

CEO's Report

Issue 39 – November 2018



Thank you Madam Mayor

I would like to take the opportunity to thank outgoing Mayor, Cr Pamela Rothfield and welcome new Council Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari and Deputy Mayor, Cr Bruce Kent. Congratulations on both your appointments.

It has been a pleasure working with Cr Rothfield over the last two years. Being the Mayor of a new Council can present itself with many challenges and opportunities and she has done a wonderful job to lead us through the term so far.

Cr Rothfield has left big shoes to fill, but I'm sure that Cr Tessari with the assistance of Cr Kent will continue to build on the success of this Council over the next 12 months.

Thank you again for your leadership and support to the entire organisation and to our community.



Council's new Mayor, Cr Brett Tessari (r) and Deputy Mayor Cr Bruce Kent (l) thank outgoing Mayor, Cr Pamela Rothfield.

Change for Sam

Council unanimously voted to prioritise advocacy for the Change for Sam Strategy and increased police resources at October's Ordinary Council Meeting.

The Strategy was developed after the tragic death of Phillip Island resident Samantha (Sam) Fraser, through a collaboration between the Phillip Island community and Bass Coast service providers.

The Strategy includes lobbying the State Government for an increase of \$600,000 in recurring funding to organisations such as Bass Coast Health, SalvoCare and Gippsland Women's Health to help support family violence programs and support services provided within Bass Coast.

The Change for Sam Strategy will comprise four key tiers which align with the Victorian Government's Free from Violence Strategy. These tiers include Prevention; Service Response; System Coordination and Alignment; and Practical Support.

The Phillip Island community was deeply affected by Sam's death and this Strategy will work to prevent family violence occurring in the future.

The goals of Change for Sam include improving current services and resources to better respond to incidents of family violence in Bass Coast. Also unanimously supported on the night, was a motion that Council supports an increase in policing resources in Bass Coast to assist in the reduction of family violence and to support the victims.



Council unanimously supports 'Change for Sam'.

Tertiary Education Advocacy continues

As part of its strong focus on advocacy priorities, Bass Coast Shire Council hosted a Roundtable discussion in October to help progress tertiary education investment in the Shire.

Participating in the facilitated workshop were representatives from several state government departments, local and regional education providers, post-secondary students, community and business advocates and key employers.

For many students in Bass Coast, facing the hurdles of limited access to higher education and skills training decreases the likelihood of them completing year 12, going to university and finishing a degree. The prospect of relocating to attend tertiary education can deter many students.

Council has been actively advocating to government for support and is seeking to develop a business case which will investigate the establishment of a Bass Coast University Centre.

The Centre would provide a regional study hub and university centre located in Bass Coast. It would work with existing education and university providers and attract new opportunities and pathways to support the delivery of a range of courses and programs.

The Roundtable provided insights and direction from the participants in order for the initiative to be progressed and achieved.

Council's Manager Advocacy and Engagement, Christian Stefani and I visited the Country Universities Centre in Cooma, NSW to understand how that model works and whether it had been successful. Council is taking a lead on the proposal

and will seek to establish a project steering committee to help develop a business case and confirm the model to progress.

The Centre may deliver courses in mixed-mode, providing a blend of online curriculum, resources and activities together with face-to-face tutorials, laboratories and workshops. The Centre would also provide a study hub for local students designed to nurture collaboration and provide a safe and practical study environment.

Council has written to, and had meetings with, State Government Ministers, Shadow Cabinet Opposition members, elected representatives and election candidates to garner support for all our advocacy priorities. Council officers have also met with the Federal Department of Education's Regional Study Hubs Program Manager in Canberra.



Participants shared their thoughts and ideas at last month's Tertiary Education Roundtable discussion.

Annual Report adopted

At last month's Ordinary Meeting, Council adopted the 2017/18 Annual Report. The Annual Report demonstrates Council's achievements against the objectives and activities set out in the Council Plan 2017-2021.

The Report shows Council delivered a positive financial result in 2017/18, with a \$10 million surplus compared to a budgeted surplus of \$3.9 million. The Report also highlights some of Council's other achievements, including the completion of 116 capital works projects and successful advocacy for the Shire.

A key measure of financial sustainability is the trend in the underlying result, which identifies whether the organisation is generating enough revenue to cover operating expenses, including asset replacement. The underlying result for 2017/18 was a surplus of \$1.5 million. This is a great outcome, following on from the success of 2016/17, when Council achieved a positive underlying result for the first time in five years.

The 2017/18 Budget initiatives included major projects such

as the extension of the Surf Parade shared path to Veronica Street in Inverloch, construction of the Phillip Island Football Netball Club rooms, new floodlighting for two soccer pitches at Newhaven Recreation Reserve and redevelopment of change rooms at Dalyston Recreation Reserve.

The biggest project of the year was the refurbishment of the Wonthaggi Union Community Arts Centre. The \$2.2 million project included replacing all 424 of the 35 year-old seats in the auditorium, lighting and rigging upgrade, installation of a lift to boost accessibility and new solar panel system, amongst many other improvements to the Centre.

The 2017/18 Annual Report is now available to view online at www.basscoast.vic.gov.au/annualreport and in person at Council's Customer Service Centres.

Paul Buckley PSM
Chief Executive Officer