



# LG Tas

June 2020

Chalk messages of support - Hobart Rivulet

## SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO ENDURE, RECOVER AND PROSPER

**The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every Australian home, business and community. Even for those who remained in work, the associated uncertainty and changes to our way of life have had an impact. COVID-19 will continue to influence how we operate for a long period after people start to resume social contact and work.**

COVID-19 can be seen as a magnifying glass that highlights and heightens divides that already existed in our community. Indicators such as financial disadvantage, job insecurity, digital access issues, homelessness, nutritional voids, alcohol, tobacco and recreational drug use, domestic abuse, mental health and gambling issues have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and its related disadvantage.

To date, all levels of government have invested to ensure that Australia's community capacity remains in place to support the operation and recovery of our society, economy and livelihoods post the COVID-19 national shut-down. While the investment from Federal and State Governments has been significant, Local Government's contribution cannot be underestimated.

Tasmanian councils have already committed to nearly \$40 million in relief measures to support their communities through the crisis and into recovery through a variety of means. These include a 0% rates increase for the 2020/21 financial year; direct business and community support grant programs; hardship assistance policies; rates remissions for certain businesses; relaxing or waiving of certain penalties, fees and charges; suspended debt collection; waiving of rent on council properties; and a variety of local and regional programs to support businesses and communities.

This investment in relief equates to 6.85% of 2017-18 revenues (as published by the State Grants Commission). For the sake of comparison, State Government's investment in covid relief represents 6.58% of revenue .

All councils and communities will be impacted differently by COVID-19. Each local community has its own unique makeup of residents and businesses, which inherently means that some communities will be more vulnerable than others in both a health and economic sense.

As councils plan their response and recovery activities, additional focus will be directed towards those community cohorts that will require more support than others.

More so than any other sector, councils deliver the services and infrastructure that shape the daily experiences of Tasmanians. These services and infrastructure are the major determinants of our community's prosperity and wellbeing. Councils are place shapers who drive most people's attachment to, and satisfaction with the area in which they live.

Councils must be considered a crucial partner in any attempts to effect economic, social and cultural change and to promote strong, healthy, viable and sustainable communities. Together, Local Government and communities can create liveable places in which we can all prosper.

**Dr Katrena Stephenson, CEO LGAT**

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## THIS EDITION, WE INTERVIEW OUR PRESIDENT MAYOR CHRISTINA HOLMDAHL ON HER EXPERIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

What have been the major impacts you have seen on your council during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected Tasmanians. Twenty-five percent of our population was considered vulnerable and therefore were at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. The Local Government sector immediately became an important contact point for our communities, ensuring access to up-to-date information and assistance where needed. This has certainly been the case for my Council.



We were well prepared for the lockdown and quickly implemented the necessary changes and conveyed them to our municipality. But many Councils struggled in connecting with their communities. Throughout our State customer service centres, community halls, sporting groups, and youth and seniors programs were forced into hibernation. As well, arrangements had to be made to enable staff to work from home, or in some cases at home on standby.

What are the major challenges facing your community as a result of COVID-19?

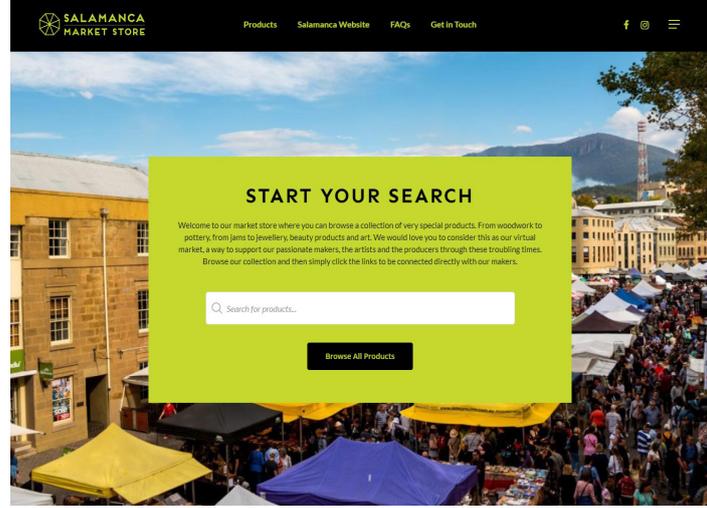
Tasmanian communities, especially the smaller regional communities that rely heavily on the tourist industry, immediately felt the economic hardships of the closure of tourism. The retail sector has also been hit very hard. With borders not looking to reopen in the short-term, these businesses will need the support of locals in order to get through the winter months. Communities also now face a return to a post COVID-19 life with increased personal hygiene and cleaning requirements which will need to be adopted before sporting clubs and community groups can gather, as well as adapting to the changes to everyday life. The cancellation of sporting rosters has also significantly impacted communities.

What innovation or positive responses/activities have you seen emerge as result of COVID-19?

There have been some beautiful and innovative examples of councils finding ways to connect with their communities such as Brighton encouraging locals to create weekly themed window displays, West Tamar's new Youth YouTube channel launch and George Town's Kids Portal, just to name a few.

Are there any 'covid-isolation' activities/practices/trends that you would like to see remain as we return to the 'new normal'?

Our communities have reconnected in so many ways at a much more local level because of the restrictions on travel. People reached out to family and friends more often. It's been great to see so many people out exercising in our parks and trails together as families with their pets in tow and I hope to see this continue.



Salamanca Market

## SALAMANCA MARKET MOVES ONLINE

**The City of Hobart's popular Salamanca Market has entered the digital world, with many of its regular stallholders now represented in a dedicated online store.**

The initiative was launched following the forced closure of the market due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"The Salamanca Market is iconic and has built its reputation on the range of unique, local products," Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds said.

"Many of the stallholders rely on Salamanca Market as their only form of regular income. With the market now suspended indefinitely, it's important to find ways to support them through this very trying situation."

"It's also important that we keep looking ahead. Salamanca Market will be essential to the economic recovery of our city and region and we want to make sure it's in a good position to bounce back when the time is right."

The online store has hundreds of products available for purchase directly from the seller and allows shoppers to browse products by category. It's available at [salamancamarket.com.au](http://salamancamarket.com.au).

The City of Hobart has put in place more than \$3.5 million worth of support measures to assist the community through the COVID-19 crisis. These include quick-response grants program, waiving of fees for businesses, rent relief for tenants of City-owned buildings, and extending our financial hardship arrangements to support those most affected by the downturn.

In addition, the Council recently resolved to freeze general rates and most fees and charges in response to widespread economic hardship and uncertainty.

"We know people are doing it tough and any increase to rates would only cause further hardship," Cr Reynolds said.



George Town Kids Activity Portal

## GEORGE TOWN COUNCIL LAUNCHES ACTIVITY PORTAL

**George Town Council has helped the challenge of keeping kids and adults entertained and active during the COVID-19 restrictions with the creation of the 'Kids' Activity Portal', livestreamed classes, podcasts and other online resources.**

A Council initiative, the Kids Activity Portal is supported by South 32, KEEN Partners and Walker Designs, and provides educational resources and activities as well as health and wellbeing services for those who are house-bound. And it is not just kids who have been kept entertained! The Portal uses a multitude of website platforms across a broad range of topics and aims to educate, amuse, and challenge both kids and parents alike.

Mayor Kieser said "Council is very aware that entertaining and educating the kids at home will be challenging, as will home schooling and for those working from home. "Apart from exploring the backyard, finding and creating your own fun, Council hopes that our Kids Activities Portal will give the community another tool to support them in these unfamiliar times".

The Portal required a new role to be created to develop fun and educational content for children. Fortunately, the role was filled by a worker who had been displaced from the child care industry by the impacts of COVID-19.

George Town Council also transitioned their face-to-face Healthy George Town programs to live streamed social media sessions to assist in maintaining the community's health and wellbeing, social engagement and connection during social isolation. Healthy George Town engages local service providers and health professionals to facilitate the delivery of free health and wellbeing programs, aimed to create a safe, connected, vibrant, healthy and positive community. The streaming of the programs has been extremely successful, reaching members of the community, and people from various parts of Tasmania. All sessions are available on the Healthy George Town website for download.

Healthy George Town also engaged Penny Terry from Health Speak to develop a range of podcasts. They were designed to assist with the community's mental health whilst managing social isolation during COVID-19. The episodes covered topics such as family violence, addiction, and ways to adjust to our new lives, helping those who are unwell and those with an intellectual disability.

The online and livestreaming initiatives are part of George Town Council's Community Care and Recovery Package which is Council's response to the significant economic impacts the COVID 19 pandemic has or will have on residents, the community and businesses in the George Town municipality.

All families, including those beyond the boundaries of the municipality can discover the [Kids Activity Portal](#) and [Healthy George Town](#) and enjoy the activities on offer.



Mayor Peter Freshney on his Silly Walk

## LATROBE COUNCIL – CREATING SMILES WITH SILLY WALKS

**To provide some light-hearted relief in our current climate of uncertainty and social distancing, Latrobe Council has declared a short section of Gilbert Street and a section at Club Drive in Shearwater Village, Port Sorell as "Jurisdictions of the Ministry for Silly Walks".**

Based on John Cleese's famous skit the local silly walk is gaining interest in many countries around the world and is now joined by Tasmania, represented by Latrobe and Port Sorell.

Silly walking involves the exaggerated movement of legs and arms as one walks from 'point a' to 'point b' much to the amusement of those who may be watching. While participation is voluntary, footage of the silly walks can be uploaded to the Latrobe Silly Walks Facebook Group for others to enjoy and to hopefully mimic.

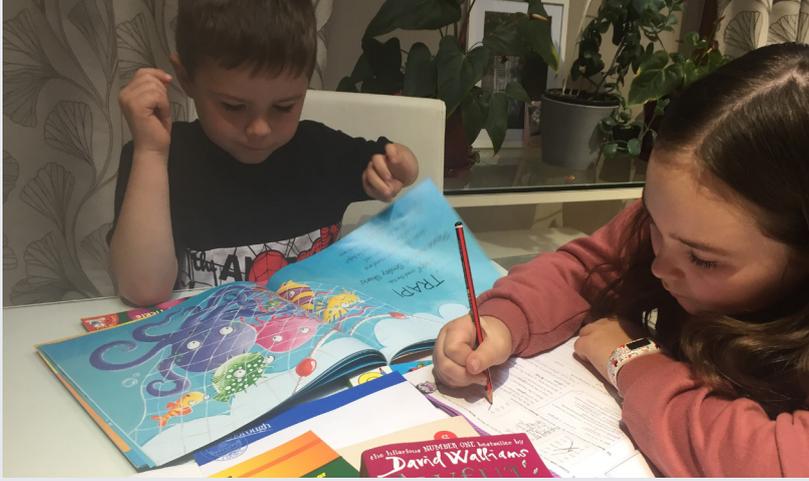
Of course, silly walking is always done within the confines of the current social distancing protocols and in high spirits.

The first to attempt a Silly Walk in Latrobe was Mayor Peter Freshney, who continued to recover from his deep lunges days later.

"This light-hearted project aims to lift the spirits, create laughter and have some fun.

Participation is completely voluntary with many now reviewing their footage online and refining their silly walk further. Participants are also encouraged to pay it forward and nominate another person to complete the silly walk.

To find, search for [Latrobe Silly Walks Facebook Group](#).



Kind Acts underway by Sasha and Henry from Kettering



HEARTFELT creations to show community members messages of care and hope

## KIND ACTS IN KINGBOROUGH

**The KIND ACTS initiative created to support the community during the coronavirus pandemic is being positively received across Kingborough.**

Developed by the Council's Community Services team, KIND ACTS stands for KINGborough, Daily, Art, Community, Teaching and Support.

Activities, ideas and resources have been shared online on the Council's website and social media channels to keep people engaged and occupied. For those who don't have access to the internet, free paper copy packs have been posted to residents.

The paper copy packs contain books, puzzles, educational resources and tasks, exercise suggestions and lots of creative activities.

"KIND ACTS has exceeded all expectations," said Deputy Mayor Cr Jo Westwood, who launched the initiative in March.

"There has been great engagement online with the activities and information shared, particularly for the online educational resources."

"However, the real success has been the paper copy packs. Nearly 250 packs have been sent to residents which have included packs for seniors, youth, home schooling, and arts and crafts activities.

"This demonstrates the need for people to have physical activities to engage with, as it can be difficult for the whole family to be online while we are all working and schooling from home.

"KIND ACTS has encouraged people to look after their physical and mental health, as well as provide creative and educational ideas to keep kids engaged and busy.

"I'm proud of the way Council officers are continually thinking outside the square to support the community during these challenging times.

"I really love the name KIND ACTS because, particularly at the moment, simple acts of kindness are so important."

More information about KIND ACTS can be found on Council's website at [www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/kind-acts](http://www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/kind-acts) and social media channels, or by calling the Community Services Team on 6211 8200.

## HEARTFELT LAUNCHED IN THE HUON VALLEY

**The HEARTFELT project celebrates the creativity, strength and kindness of the Huon Valley people when times get tough.**

Launched as part of the Huon Valley Council 'Stronger Together' community recovery program, HEARTFELT invites community members to share their message of care and hope for others in the Huon Valley by creating a heart of any material and sharing it online.

The initiative has resulted in all sorts of handcrafted HEARTFELT creations, made from things like paper, felt, stone painting, crochet, beads, flowers, leaves, and even seaweed on the shore!

Although in its infancy over 25 local residents/artists, stretching from Grove to Dover, have so far participated in the Project.

When the community can come together again in person, Council will create a public exhibition of all the HEARTFELT hearts, photos and messages.

In the meantime, people are encouraged to share their creation on Instagram using the hashtag #HeartFeltHuonValley and follow along on the @huonbeings account.

Visit [huonvalley.tas.gov.au/heartfelt](http://huonvalley.tas.gov.au/heartfelt) for more information on the project.



Mayor of Break O'Day Mick Tucker

## INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR OF BREAK O'DAY MICK TUCKER

### What have been the major impacts you have seen on your council during the COVID-19 pandemic?

As a region dependent on tourism our business community has certainly felt the effects of COVID-19, however the other major impact has been the overall wellbeing of our community. Because we have an above average ageing community many of us felt anxious about the virus but this has also led to a really strong community spirit and it was heartening to see people banding together to help others.

### What are the major challenges facing your community as a result of COVID-19?

Aside from the financial recovery that travel restrictions will have on our Tourism industry, we are also aware that there may be those in our community who are concerned about visitors returning to our area. This is of course a real catch 22 as we need the visitation but we also need to make sure our community is protected.

### What innovation or positive responses/activities have you seen emerge as result of COVID-19?

From a Council perspective, we developed a wellbeing survey for our staff and check in on them twice a week to see how they are travelling and they have access to services if required. In terms of the community we have really tried to focus on the positives and spreading positive messages. Some of the things we have done include sending thank you cards to volunteers and developing kindness cards that will be used to check-in on those more vulnerable in our community. We have also developed and implemented a Community Care Package and Rates Hardship Policy which offers a range of assistance to businesses and ratepayers.

Of course these are all Council initiatives and do not even touch on the community spirit we are seeing in a small towns. There are many individuals and organisations that are spreading the Break O'Day community spirit by checking-in on neighbours, delivering groceries and supplies and just being there to lean on.

### Are there any 'covid-isolation' activities/practices/trends that you would like to see remain as we return to the 'new normal'?

The connections that we have made with each other and with our community I am sure will continue long after the pandemic is over. There is no doubt that the pandemic has been a tough time for everyone in many ways but I am sure that we will all come out of this a more connected and stronger community. One outcome I would like to see remain after this is all over is what I like to call, 'Playing for Team Tasmania' – by that I mean a focus on buying local, using local services and even travelling within the state instead of interstate.



Flinders Island App for their Kids Holiday Program

## FLINDERS ISLAND KIDS GO VIRTUAL!

### Every School Holidays, Flinders Council runs a very well attended and much loved Kids Holiday program. This year due to COVID-19 restrictions, the program went virtual!

In collaboration with the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association, Flinders Council developed an interactive web app – Island Kids - especially designed for the kids on Flinders Island.

The App featured daily and weekly challenges including a local Bear Hunt, Fitness Activities from the local School PE Teacher, a selection of recipes from the School Kitchen Garden Specialist, Art and Craft projects with an Easter themed focus and even a page of Virtual Tours where the kids could ride a roller coaster or visit Machu Picchu.

The Island Kids could upload photos of their projects and chat amongst themselves – all in a safe and secured environment. The major focus was to help our young community stay active and connected.

To finish the holidays, an 'Online Zoom Dance Party' was held with local dance Teacher Adriana Backhaus. Glam and glitter filled the screen on a Friday afternoon and was a hit amongst the kids.

The uncertain COVID-19 times of late definitely revealed the capability and flexibility of Flinders Council to deliver health and well being programs remotely.

It was also an excellent time to play with the latest video and technology platforms that could be used for future community programs and projects.



Glenorchy Mayor Kristie Johnston filming Storytime

## STORYTIME WITH THE MAYOR OF GLENORCHY

**The COVID-19 crisis has presented many challenges for local councils and their communities, particularly around how they can continue to operate under the new restrictions.**

Glenorchy City Council has continued to provide essential services to its residents, while also supporting its staff to work safely during the pandemic.

In the early days of the restrictions, when the impacts were just starting to be felt across our Community, Council didn't just want to provide support to the vulnerable members of the community and those in financial stress, but also to show kindness and caring to help some of the other people whose lives were made a little bit harder by having to stay at home.

Glenorchy Mayor Kristie Johnston was one of the first champions with her own act of kindness and started using Council's Facebook page as a way to connect with families and young children who were stuck at home.

With her normal schedule disrupted and having to move to online meetings and phone calls, Mayor Johnston took a bit of time each morning to read children's books via livestream video on Facebook.

Plenty of young families tuned in to watch 'Storytime with the Mayor' and it provided a regular moment of relief to their day, hopefully giving exhausted parents 5 minutes to catch their breath. With access to the Council Chambers being limited, and Mayor Johnston mostly at home, Storytimes have been regularly read from her sofa. Toby, her faithful pet dog, has also been joining in, drawing many delighted comments from viewers as he snoozes peacefully beside her (unaware of his growing fame).

Mayor Johnston and the Glenorchy Council have also undertaken other acts of 'Glenorchy Kindness' to let the community know they can help. Council has distributed neighbourhood Kindness cards, helpful hard-copy booklets with details of important services to households without internet and family packs with activities for children. They've also been encouraging children to send letters and pictures to local aged-care homes when visiting became restricted.

Any act of kindness makes a difference and Glenorchy City Council continues to keep the community's wellbeing at the front of its mind, during this pandemic and beyond.



Burnie City Council Trucks help important COVID-19 messaging

## BURNIE CITY COUNCIL WASTE TRUCKS USED TO SHARE IMPORTANT MESSAGES

**When is a garbage truck not just a garbage truck? When it's a moving billboard! Burnie City Council came up with a clever way to support the important 'Stay Home Save Lives' message during the COVID-19 outbreak in the North-West; by placing the message on garbage trucks.**

Mayor Steve Kons said "Credit must go to our depot staff who came up with idea of putting the #StayHomeSaveLives message on our garbage trucks. The trucks travel around our municipality and are highly visible; the message to our community is a simple reminder to think of your family, friends and the vulnerable and stay at home".

A member of the North-West Regional Emergency Management Committee and Regional Emergency Coordination Centre, Burnie City Council has been doing all it can to support key Government public health measures.

Now that the additional restrictions in North West Tasmania have been lifted, Burnie City Council garbage trucks have a new message thanking frontline Health Workers. Large stickers that read 'Thank You Frontline Health Workers' have been added to the side of the Burnie trucks to thank them for putting their own wellbeing at risk every day during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This message has been especially uplifting locally as a number of health worker are also relatives, partners and loved ones of council staff.



Brooke Ludbey and Bron Wheldon with the Business Listing

## WEST COAST COUNCIL LAUNCHES BUSINESS DIRECTIVE

**When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the West Coast Council rallied to support the community.**

From the start it became quickly apparent that businesses in the West Coast would be severely impacted as visitor numbers dropped – even the Council Visitor Information Centre had to close its doors.

As a region heavily reliant on the tourism, Council quickly developed ways to support the 150+ local businesses. The Visitor Centre staff, and the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator joined together to contact every business across the West Coast to find out their operating hours, contact details and other essential information.

From this a Business List was created to inform the municipality about the operations of local business. This provided easy access to residents on what services were operating.

With a strong response from businesses, particularly the tourism and food businesses, this list was initially revised daily to provide the latest information and then transitioned to a weekly update. From here the list has been published on Council's website as well as spread across social media channels including local Facebook Pages and the West Coast Community Information Board.

At time of publishing over 76 Queenstown businesses and 39 in Strahan were included on the list.

To support local businesses the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (using the West coast community brand resources) developed a new "supporting West Coasters logo" which may be developed for local business use. This has been particularly important with the sharing of those businesses using Gift Cards and information over Mother's Day.

The West Coast Council has greatly valued the participation of residents and participants in assisting to keep the West Coast business community thriving.



Jessica Storm and Christine Turnbull from People of Purpose

## SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS IN CIRCULAR HEAD

**To help support the local business community, the Circular Head Council hired a specialist independent business consultant to assist businesses emerging from COVID-19 to get back on their feet. Councillors voted unanimously on this initiative, one of eight components that the Council adopted at their April Meeting to assist the community as part of Council's Circular Head Economic Recovery (CHER) program.**

Christine Turnbull, business consultant and founder of the People of Purpose Group, has been funded by Council to assist businesses in Circular Head through mentoring, business support and referrals to agencies that can help with Federal or State funding. Ms Turnbull is connecting with businesspeople in the local area to help them navigate and access relevant resources in relation to the impacts of COVID-19.

Mayor Quilliam was keen to see the COVID-19 package supported by Council in motion as soon as possible to help businesses navigate through these hard times. Mayor Quilliam said "many owners needed help but weren't sure where to go. Some are struggling to fill out the forms to get government funding, some have mental health impacts and others need help navigating how to set up online shopping".

"We have engaged an independent consultant based on her outstanding abilities to support small businesses, longevity and a familiar face around Tasmanian businesses," Mayor Quilliam said.

People on Purpose owner Christine Turnbull and Manager Jess Storm have been busy calling the district's 300 small firms ranging from accommodation and tourism, to restaurants, food, health providers, industry, production, shellfish and farming, retail, trades and services.

All businesses that are listed on Council's business register are being contacted as well regarding the business support package and businesses are able to contact the consultant directly. A [flyer](#) has also been distributed locally and is available on Council's website and facebook page:



Devonport City Council recognising the importance of movement in isolation - fit Harry joins in the activities

## KEEPING FIT AND WELL IN DEVONPORT

To help keep the community's mental health and fitness up and anxiety levels down during the COVID-19 pandemic, Devonport City Council initiated "Wellness Wednesday" and "Fitness Fridays" via Council's Website and Facebook page.

Wellness Wednesday is a weekly blog that covers interesting topics on positive steps that community members can put in place to help them through difficult times. Developed by Council's Community Services Department, tips cover everything from food, fitness, spring cleaning, children's activities, mental health and how to keep your garden happy.

A key message of Wellness Wednesday is that individuals and communities are stronger when we maintain connections with each other and our communities and remain kind. The blog also promotes essential health messages relating to COVID-19 as well as advice on helplines and resources. You can find the link at <https://www.devonport.tas.gov.au/live/your-community/community-services/wellness-wednesday/>.

Recognising the importance of keeping participants engaged and moving whilst in isolation Council introduced "Fit Fridays". Council's Sport and Recreation team filmed a number of video sessions for participants to do at home, which are being posted weekly on a Friday. The sessions replaced Council's popular Active Stronger, Active Longer and Tai Chi for Health programs which were unable to be run due public health directives in response to COVID-19. Tune into Fitness Fridays [here https://www.devonport.tas.gov.au/live/your-community/community-services/fit-fridays/](https://www.devonport.tas.gov.au/live/your-community/community-services/fit-fridays/).



Mayor of Clarence Doug Chipman

## INTERVIEW WITH MAYOR OF CLARENCE DOUG CHIPMAN

**What have been the major impacts you have seen on your council during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

We are proud to have been able to carry out essential services with no disruption and although we were forced to close the doors to the council chambers the vast majority of customers were able to continue their business with us via phone, email or on our website.

Our workforce was proactive and able to adjust operations quickly to allow most of our office-based staff to work from home.

**What are the major challenges facing your community as a result of COVID-19?**

Creating a financial relief package was a priority for Council to support the many individuals and businesses suddenly under financial pressure due to job losses, a drop in trade or employment hours.

The mental health consequences of the stress and unpredictability of COVID-19 will take time for many to deal with. The issue of disconnection and isolation, particularly those who are high-risk, remains a threat to the wellbeing of many.

**What innovation or positive responses/activities have you seen emerge as result of COVID-19?**

Some of our community programs have diversified to be delivered online and Council meetings have been streamlined online which has made them more accessible to people who otherwise may not have been able to attend. I hope we can continue to diversify the delivery of services using online mediums.

The Caring Kids poster competition asked for children to submit artworks representing what they were doing to take care of themselves, their family or their neighbourhood during the pandemic. All participants will have their work displayed in an online gallery, and winners will have their image printed and put into our new community signage boxes around Clarence.

**Are there any 'covid-isolation' activities/practices/trends that you would like to see remain as we return to the 'new normal'?**

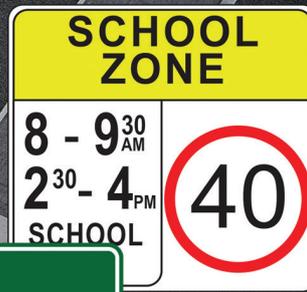
Council deemed it a priority to keep our tracks and reserves open wherever to allow residents and visitors to take care of themselves by utilising these services. It has been remarkable to see so many people heading outdoors to exercise their bodies and relax their minds. As life continues to evolve towards a 'new normal' I hope that people continue to explore the outdoors and prioritise moving their health.

While some of our regular volunteers have not been able to give their time as they are more at-risk many new volunteers have joined our program and wish to continue post COVID-19.

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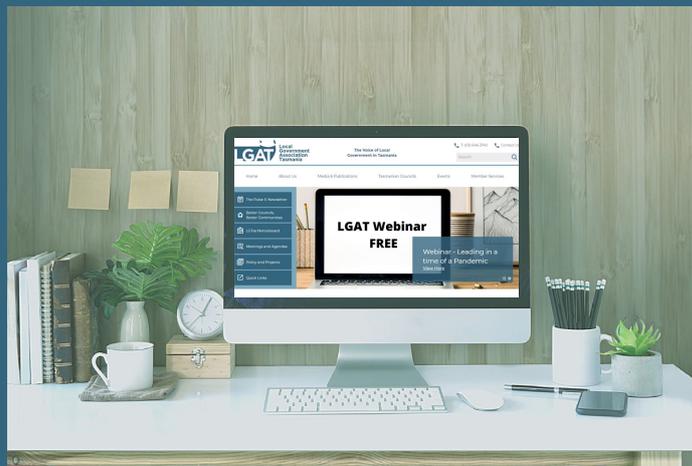
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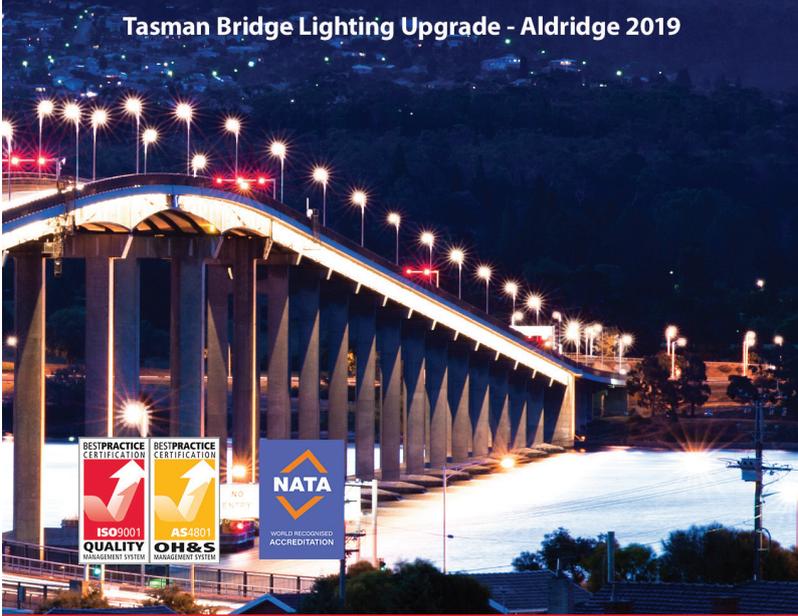
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