Five Minutes with Mayor Adriana Taylor
Glenorchy City Council

Birth date: 20 August 1946

How long have you resided in the Glenorchy area and what do you enjoy most about it?
I have lived at Collins Cap since 1975 and love being somewhat out of town in the fresh air, with lovely views. I also enjoy being part of a smaller community.

What motivates you in life?
Wanting to be part of the solution rather than the problem.

How do you like to spend your free time?
I enjoy being outdoors as much as possible, being physically active, and spending time with the people that I love.

Three qualities that you appreciate most in people?
1) Honesty
2) Generosity of spirit
3) Sense of humour

When you were a child, you wanted to be...
A schoolteacher

Name three previous occupations you have held in the past.
1) Mother
2) School Teacher
3) Retreat house director

What motivated you to become involved in Local Government?
Lobbying by a retiring councillor whose opinion I valued.

How many years have you served as:
Alderman – 10 years
Mayor – 5 years

What do you consider as the key barriers to female representation within Local Government?
A perception, as much from women as men, that there is a greater time commitment required than there really is, and a lack of understanding of the importance of the role. We women councillors need to give the role better press.

Having just doubled your leadership responsibilities as Tasmania’s newest member of the Legislative Council, what enables you to pursue these leadership roles when other women might be more inclined to shy away from them?
Having had some life experience puts the interest and capacity to contribute to public life in a different perspective. A supportive household and no longer having the time constraints that families with young children have is a help.

What has been the most memorable moment of your Local Government career?
That’s a difficult one. Election night was pretty exciting and hosting the Dalai Lama at the Derwent Entertainment Centre ranks pretty highly.

What do you enjoy most about your role as Mayor?
The privilege of getting to know so many extraordinary people in our community.

What’s the best advice anyone has ever given you?
Be true to yourself.

What word best describes you?
Enthusiastic.
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National Leadership Role for Kingborough General Manager

Kingborough Council’s General Manager, Paul West, will be at the forefront of promoting excellence in Local Government management as National President of Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA).

The hand-over of the National Presidency took place at the close of the 2010 LGMA National Congress, held in Adelaide in May. Mr West is one of two Tasmanian representatives to serve on the National Board over the past six years and will serve as President for one year.

Mr West said the role of Local Government continues to change at a fast pace as we respond to the needs and aspirations of local communities across Australia. “Communities look to Local Government when they are recovering from crisis; they expect us to prepare for future challenges such as climate change and continue to deliver services to a high standard,” Mr West said. “LGMA plays an important role by providing leadership, policies and guidance to assist professional managers to meet these challenges and continue to be at the forefront of change and innovation in Local Government.”

New GM for Break O’Day Council

Mayor Robert Legge of Break O’Day Council welcomed newly-appointed General Manager, Des Jennings, on 15 March.

Mr Jennings relocated from Streaky Bay Council in South Australia where he was CEO and can draw upon 33 years experience in the Local Government sector in his new role.

He is keen to work closely with the Council and community to achieve short and long-term beneficial outcomes for Break O’Day. A priority is to progress the preparation of the Strategic Management Plan that will drive Council’s decision-making and activities over the next five years. Mr Jennings will also review existing plans with a focus to prepare a District Management Plan that will provide Council and the community with a priority list of works over public land and infrastructure to improve the physical appearance and functional layout of the towns.

Mr Jennings’ appointment follows the retirement of Tony Walker on 12 March, after 40 years in Local Government and almost 23 years at Break O’Day Council.

Launceston City Council Welcomes New General Manager

Launceston City Council has appointed Robert Dobrzynski as its new General Manager, following the resignation of Frank Dixon.

Mr Dobrzynski, who commenced his new role on 17 May, relocated to Launceston from the Moorabool Shire Council, north-west of Melbourne, where he has been the Chief Executive Officer for the past seven and a half years. He has 26 year’s experience working in the Local Government sector.

Launceston City Council Mayor Albert van Zetten said Robert’s experience and knowledge will be a major asset to Council and the Launceston community, and he is very highly regarded within Victoria.

Mr Dobrzynski, who has accepted a five-year contract with Council, looks forward to the opportunities and challenges of working with a large, regional council.
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Star Performers

Michelle Neasey
BUSINESS AND CORPORATE SERVICES
Burnie City Council

For the past two and a half years, Michelle Neasey has worked as Burnie City Council’s Strategic and Governance Manager. She provides strategic support to the General Manager and Directors in areas of developing proposals and strategies, resourcing major capital grants, progress reporting and governance.

Michelle has a Bachelor of Business and was previously Executive Officer of Camp Clayton, a busy 200-bed youth conference centre providing management experience in the areas of staffing, hospitality, recreation, catering, accounting and project development.

“It has been an eye opener for me to develop an understanding of what Local Government does for the community,” Michelle said. “Prior to joining, I had no idea the amount of work that is undertaken by a Council. Seeing the major transformation of Burnie, my home town, through a strategic vision over the past ten years was the catalyst for me wanting to join the team to be part of such a positive and meaningful contribution to the community,” she said.

The aspect of her role that Michelle enjoys the most is being part of teams that achieve great outcomes. “I am proud to have played a part of the team that has undertaken major capital projects across the city in the past couple of years that has helped transform Burnie,” she said.

Burnie City Council General Manager Paul Arnold said since joining Council, Michelle’s experience and expertise as a CEO of an NGO had benefited Council enormously. “Michelle’s strategic mindset and big picture thinking has been paramount in bringing together many of Council’s major projects,” Mr Arnold said. “Her personable nature, coupled with her strive for excellence, has been an invaluable addition to Council.”

Alexander Crothers
SPATIAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
Launceston City Council

Alexander Crothers has worked 16 years with Launceston City Council. As Spatial Data Coordinator, his role and responsibilities focus on using the latest spatial technology, tools and practice to support council employees with their decision-making. Clients include town planners, architects, engineers as well as meeting the spatial knowledge needs of all employees.

Maintaining and improving supporting GIS systems and datasets also forms a big part his role. Alexander said GIS contributes in a valuable way to decision-making and design/planning process by providing objective, repeatable and scientifically rigorous spatial analysis of the environment. “It’s nerdy but fascinating,” he said.

Among his qualifications, Alexander has an Advanced Diploma of Applied Science from the University of Tasmania, a Graduate Certificate in Applied Science GIS and Remote Sensing from Charles Sturt University, he is accredited as a GISP-AP certified GIS Professional - Asia Pacific, and is currently studying for an Advanced Diploma of Management.

Alexander enjoys the variety of fields that Local Government is responsible for which always ensures an interesting and stimulating environment to work in.

His proudest achievements include; integrating for the first time Asset and GIS Data which revolutionised access to councils asset data; developing a system and managing the process to bring all municipal drainage GIS data to a standard that is now utilised directly by hydraulic network modelling software; and building a GIS model for objectively analysing rural land by planners.

Former Acting General Manager, Rod Sweetnam, nominated Alex Crothers in recognition of his enthusiasm towards his role and contribution to the effectiveness of Council’s GIS system. Alex is an advocate for the benefits of GIS to council, where approximately 80 officers utilise at least one spatial interface to do their job. Outside Council, the GIS system has been recognised as a leader in Local Government.

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Responding to the needs of Local Government

We have a strong appreciation of the challenges facing the local government sector in balancing the requirements for efficient resource management with effective program delivery.

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faces of local government

Sue Dewhurst
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Glenorchy City Council

With a Bachelor of Commerce degree and as a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, Sue Dewhurst began working at Glenorchy City Council 6 years ago as their Financial Accountant.

Sue is responsible for coordinating the budget process, completing the financial statements, and managing six staff from the accounts payable, payroll, budget and reporting areas.

One of the more challenging tasks Sue has undertaken, was the implementation of Council’s current finance system. “The implementation was only successful because we had a dedicated team who spent long hours making it happen. This experience reinforced how important team work is to achieve organisational goals,” she said. “I really enjoy working at Council as my role is interesting and varied. I work with great people who are passionate about our community.”

Glenorchy City Council General Manager, Frank Pearce, said that Sue had been a daily strength and motivating force in keeping the finance team together with the loss of two Corporate Accountants in two years and a Rates Co-ordinator. “Sue has not only assisted these staff but has been responsible for producing the budgets within the very challenging financial circumstances that Council has been in during the last few years,” he said. “Sue has confidently worked with the finance section and management to achieve really good outcomes and is a great asset to the organisation.”

Lindsay Harwood
GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT
Northern Midlands Council

As Executive and Liaison Officer for the Northern Midlands Council, Lindsay Harwood provides executive support to the Governance Department and, in particular, to the General Manager. In undertaking the broad range of duties in this role, he also manages five local district committees.

Lindsay’s Local Government career began in 1978 at Kingborough Council. In 1987, he was appointed as Council Clerk for the Campbell Town Council and, following the council merger in 1993, was appointed to his current position with Northern Midlands Council. By attending Council meetings, local district committee meetings and the numerous recreation and reserve committee meetings throughout the municipal area, Lindsay has gained a valuable understanding of community needs and enjoys being able to help develop affordable solutions for local issues.

Throughout his Local Government career, Lindsay has always found that the support and respect given to him by his fellow work colleagues and the community has enabled him to deal with the many challenges in Local Government.

Northern Midlands Council Acting General Manager, Adam Wilson, said the experience and skills Lindsay has provided our industry is invaluable, and he has always been an approachable colleague that is content to share his knowledge with others. “In my short time with Council, I have received a lot of positive feedback about Lindsay’s can do attitude from members of Council’s local district committees and he goes above and beyond his role in helping these local committees to achieve their long-term goals and objectives,” he added.
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