.

What makes you laugh?
My two sons trying to outwit each other.

What annoys you?
Not being able to find my glasses or car keys when I am running late.

How long have you worked in Local Government and how many years have you served as Mayor?
I have spent 16 years in Local Government and have served as Mayor for 12 years.

How did you become involved?
I became involved with a local Progress Association where I took up a petition for a by-pass of Lewisham. This was achieved a few years later, once on Council.

Despite greater equality between men and women, female elected members are still vastly outnumbered by men. Why do you think this is the case?
Politics is not for all women and I understand this. Perhaps many women do not like the confrontation that is aligned with it. I would have to say that sometimes we can be our own worst enemy, not men.

If you could make any changes to the culture of Local Government to make the sector a more appealing proposition for women, what would you change?
This is not an easy task but I believe our society is changing, albeit slowly. Attitudes towards women in politics have improved over the past decades. It comes down to respect for each other. The younger generation now seems more accepting of women undertaking roles previously dominated by males.

What are the most satisfying aspects of your role?
To have been given numerous and varied opportunities to meet people, knowing that many trust in my ability to do the job. The role has helped me learn so much about human nature, even though I don’t always get it right.

What is the worst part?
Not being able to achieve my goals in a hurry. Things move slowly in Local Government but I have learnt to be patient. Also, being hurt by untruths that affect my family and myself and learning to cope with them.

What is your most memorable moment?
Helping to organise a successful event with members of the Sorell RSL, to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II.

What’s your most embarrassing moment?
Looking down at my feet at an official function to be confronted with two odd shoes on my feet. The designs were similar but one shoe was black and the other navy.

What’s the best advice someone has given you?
Don’t expect too much from people and you will be pleasantly surprised when their deeds exceed all your expectations (occasionally).

What’s one word other people might use to describe you?
I am sure there are numerous words that have been used to describe me but most would be unsuitable to print. Perhaps “determined”.

What are your plans for the future?
I have some unfinished projects within Council that I wish to progress and I intend to hasten the pace on these. At a personal level, I want to continue renovating our 1832 convict brick residence with my husband, to bring it back to its former glory. I would also like more time to travel. We intend to go back to Finland, my husbands birthplace. 🇫🇮
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Matthew Grimsey  
LEGAL OFFICER, EXECUTIVE SUPPORT AND POLICY  
HUON VALLEY COUNCIL

As a Legal Practitioner with a Bachelor of Laws and a Graduate Certificate of Legal Studies under his belt, Matthew has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Huon Valley Council, where he has worked for the past eight years.

As Council’s Legal Officer, Matthew provides support and assistance to the General Manager, as well as general legal services to the Council such as preparing briefs for Council’s solicitors, dealing with general governance and statutory compliance matters (including elections, FOI, Privacy legislation etc), liability claims, acquisition and disposal of land, and the maintenance of the Land Register. He also provides reports and submissions on draft legislation and new legislation.

Matthew describes his role as being both reactive and proactive. By offering Council employees quick access to legal advice to address problems and potential problems at an early stage, Council can avoid or reduce further costs and potential claims. The ability to provide input into decisions which benefit the local community and seeing the end results, is the part that Matthew finds most satisfying.

“While my position often finds me dealing with difficult issues and unhappy and disgruntled customers (that have either breached a law, failed to pay rates, or are claiming against Council), which can be very frustrating, it is a pleasure to be able to assist a variety of people to resolve their issues. My position deals with all areas of Council operations and is one of the most interesting in Council. There is always something new and challenging,” he said.

Matthew’s proudest achievements to date include providing input into the 2005 amendments to the Local Government Act 1993, and his participation on the LGAT Legislation Committee on behalf of Local Government. Geoff Cockerill, General Manager of the Huon Valley Council was quick to commend Matthew on his contribution to Council saying, “The skills and expertise Matthew brings to his role are invaluable given the level of support that he provides to our organisation as a whole.”