



GEORGE TOWN COUNCIL

Strategic Plan

2007 - 2012

Adopted 22 May 2007



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Foreword

George Town Council is pleased to present its Strategic Plan for 2007-2012. This plan sets our course for the next five years although Council has considered the next twenty years in formulating this plan.

The Strategic Plan for the George Town Council for 2007-2012 provides the strategic direction for the Council and the community. It identifies key issues affecting the municipality and provides strategies to reinforce the vision and values of the Council and community.

Council's overarching vision for our municipality is to achieve a quality of life that builds pride in our heritage and secures a future for our community. This vision is supported by our core values of leadership, community participation, equity and transparency, quality, responsiveness, sustainable development, simplicity and accountability.

The Strategic Plan was developed using the outcomes of five community workshops involving 78 community members to provide their vision of where they wanted the George Town Council area to be in 2012 and beyond.

Every person is important and has a right to be heard and their opinion valued however our community expects that the individual rights of a person are counter balanced by their responsibilities as citizens of our area.

The process for this Strategic Plan is detailed in Appendix 1. During this process Council and the community have considered such questions as "where are we now?" and "where would we like to be in 5-10 years time?" for the various areas of operation. We thought about our strengths and weaknesses and our current or potential opportunities and threats.

George Town is widely recognised as a dynamic and progressive municipality willing to support innovative ideas and providing opportunities for our community to grow and improve. This Plan builds on our past achievements and clearly articulates our direction for the next five years.

Council looks forward to working in partnership with the community, government and other organisations to implement the strategies in this Plan to achieve our vision for the future.

Cr Douglas Burt
MAYOR



Our Vision

To achieve a quality of life that builds pride in our heritage and secures a future for our community.

Our Mission

To develop and maintain a proud prosperous and vibrant area by planning our future and promoting our strengths.

Our Vision will be achieved by making consistent decisions that recognise the role of each unique locality of our municipality:

- **GEORGE TOWN** The principal service centre of the municipality which provides the ideal lifestyle for people of all ages.
- **LOW HEAD** The historic maritime area with outstanding beaches and residential amenity in harmony with its history.
- **BELL BAY** The shipping entrance to Tasmania with the most important concentration of heavy industry in the north.
- **HILLWOOD** A high quality rural residential area including horticulture and an important tourism centre along the Tamar River.
- **COASTAL VILLAGES** The seaside villages of Beechford, Bell Buoy Beach, Bellingham, Lulworth, Tam O'Shanter and Weymouth preserve unique environments which provide complimentary lifestyles for residents and visitors.
- **PIPERS RIVER
PIPERS BROOK** An ideal agricultural district, building on its wine industry as an integral part of the Tasmanian economy.
- **LEFROY** Once a thriving gold mining area with a sense of history.
- **RURAL AREA** The primary production base of the municipality providing for farming and forestry as a critical element of our economy.



Key Areas

Key areas are the major functions by which Council will achieve its Vision and Mission. They are:

KEY AREA 1	Governance
KEY AREA 2	Corporate
KEY AREA 3	Planning & Development
KEY AREA 4	Environment & Heritage
KEY AREA 5	Infrastructure
KEY AREA 6	Community

Values

Council's core values are:

- 1. LEADERSHIP:** *Council is committed to providing the highest standard of civic leadership and performance for the betterment of our community.*
- 2. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:** *Council encourages community participation and involvement in the life of our municipality and values the contribution made by each person.*
- 3. EQUITY & TRANSPARENCY:** *Equity, consistency and transparency is paramount in Council decisions and processes to ensure fairness to all sectors of our community.*
- 4. QUALITY:** *Council seeks to continuously improve productivity, services, facilities and processes and to create a reputation for excellence within our financial capabilities to enhance the quality of life of our community in an economically sustainable manner.*
- 5. RESPONSIVENESS:** *Council seek to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of our community.*
- 6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** *Council is committed to the effective management of its infrastructure assets to facilitate appropriate development that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable to ensure the wellbeing of our community.*
- 7. SIMPLICITY:** *Council will ensure that as far as possible our rules, laws and operations are simple, clear and precise.*
- 8. ACCOUNTABILITY:** *Council will not make promises that cannot be kept and will continue to operate prudently within our means to ensure our ongoing financial sustainability.*



Key Area 1 - Governance

OBJECTIVE: *To provide civic leadership and ensure good governance.*

Council's Governance Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Proactive leadership in local affairs in accordance with Council's values.
- Foster community involvement and encourage a better informed community.
- Ensure that Council provides the highest quality advice and customer service to our community and other customers.
- Develop a high level of trust, confidence and co-operation between Council and the community.
- Foster a Board of Directors approach to running Council's operations.
- Collect information to allow strategic planning, effective decision making and benchmarking of Council's performance.
- Create strong strategic networks and alliances regionally and on a State-wide basis.

STRATEGIES:

1.1 Provide effective leadership in our community through open and consultative Council decisions.

- 1.1.1 Promote the professional development of elected members.
- 1.1.2 Develop and maintain strong working relationships with other Councils in the region and with the State Government.
- 1.1.3 Develop a partnership agreement with the State Government in relation to issues of importance to our community.
- 1.1.4 Maintain risk, emergency management and community recovery systems.
- 1.1.5 Develop, implement and review Council policies systematically to ensure the highest quality customer service and governance.

1.2 Consult with the community and encourage participation in Council decisions and elections.

- 1.2.1 Encourage consultation with the community on significant Council projects and policy development.
- 1.2.2 Conduct a community survey every two years to assess Council's performance and canvass other community issues.

1.3 Provide the highest quality customer service to Council, the community and other customers.

- 1.3.1 Maintain the accessibility of Councillors and the Council to the community and provide quality customer service in accordance with the Customer Service Charter.
- 1.3.2 Ensure that all Council services and operations are effective and efficient and are planned and undertaken to provide the most benefit to our community now and in the future.
- 1.3.3 Provide and maintain adequate staff and resource levels to meet changing needs.

1.4 Provide high quality corporate information, systems and processes.

- 1.4.1 Maintain and develop strategic asset management to ensure Council's future sustainability and mitigate risk.
- 1.4.2 Maintain best practice systems and processes to ensure information is accurate and activities are undertaken in a timely manner.



Key Area 2 - Corporate

OBJECTIVE: To manage our resources in a sustainable, effective and progressive style.

Council's Corporate Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Attain long term financial sustainability for George Town Council.
- Organisational excellence through quality, best practice and the market testing of Council's services.
- Maintain adequate cash reserves of not less than the amount required to meet all provisions and reserves.
- Identify real costs of services and provide financial transparency.
- Effective budget control of programs and projects.
- Encourage community understanding of costs of services and their input and support.

STRATEGIES:

2.1 Continue to work towards organisational excellence.

- 2.1.1 Create an environment for staff to achieve their maximum potential and contribute to the organisation in an environment encouraging continuous improvement including providing resources and training to staff.
- 2.1.2 Develop and manage new technologies and other innovations to maximise efficiency.
- 2.1.3 Provide a safe workplace free from discrimination and recruit staff on merit.
- 2.1.4 Maintain and improve our risk management strategies and culture including business continuity, OH&S and environmental risks to manage risks at acceptable levels.

2.2 Ensure that Council continues to be financially sustainable and in the best position to meet future needs and demands.

- 2.2.1 Continue to review community assets to maximise their use and effective life and develop asset management plans for all classes of assets.
- 2.2.2 Maintain debt levels at or below one years general rates levy and only borrow strategically for long term assets where additional net income will be generated or intergenerational equity is reasonable.
- 2.2.3 Continue to share resources with other organisations to maximise efficiency and customer service.
- 2.2.4 Maintain transparent pricing and continue to work towards user pays for services.
- 2.2.5 Achieve an operating surplus, a balanced budget and fully fund depreciation.
- 2.2.6 Maintain appropriate rating levels to ensure financial viability.
- 2.2.7 Maintain prudent financial management and a long term financial strategy.



Key Area 3 – Planning & Development

OBJECTIVE: To plan and promote our municipal area and community internally and externally to pursue opportunities to expand and diversify our economy and improve our lifestyle.

Council's Planning and Development Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Promote the George Town Council area as a great place to live, work and visit.
- Establish links and networks to encourage economic development in the area.
- Provide a high standard of infrastructure at affordable levels for visitors, industry and the local community.
- Encourage local business to develop and provide opportunities for young people to stay in our community.
- Encourage tourism visitation and expenditure and promote local events.
- Recognise and promote opportunities for industrial and manufacturing growth in the Bell Bay industrial area.
- Provide efficient legislative and regulatory systems that are as user friendly as possible to encourage appropriate development in the area.

STRATEGIES:

3.1 Market George Town Council area and promote it as a great place to live, work and visit.

- 3.1.1 Develop a promotion and marketing strategy to encourage new residents.
- 3.1.2 Ensure the area presents a tidy, cared for appearance and encourage local people to take pride in and responsibility for the environment.
- 3.1.3 Promote our natural and built assets
- 3.1.4 Participate in promotion and development initiatives for Bell Bay.
- 3.1.5 Encourage and foster continuing growth of viticulture and ancillary developments.

3.2 Implement strategies for economic development and growth in the area.

- 3.2.1 Ensure sustainable, high quality infrastructure is provided for local residents, visitors to the area and to facilitate economic growth.
- 3.2.2 Ensure planning for the area promotes business, lifestyle and visitor opportunities.
- 3.2.3 Facilitate new sustainable business development that fits with the business strengths in the area.
- 3.2.4 Ensure entrances to the George Town Council area are identified, promoted and maintained in a visually attractive manner.
- 3.2.5 Develop programs to support the ongoing viability of local business and industry and build on opportunities provided by the proposed Pulp Mill and other major developments.

3.3 Ensure land use planning enhances our environment, economy and lifestyle.

- 3.3.1 Maintain adequate buffer zones between industrial and residential areas.
- 3.3.2 Continue to implement the Central Area Strategy and the York Cove Development Plan to enhance the central area of George Town.
- 3.3.3 Continue to develop a recreation trail between Bell Bay and Low Head and investigate strategies for a recreation trail at Hillwood.
- 3.3.4 Encourage sustainable development and natural resource management.
- 3.3.5 Ensure that future planning takes into consideration the financial costs and sustainability of expanding or establishing new infrastructure.



Key Area 4 - Environment & Heritage

OBJECTIVE: To ensure the provision of a high quality, safe, clean and healthy environment.

Council's Environment and Heritage Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Ensure the physical environment is planned to achieve a high quality, safe and healthy lifestyle.
- Maintain the cultural heritage of the George Town Council area and improve access to and interpretation of that heritage.
- Encourage environmental activities including maintaining air, land, noise and water pollution levels within approved levels.
- Provide best practice environmental management including health, building, planning and garbage services.
- Maintain important landscape values and encourage public involvement in natural resource management strategies.
- Encourage and manage the sustainable development of the areas' human, natural, social and physical resources including the maintenance of ecological processes and diversity through support of Natural Resource Management and its principles.

STRATEGIES:

4.1 Improve access and interpretation of cultural heritage in George Town Council area.

- 4.1.1 In consultation with stakeholders continue development of the Low Head Precinct.
- 4.1.2 Continue to improve interpretive signage in the area highlighting the historic and environmental significance of our heritage.
- 4.1.3 Maintain the Watch House as a heritage building and optimise its use.

4.2 Provide best practice Regulatory Services including environmental health and building services.

- 4.2.1 Effectively monitor and enforce public environmental health standards and building standards.
- 4.2.2 Maintain systems to monitor environmental health issues and educate the community on legislative requirements for permits including those for health matters including food licenses, building permits and street stall permits.
- 4.2.3 Maintain effective nuisance, fire abatement and animal control.

4.3 Provide best practice garbage services and operations in a sustainable manner.

- 4.3.1 Provide appropriate garbage collection services to our communities.
- 4.3.2 Implement and maintain a transfer station at George Town and Pipers River tips at appropriate environmental health standards.
- 4.3.3 Encourage recycling programs, reduction of litter and streaming waste at source.
- 4.3.4 Participate in regional waste programs.
- 4.3.5 Rehabilitate old refuse disposal areas.



Key Area 5 - Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE: To provide high quality infrastructure that is sustainable.

Council's Infrastructure Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Provide appropriate, safe, high quality infrastructure that meets the current and future needs of our community within the constraints of Council's financial sustainability and agreed service levels.
- Review Council infrastructure assets to ensure that they meet current and future needs and are able to be maintained and improved within budget.
- Provide adequate funds annually to ensure that assets are appropriately maintained and renewed or seek community approval to either reduce the level of service for a particular asset or increase rates or charges to pay for the higher level of service.

STRATEGIES:

5.1 Review and develop asset management strategies and maintenance programs to ensure best value and fit for purpose assets are provided.

- 5.1.1 Maintain and develop a best practice asset management strategy for all Council assets in conjunction with the long term financial plan.
- 5.1.2 Develop and maintain asset management plans for each class of assets.
- 5.1.3 Ensure engineering and financial asset data is combined and is driving the depreciation of assets and the ability of Council to reasonably afford them.
- 5.1.4 Ensure optimum levels of maintenance and renewal of existing assets to maintain assets at their current levels and reduce the future funding gap for asset renewals.

5.2 Provide the highest quality built assets and facilities possible, maintained at the optimum time subject to financial constraints.

- 5.2.1 Develop and implement an asset management strategy for Council buildings and facilities including the swimming pool, to provide sustainable management practices, maximising the use of buildings and facilities and ensuring appropriate fee structures are in place.
- 5.2.2 Maintain and upgrade buildings and facilities to the highest possible standard within financial constraints and at agreed levels of service.
- 5.2.3 Maintain strategies to mitigate risk associated with Council buildings and facilities including physical and financial risk.
- 5.2.4 Provide parks and recreation facilities that are financially sustainable including rationalisation where appropriate and maximising the use of facilities.

5.3 Provide the highest quality road infrastructure possible maintained at the optimum time subject to financial constraints.

- 5.3.1 Maintain and renew road infrastructure at the appropriate time.
- 5.3.2 Maintain and renew footpaths at the appropriate time.
- 5.3.3 Maintain and renew drainage structures and bridge infrastructure at the appropriate time.
- 5.3.4 Upgrade strategic infrastructure where appropriate, subject to financial constraints.
- 5.3.5 Expand infrastructure and provide new assets only after consideration of the need for the asset, the life cycle cost of the asset and the financial sustainability of providing the asset.

5.4 Provide the highest quality water and sewerage infrastructure and services.

- 5.4.1 Maintain, renew and improve water supply infrastructure at Hillwood and George Town at the appropriate time.
- 5.4.2 Maintain, renew and improve the Waste Water Treatment Plant to provide industrial and domestic waste treatment at the highest level within environmental standards.
- 5.4.3 Maintain, renew and improve the sewerage system in George Town at the appropriate time, subject to financial constraints, to ensure the highest level of environmental standards.



Key Area 6 - Community

OBJECTIVE: To ensure that our residents are provided with the opportunity to maximise their independence and quality of life.

Council's Community Strategy is based on achieving the following:-

- Programs to enhance community participation and quality of life for all sections of the community.
- Empowering groups and individuals within the community to create an environment for participation and community ownership to provide for its lifestyle, health and wellbeing.
- Encouraging participation in community cultural, recreational and sporting activities.
- Programs to provide for the retention of necessary community services including health and welfare services by other agencies.
- Encourage and support the retention of community health facilities and services by other agencies.

STRATEGIES:

6.1 Encourage and support participation in community groups to enhance the lifestyle of people.

- 6.1.1 Provide grants to community groups and individuals subject to budget allocation.
- 6.1.2 Encourage and assist community groups to take ownership of their activities and become self sufficient.
- 6.1.3 Provide and encourage programs to enhance the wellbeing of people for all sectors of the community including youth, older persons, people with disabilities and those disadvantaged.
- 6.1.4 Encourage and promote sport and recreation participation opportunities for the community.
- 6.1.5 Increase utilisation of sports areas, halls and recreation facilities provided by Council.
- 6.1.6 Develop and implement a Community Development Plan and Positive Ageing Plan in partnership with the State Government.

6.2 Encourage, organise and promote local events and festivals.

- 6.2.1 Assist and motivate community groups to organise and participate in festivals and events.
- 6.2.2 Assist community groups to hold State-wide events in George Town where practical.

6.3 Actively support the retention and improvement in community health facilities and services in the area.

- 6.3.1 Support the Community Health and Welfare Committee in retaining and improving health and welfare services provided by Government.
- 6.3.2 Encourage the development of a multi-service community health and welfare facility at the George Town Hospital.
- 6.3.3 Encourage service providers to operate community welfare services and divest Council of the responsibility for these services.

6.4 Provide health and welfare services, within funding constraints, to aged, disabled and disadvantaged people in the community where these are not provided by another agency.

- 6.4.1 Maintain the provision of community cars and other HACC services while funding is available.
- 6.4.2 Maintain the youth services, family support services and social welfare services while funding is available.
- 6.4.3 Seek funding to improve the current levels of service and provide additional services to the community, provided Council is not required to fund any part of these services.
- 6.4.4 Seek to improve public transport services between George Town and Launceston.

6.5 Facilitate and support an integrated community safety strategy with other key stakeholders.

- 6.5.1 Provide best practice infrastructure to ensure community safety including street lights.
- 6.5.2 Encourage and support community safety groups both locally and regionally.



The Process

