Investigation Finds No Benefit to East Coast Council Merger

The Minister for Local Government, Jim Cox, has announced that, following a comprehensive and independent review and extensive community consultation, the Local Government Board has recommended that the proposed voluntary merger between the Break O’ Day and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils should not take place.

In the view of the Board, a newly merged East Coast council would not be substantially more sustainable than the two existing councils and would fail to deliver significant benefits to the communities in question. A copy of the report has been released to the public and the Board is currently developing recommendations on guiding principles for future voluntary mergers.

Subsequent to the Board’s recommendation, the Governor has announced that the postponed elections for the Break O’ Day and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils be held in December, in the best interests of the affected communities.

Mr Cox thanked the Local Government Board for undertaking the review and commended the Mayors of the two Councils, Mayor Robert Legge and Mayor Bertrand Cadart, for their vision and leadership. “The Councils involved are to be congratulated for seeking to investigate the potential benefits for their respective communities of a voluntary merger,” he said.

A Strong Vision for Women in Local Government

The Rudd Labor Government has announced that it will provide $490,000 for a range of projects to help improve the participation of women in the nation’s Local Government councils and shires. The Government is funding these projects in support of the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government.

As part of their commitment, the Government is funding $250,000 for a three-year 50:50 Vision: Councils for Gender Equity program to be conducted by the Australian Local Government Women’s Association (ALGWA). The program will audit councils and shires to determine the status and role of women in leadership roles as well as their participation in the workplace. The program will also accredit councils and will establish an awards program to recognise their commitment to women’s participation in four categories of activity - leadership, nomination and recruitment, remuneration, recognition and training; and work and family balance.

Data shows that less than 30% of councillors are women; 20% of senior management roles are filled by women; and only 7% of council Chief Executive Officers are women.
Sport and Recreation Framework for People with a Disability

Sport and Recreation Tasmania has released the Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Framework for People with a Disability.

The framework sets out the Tasmanian Government’s vision for an inclusive sport and recreation sector and provides direction for action by organisations responsible for providing sport and recreation opportunities for people with a disability. The overall aim is to achieve a more strategic and collaborative approach ensuring more sport and recreation opportunities are available to people of all abilities.

The framework identifies strategies to be implemented by government and non-government organisations within four key priority areas: capacity building; collaboration; information, awareness and promotion; and accessibility.

A reference committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the framework and will report on progress every six months, with a review scheduled in 2012. The framework was developed in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services’ Disability Services Unit, and the Tasmanian Sport and Recreation Association for People with a Disability.


Social Inclusion Update

The Tasmanian Government has released its preliminary response to A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania, presented by Professor David Adams, Social Inclusion Commissioner for Tasmania.

In launching the response, the Premier committed the State Government to implementing the strategy and highlighted some areas where work would start immediately including:

- $1 million for the Community Capacity Building Grants Program to support projects that progress one or more of the strategies in A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania;
- $1 million for a Tasmanian Food Security Council to invest in food security programs;
- $5 million for a Community Development Finance Fund to provide no-interest loans through micro-finance to those in need and micro-credit for individuals who may need a hand up to start their own business, and to support the development and growth of social enterprises in Tasmania;
- An additional $500,000 for the Tasmanian Community Transport Trust’s Cars for Communities program.


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October was a big month for Launceston City Council, as it welcomed $1,577,000 in funding under the Federal Government’s Jobs Fund Initiative. $1 million will go towards the Albert Hall revitalisation, which will secure a more sustainable future for this much loved social gathering place. The project includes a major refurbishment of the dressing rooms and stage, and the installation of exterior lighting.

The funding will also help Council implement key recommendations of a recent acoustic report, jointly commissioned by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

The project will help to attract more state, national and international events and conferences which will help create and retain more local jobs, particularly in the arts, tourism and hospitality industries. These are in addition to the jobs which will be created during the construction phase.

The remaining $577,000 will see Launceston significantly improved for cyclists by funding the roll out of both of the major components of the Launceston Cycling Infrastructure Strategy.

Exercise your Power to Choose

The Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator (OTTER) has expressed concern that businesses are not taking steps to prepare themselves for electricity retail contestability.

Mrs Jane Hyland, Director OTTER, said that businesses whose electricity usage is more than 150 MWh per year (that’s an annual electricity bill of around $25,000 or more) are now eligible to choose their electricity retailer and would have been advised of their eligibility by Aurora Energy in September 2008.

From 1 July 2010, these eligible or ‘contestable’ electricity customers will no longer be able to purchase electricity from Aurora Energy under a regulated tariff. Within the next seven months these businesses must decide whether to negotiate a new contract with Aurora Energy, sign up with another licensed electricity retailer, or purchase their electricity through the wholesale market. Contestable customers that do not exercise one of these options by 30 June 2010, will automatically go onto a deemed fallback contract with Aurora Energy.

“A fallback contract is not a safety net or default tariff. The significant difference between what these business customers are paying now under a regulated tariff and what they would pay under a fallback contract is in the ‘energy’ component,” Mrs Hyland said. “Under the regulated tariff, the energy component is priced at around $68 per MWh. Under a fallback contract, the energy price is the spot price in the wholesale energy market which can be quite volatile and at times reach $10,000 MWh,” she said.

Mrs Hyland urged businesses not to leave their decision to the last moment. “The purchase of electricity is not an insignificant item of expenditure and market contracts should be carefully examined,” she said.

Only two of the four licensed electricity retailers in Tasmania are offering market contracts to businesses that consume less than 4 GWh of electricity - Aurora Energy and ERM Power.

Comprehensive information about electricity retail contestability is available from www.power.tas.gov.au, or call OTTER on (03) 6233 6323. For details about your organisation’s contestability status, contact Aurora Energy on 1300 132 003.
Hobart Reaches out to Homeless

The community of Greater Hobart came together during Anti-Poverty Week, in October, to demonstrate that people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are as much a part of the community as everyone else.

Around 120 people sleep rough each night in Hobart and approximately 700 people are without permanent, stable accommodation. Homeless Connect opened the door for inclusion in the community for one of the most marginalised groups.

Coordinated by Hobart City Council, Homeless Connect brought together a broad range of services and activities at the Hobart City Hall, as part of an overall response to homelessness. Members of the community experiencing difficulties in their accommodation were invited to attend the event, which included food provided by mobile food programs, the opportunity to enjoy a massage, get a haircut, or watch entertainment provided by local performers.

Guests also met with staff from organisations including TasCAHRD, Colony Outreach Support Service, Department of Health & Human Services Oral Health services, Anglicare’s Access, and The Big Issue’s Street Soccer. Many of the 150 guests continue to benefit from the connections they made.

Community volunteers, including Council staff, welcomed guests and assisted them to explore the options available to them. Community members also donated money for vouchers, which were given to guests and redeemed at the St Vincent de Paul store in Argyle Street.

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Top Building Designers Reap Rewards

For the second year in a row, Mike Cleaver of Clever Design has scooped the Awards pool at the annual Building Designers Association of Tasmania (BDAT) Award’s, receiving the overall Award for Excellence.

A single story contemporary, open plan residence in Lauderdale won five categories of awards for Mike Cleaver. ‘Bayside Bows’ won awards for Residential Buildings from 351 to 450sqm; Best Residential Interior; Top Award for Environmental and Energy Efficient Buildings; Best use of Glass; and Best use of Timber.
Mike Cleaver’s ‘Benjafield Blades’ residence, located at Mt Stuart in Hobart, won the category for Residential Buildings up to 250sqm, with its commanding 180 degree view across the city. This innovative structure also took out the award for the Best Use of Colour.

Launceston designer Frank Geskus, from Prime Design, was rewarded with five individual awards including: Low Density Multi-Residential at Karla Place Launceston; Commercial Building-Furniture showroom - Sydney Place Invermay; Best Commercial Interior for City Park Grand; Non Residential Alterations and Additions for City Park Grand; plus Conceptual Design for a new Gym at Launceston Christian School.

Other major awards went to Ian Picone of Ian Picone Design for Residential Buildings 251 to 350sqm with his entry ‘On Forest’ in West Hobart. In the same category, Gary Austin from Concept drafting Tasmania won a commendation for his Zig Zag House overlooking Launceston’s Cataract Gorge.

Gregory Eade from Gregory Eade Building Design won two awards – Forster Street in the Residential Alterations and Additions up to $200,000, and Salamanca Place in Residential Alterations and Additions over $200,000. In the Heritage Buildings Award, Andrew Gifford from Andrew Gifford Architectural Design was the winner with Huckerby House at Petchey’s Bay South of Hobart. Andrew’s role was to re-instate traditional, honest charm to an original derelict heritage listed cottage.

The special Awards presentation was held in Campbell Town where all entrants were judged across 16 categories. Outright trophy winners in each category are eligible to compete against the other states in the Building Designers Association of Australia National Awards.

For further details of the Building Designer’s Association of Tasmania Design award winners, visit www.bdat.com.au.
New Guidelines Pave the Way for Solar Installations

Tasmania’s heritage property owners are to benefit from guidelines, developed by the Heritage Council, on the installation of solar panels and wind turbines in response to an increase in applications for the installation of solar panels, heat pumps and gas installations.

The Heritage Council Chairperson Michael Lynch said the aim was to encourage owners to think about balancing new technologies with heritage values and features. “All of the trappings of the modern world have the potential to be intrusive on heritage properties. These guidelines explore ways to reduce the impact,” Mr Lynch said. “Updates can be challenging, but in many cases it is possible to find a solution with minimal impact on a place’s heritage values,” he said.

One case study provided in the guidelines is that of free-standing panels located in a paddock adjacent to a Georgian homestead, Campania House. The placement of the solar panels on any of the house’s roof elevations were considered to have an adverse impact on the place’s heritage values. By placing the panels in the paddock, not only have the heritage values been accommodated, but the ability to orient the panels to receive the optimum amount of sunlight provides a greater benefit for the property owner.

The guidelines also provide advice on installing wind turbines, water tanks, heat pumps, air conditioners, gas installations, satellite dishes and antennae.

The guidelines are available at www.heritage.tas.gov.au.

Heritage Reforms Underway

The drafting of proposed new legislation for the management of historic heritage is well underway, with input from key stakeholders including a Local Government Reference Group.

The Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Michelle O’Byrne, said the proposed legislation draws on the key role Local Government has played in protecting those places important to local communities.

The reforms aim to develop a clearer, more consistent and more integrated approach to the management of historic heritage by Local and State Government. The proposed Bill creates provisions for the listing and registration of heritage places at a local and state level, while the management of works at the local level will be aligned with the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPAA).

The Director of Heritage Tasmania, Pete Smith, said that there is a real need to ensure any proposed changes are easy to understand and engage with, for owners, developers and Local Government personnel. “It is hoped that by integrating the historic heritage legislation with existing provisions of LUPAA, that many of the difficulties of dealing with two separate pieces of legislation will be minimised,” Mr Smith said. “The Local Government Reference Group has been critical in ensuring the detail of the proposed legislation will be achievable in practice.”

For a copy of the Legislative Reform Fact Sheet, visit www.heritage.tas.gov.au, or contact Heritage Tasmania on 1300 850 332. For monthly updates on the reform process, subscribe to Heritage Tasmania’s email bulletin by emailing enquiries@heritage.tas.gov.au. Monthly updates are also available online at www.heritage.tas.gov.au/act_reform.html.
Excellence in Greenspace Design Awarded

Landscape architecture is the internationally recognised profession with the responsibility to shape and form future communities through the creative combination of art and science. On 6 November, excellence in landscape design by Tasmanian landscape architects was celebrated at the 2009 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Awards ceremony, held in Hobart.

The work of landscape architects involves design of public and private external facilities, including both constructed pavements and features, and planting. Typical projects range from the design of parks, waterfront areas, highway plantings and institutional gardens, to streetscapes and public urban spaces.

The 2009 category winners are:

**Design Award**
Inspiring Place for the Hydro Consulting Headquarters

**Landscape Planning Award of Excellence**
Inspiring Place for the Royal Botanic Gardens Master Plan

**Landscape Planning Award**
Barwick and Associates for the Brooker Highway Beautification

**Land Management Award**
Urban Initiatives for the Skretting Administrative Headquarters

The jury gave a special citation for Local Government Greenspace to Barwick and Associates for their Brooker Highway Beautification. The beautification of 15 km of the Brooker Highway was seen as an opportunity to represent Glenorchy City and its people. The design team devised a series of beautification proposals after undertaking extensive community consultation and landscape analysis. Extensive local native revegetation, an avenue of palm trees, large-scale mileposts and artworks reflecting Glenorchy’s history and vibrant culture are among the strategy’s proposals. The beautification project will take place over the next couple of decades.

Feeling helpless about sea level rise and the effects of climate change? pitt&sherry, ACE CRC and WRL are Tasmania’s wealth of information.

Even a small rise in sea level will have an effect on coastal communities around Tasmania. The decision to protect, accommodate or retreat is one that requires the knowledge and experience that the alliance of pitt&sherry, ACE CRC and the Water Research Laboratory at the University of New South Wales, can provide. Adapting to and managing the effects of what is potentially the most costly and destructive natural phenomenon in our time, requires precise planning, sustainable engineering solutions and, above all, established environmental science.

The partnership between pitt&sherry, ACE CRC and WRL is the solution you need to address the critical issue of sea level rise in Tasmania.

Climate Change | Community Infrastructure | Industrial Infrastructure | Transport Infrastructure

Feeling helpless about sea level rise and the effects of climate change? pitt&sherry, ACE CRC and WRL are Tasmania’s wealth of information.
Launceston Receives Heritage and Culture Award

Launceston City Council was announced the winner of the Heritage and Culture category award at the Keep Australia Beautiful, Australian Sustainable Cities Awards, held in October at Parliament House in Canberra.

Australian Sustainable Cities judge, Sean Rooney, said the City of Launceston has demonstrated leadership and collaboration in managing, interpreting and celebrating the city’s natural environment and cultural heritage. “Of particular note is the redevelopment of the Inveresk Precinct. This has seen the former railway yards converted into a vibrant centre for culture, education and sport and successfully incorporates sustainable design features and energy and water saving technologies,” he said.

Buildings in the precinct were converted to house the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, the University of Tasmania campus for Visual and Performing Arts, and the School of Architecture.

“Special mention should also be given to the dedication and tireless efforts of numerous individuals and groups involved in conservation projects including the Cataract Gorge Volunteers Group, High Street Horse Trough, City Park Conservatory, Albert Hall, Artist in Residence program, Queen Victoria Museum, and Royal Park restoration works”, Mr Rooney added.

The Australian Sustainable Cities Awards recognise efforts by residents, community groups, businesses and government agencies to protect and enhance their local environment, to ensure its long term sustainability at all levels. ▼

Further information about the Australian Sustainable Communities Awards can be found at www.kab.org.au.

(Back, L-R) Ian Abernathy and Mayor Albert Van Zetten of Launceston City Council, Ken Stewart of Keep Australia Beautiful Tasmania, Tor Hundloe (KABNA) and Bernard Duke of Launceston City Council.

(Front, L-R) Barrie Muir of Keep Australia Beautiful Tasmania, Frank Dixon and Trevor Gaibraith of Launceston City Council.
Conversations on the Couch

A mobile, red couch has been an extraordinary conversation starter about transport issues for young people in the Kingborough municipality. As part of an innovative consultation project, Conversations in Kingborough, a red couch was placed in outdoor public spaces to attract attention of young people. They were then invited to sit on the couch and have a conversation with a researcher about their transport usage and needs.

The red couch took on an iconic status as it was strategically located at the beach, bus stops, parks, shopping centres, schools, on the Bruny Island ferry and along road sides. The project was initiated as a result of consultations conducted in 2008 with representatives of the Youth Action Network Kingborough (YANK) and Youth Action Kingborough (YAK).

Young people illustrated through their own personal stories how a lack of public transport hampered their opportunities to further their education, socialise and participate in special activities, particularly if they lived in urban fringe areas. They also raised concerns about the impact on the environment of high car usage.

The conversations were filmed in order to produce a documentary of the key findings, with a view to making it available to the State Government and other key stakeholders in the transport sector.

Conversations in Kingborough, an initiative of Kingborough Council’s Community Services Division, received funding support from the Office of Children and Youth Affairs through the Innovate, Include, Develop, Local Government Grant Program.

For a copy of the report or DVD, contact Melissa Staples, Youth Development Officer at Kingborough Council on (03) 6211 8228.

Art at the Heart

‘Art at the Heart of Business’ is the unique name Central Coast, Devonport, Kentish and Latrobe Councils have chosen for a new program they are collectively working on to stimulate arts and business partnerships in the north-west region of Tasmania.

These four councils have partnered to work with the Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) to help them achieve this aim. On 22 September, senior council staff, along with local arts and business leaders, including Rob Philip representing Toyota - the national principal partner, participated in a planning session in Devonport. Ms Evonne Ewins, Director of Community Services at Devonport City Council, spoke of the exciting possibilities that can result from this endeavour.

Creative communities are strong communities, delivering economic and social benefits to all. Research by the Australia Council for the Arts shows that “direct involvement by communities in arts activity can contribute significantly to individual and community wellbeing and can enhance the efforts of government agencies in realising their policies for community wellbeing and ecologically sustainable communities.” For the north-west of Tasmania, cash or in-kind partnerships will further this objective.

Early next year, twenty cultural organisations and council staff will participate in a two-day workshop to learn how to develop successful partnerships with business, as well as developing their own business case.

For more details, contact Mandi Schjelde at the Australia Business Arts Foundation on (03) 6337 1007, or visit the website at www.abaf.org.au/acc.

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i Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, Art and Wellbeing, Australia Council for the Arts, Surry Hills, Australia, 2004, p.4
World-Class Mountain Bike Park Opened in Clarence

Another world-class mountain bike park is now available in Tasmania, with the opening of the Clarence Mountain Bike Park by Clarence City Council Mayor, Ald Jock Campbell.

Designed by Dirt Art mountain bike course designers, the park features easy accessibility to different types of terrain and riding experiences within one area, from racing tracks to cross-country tracks. Clarence City Council has invested $70,000 in the park, which offers an emphasis on facilities for beginner riders.

Ald Jock Campbell said that Council hopes to work together with the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park to attract national bike competitions to Tasmania and build the state’s profile within the growing mountain-biking community.

Clarence Mountain Bike Park is located on Flagstaff Gully Link Road, Mornington, just off the Tasman Highway opposite the Mornington roundabout.

A mountain bike rider puts the newly opened Clarence Mountain Bike Park to the test.

Youth Strike Gold in Crimestoppers Challenge

Burnie Youth Council claimed Gold at the 2009 Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge Tasmania Awards, held in Hobart on 26 October.

Don’t Live in Silence was the catchcry for the Youth Council’s submission in the Upper Secondary section, which saw Burnie blitz the field against schools from across the state. About 30 Youth Council members worked on the project for several months alongside local police officers.

This year’s topic, Youth Violence, enabled the students to look closely at the different forms of violence, which can be both physical and psychological. Burnie City Council Youth Development Officer, Mel Taylor, said cyber bullying is a form of violence that can quite often go unaddressed, so this was a great opportunity for the younger generation to delve into.

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At the awards ceremony, Youth Council representatives, Hayley White, of Parklands High School, and Jacqui Fishwick, of Marist Regional College accepted the $600 prize.

Celebrating the Gold Award at the 2009 Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge Tasmania Awards are (Back Row, from L-R) Ald Sandra French of Burnie City Council, Burnie Youth Council members Sophie Chilcott, Casey White and Jacqui Fishwick, Burnie City Council Youth Development Officer Mel Taylor, and work experience student Meg Cherry. (Front Row, L-R) Hayden Kelly and Hayley White.
Report Sheds Light on the Early Years

The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation has launched its research report: *Outcomes in the Early Years: The State of Tasmania’s Young Children 2009 - A report on the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation’s Outcomes Framework.*

The outcomes-based framework brings to the community a way to monitor the health and wellbeing of our young children at a critical period in their lives. The framework provides, in one database, a baseline for information which will assist the collective efforts of the Tasmanian community to measure the effectiveness of interventions. The report also outlines some excellent services that support young children in Tasmania, including some exciting new initiatives that are aiming to strengthen and extend these services to support more families with young children.

However there is a need to confront and deal with underlying factors in our society that result in difficult beginnings for children, comprising both their futures and the social and economic wellbeing of us all. The framework provides a context for recognising and understanding these factors, particularly poverty and social marginalisation.

In considering the findings of the report, the Foundation makes eight recommendations, which are addressed to all those concerned with improving the lives of our children. Recommendation 3 focuses on the important role Local Government can make to the wellbeing of children and families in their communities:

*Encourage local governments to use the local and regional data to focus on opportunities for working in partnership across sectors to improve the wellbeing and outcomes for children and families. This could include reference to early years initiatives in existing and future strategic plans for children and young people, within a community development framework.*

The Foundation has already supported local councils through its annual grant program to assist in developing strategies to support early years initiatives in the community and will continue to support Local Government to work toward improving the outcomes for children in our communities.

For more information, contact the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation on 1300 367 863. To view the report, go to www.earlyyears.org.au/news/research_report_launched.
Kingborough Residents have a Lend of Living Books

Kingborough Council’s Positive Ageing Advisory Committee recently coordinated the Kingborough Living Library in which the books were real people with a story to tell, and real readers could ‘borrow’ a ‘living book’ and hear their stories face-to-face. The event was held in the comfortable surroundings of the Kingston State Library during Seniors Week. Over four days, eighteen diverse and mature storytellers were recruited and readers booked to ‘have a lend’ of them for a short period. The ‘living books’ had many and various titles which attracted over 70 individual readers and 140 local school children from five different schools. The committee is now seeking community interest in forming a working group to ensure the continuation of the project which promotes positive relationships between younger and older people within the community. Further information is available at www.agewellkingborough.com.

New $4 Million “Hub” for West Coast

Premier David Bartlett has announced a new and innovative approach to service delivery for the West Coast. The construction of a new $4 million Queenstown Hub is set to commence in mid 2010 to combine services from all levels of government and the private and community sectors to meet the specific needs of the community. The Hub, to be located at the West Coast Council’s premises in Driffield St, will include a Child and Family Centre, Service Tasmania, a Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) and a range of other services in one location. The Queenstown Hub is expected to be completed by late 2010.

Council Signs Second Partnership Agreement

A second partnership agreement was signed in October between George Town Council and the State Government. The agreement highlights a number of important issues that the State Government and Council will focus on together over the coming years including the development of the Bell Bay industrial zone, providing training and programs at the Trade Training Centre, developing a shared pathway between George Town and Low Head and maximising the development of York Cove. The new partnership is targeted to the community’s needs and is focused on delivering achievable outcomes.

$2.2 Million for New Cycling Infrastructure in Tasmania

The Rudd Labor Government has announced it will invest more than $2.2 million in six cycling infrastructure projects in Tasmania from the $40 million National Bike Paths Projects fund. As part of the Government’s Economic Stimulus Plan, the investment will deliver projects worth $4.3 million, with the remainder of the funding provided by local councils. The projects, located in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie, St Helens, Prospect Vale, Strahan and Tullah, will encourage healthier lifestyles amongst residents, create more sustainable communities, and will help to take cars off Tasmanian roads, thereby reducing carbon emissions in the long-term. For details of recipient projects, visit www.minister.infrastructure.gov.au/aa/releases/2009/October/aa421_2009.htm.

Clarence Master Plan Set to Become a Reality

A new public promenade, continuation of the foreshore pedestrian and cycle trail, more community events in new public spaces, new cafés and waterfront businesses are expected at Bellerive with the announcement that Clarence Council will proceed with the construction of an extension to the Kangaroo Bay boardwalk. The development represents the first major component of the Kangaroo Bay Urban Design Master Plan, which was adopted last year by Council after extensive community and stakeholder consultation. The project, to be completed by February 2010, will comprise foreshore redevelopment works from the end of the existing Kangaroo Bay boardwalk through to the Bellerive Yacht Club boat ramp.

“He must come from an area with a better housing policy...”
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