Five Minutes with Mayor Carol Cox

Flinders Council

**Birth date:** Baby Boomer

**How long have you resided at Flinders Island and what attracted you to the place?**
Flinders Island has been home for 36 years. I was lured to the island by the farming opportunity and low-cost, productive land.

**What motivates you in life?**
I am motivated to do the best I can at whatever I choose to do, and by a challenge.

**How do you like to spend your free time?**
Just enjoying me time - reading, gardening, or playing golf.

**What three qualities do you appreciate most in people?**
1) Honesty
2) Reliability
3) A sense of humor

**When you were a child, you wanted to be...**
As a small child I wanted to be a teacher but I ended up training to be an industrial chemist.

**Name three previous occupations that you have held in the past.**
1) Cook
2) Secretary
3) Farmer

**What motivated you to become involved in Local Government?**
Being able to give something back to a community that I have lived in for many years and that is home to my family.

**How many years have you served as:**
Councillor - 8 years
Mayor - 3 years

**What do you consider as the key barriers to female representation within Local Government?**
In the Flinders municipality, none! Flinders Council consistently has an even gender balance of elected members. Currently Council has three women and four men, and this has, in the past, been reversed.

**What has been the most memorable moment of your Local Government career?**
Receiving praise for a council project from a ratepayer who had previously been opposed to it.

**What do you enjoy most about your role as Mayor?**
The opportunity it gives me to meet new people and to support and promote the communities of the Furneaux Group.

**What has been the most embarrassing moment in your Local Government career?**
Introducing a guest by the wrong name.

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

**What word best describes you?**
Determined
ALGA Elects New President

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) elected a new President, Clr Genia McCaffery, at its Annual General Meeting on 11 November.

As the Mayor of North Sydney, Clr McCaffery, was previously President of the Local Government Association of New South Wales for six years and has been a Director of ALGA since 2006. Clr McCaffery has a Bachelor of Economics Degree with Honours in Government from the University of Sydney and has worked in the areas of research, youth, unemployment and public advocacy.

Clr McCaffery said that it was an exciting time to be heading the national body which represents Australia’s 565 councils. “The desire to make a difference is what attracted me to Local Government and I am particularly honoured to be President in the Year of Women in Local Government - a time when women are being encouraged to consider careers in Local Government and represent their communities in public office,” she said.

“Along with the ongoing work on constitutional recognition and infrastructure funding, I hope to address planning and natural resources management during my time as President,” she said. Clr McCaffery paid tribute to her predecessor, ALGA President, Clr Geoff Lake, saying, “He has been an energetic and hard-working advocate for Local Government and, in his two years, achieved much for Australia’s communities.”

Sector Farewells Mayor Mike Downie

Councillors and staff of the Central Coast Council, Local and State Government associates, and members of the Central Coast community have paid tribute to Mayor Mike Downie following his passing on 23 September 2010.

The Minister for Local Government Bryan Green said Mayor Downie made an outstanding contribution to Local Government in Tasmania. “He will be remembered as a great advocate for his local community and as a pro-active and respected voice for Local Government at a state level,” he said.

Mayor Downie served as Mayor of Central Coast for 12 years and has represented Local Government as a Councillor for almost 30 years. He has served as a member of the Cradle Coast Authority representatives group from its inception in 1999, and has been an active member of the Local Government Association of Tasmania’s General Management Committee and the Premier’s Local Government Council.

Our thoughts and condolences are with his wife, Kath and the family at this sad time.
Star Performers

Helen Dunk
COMPLIANCE UNIT
Huon Valley Council

Star Performer, Helen Dunk, lived in the United Kingdom for 17 years where she completed a 3-year BA degree in Hospitality Management and spent several years working in the hotel industry. Helen was then based at a Glasgow police station for five years where she was responsible for the custodial care of prisoners in detention, public counter duties, and served as a training officer in the force – providing a strong foundation in legislation enforcement.

In Australia, Helen has spent four years working in the Local Government sector, and the last two years as Huon Valley Council’s Senior Compliance Officer. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing the municipal inspectors and the administration, monitoring and enforcement of land use, building activity, Council’s by-laws and other relevant legislation. The role involves monitoring compliance with permit conditions on development approvals, the investigation of complaints into illegal land use and building activity, and ensuring Council meets its own legal obligations.

Helen enjoys forming positive relationships with the residents and developers and gains a great deal of satisfaction in helping to balance the needs of the organisation with those of the community. In March, Helen was part of the ‘Huon Natural Applebility Team’ which won the state finals in the LGMA Challenge and went on to represent Tasmania in the Australasian finals.

Matthew Grimsey, Manager of Planning and Legal Services, said undertaking the role of Compliance Officer, by its very nature, is not easy. “On many occasions Helen achieves acceptable outcomes which satisfy all parties, whilst ensuring that Council’s requirements are met,” Mr Grimsey said. “When enforcement action is required, Helen applies this without fear or favour. Helen is a well respected and valuable member of the Planning and Legal Services Department and has acted in the absence of the Manager ensuring the smooth running of the Department,” he added.

Scott Edwards
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH UNIT
Huon Valley Council

As Huon Valley Council’s Senior Environmental Health Officer (EHO), Scott Edwards has an Advanced Diploma of Applied Science – Environmental Health under his belt, as well as five years’ experience working in the Local Government sector. He has been employed by the Huon Valley Council for the last two years.

Scott has the important job of helping to protect the health and wellbeing of the community and the local environment. The primary functions of the EHO role are: the regulation of food premises; investigating incidences of environmental nuisances associated with air, water and noise; running the school-based immunisation program; issuing special plumbing permits; and regulating public health risk activities and places of assembly. In addition, Scott provides advice and develops community awareness programs about environmental and public health matters that arise in the community. Preventative measures for Ross River Virus and rain water tank maintenance are typical awareness programs Council promotes through media.

“I love working with people and the greater community … and it is satisfying to provide this service,” Scott said. His proudest achievements in this busy and varied role include: almost getting to the bottom of his in-tray a few weeks ago; achieving outcomes for Council and people on a daily basis; and seeing people’s attitudes and opinions influenced through food safety awareness programs.

Huon Valley Council’s Manager of Planning and Legal Services, Matthew Grimsey, said Scott has the strong ability to negotiate and encourage outcomes arising from disputes, thus avoiding in many circumstances the need to take further action. “Scott is a well-respected and valuable member of the Planning and Legal Services Department and is always ready and willing to provide advice and assistance to other Council Officers,” he said.
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