



LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

A Leader in Community & Government

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

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MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2001**

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MEETING HELD AT: Town Hall, Launceston

MEETING COMMENCEMENT: 7.35 pm

Martin Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

Present:

Alderman	J B Lees (Mayor)
	A L Waddle (Deputy Mayor)
	A C Peck
	G W Beams
	R L McKendrick
	H G Brookes
	I J N Routley
	M E Smart
	R W Shipp
	J Walters
	R J Sands
	J Dickenson

In Attendance:

- Mr R G Campbell (General Manager)**
- Mr R Fisher (Manager Business & Operations)**
- Mr R Sweetnam (Manager Total Workforce)**
- Mr I Abernethy (Manager Strategic Development)**
- Mr G Brayford (Manager Infrastructure Assets)**
- Mr M Tidey (Manager Corporate Services)**
- Mr M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)**

Public Attendance: See attached list.

Public Apologies: See attached list.

Apologies: Alderman Nil.

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CHAIRMAN:

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MONDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2001

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1 Welcome and Introduction

AUTHOR: Martin Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

Welcome and opening address by Mayor.

Introduction of:

- Aldermen of Council
- General Manager
- Divisional Managers

Outline of program by Mayor.

The Mayor opened the Meeting at 7.35 pm and welcomed all those present.

The Mayor introduced the Aldermen, the General Manager and the Divisional Managers.

The Mayor then outlined the programme.

2 Confirmation of Minutes

AUTHOR: M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

DECISION STATEMENT:

To confirm the Minutes of the 2000 Annual General Meeting. The Minutes have been circulated to Aldermen and copies are available for the public at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Launceston City Council held on Monday 27th November, 2000 be confirmed as a true and correct record.

RESOLUTION:

Moved Alderman A L Waddle, seconded Alderman G W Beams.

That the Recommendation be adopted, with the minutes attendance record amended to show Mr T Seymour as the Co-ordinator of Clean Up Launceston, rather than representing Clean Up Australia.

CARRIED

3 Annual Report 2000/2001

AUTHOR: Martin Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

DECISION STATEMENT:

To receive the Annual Report of Council for 2000/2001.

- A presentation will be made to highlight the achievements made by Council reported under the headings of the eight future directions outlined in Council's Strategic Plan:
 - A. Governance, Recreation, Culture & Lifestyle and Education and Research - Alderman Lees, Mayor.
 - B. Livable City, Young People and Rivers - Alderman Waddle, Deputy Mayor.
 - C. Business and Transport - Alderman McKendrick.
- Submissions from the public were invited on the 27th October and 8th November, 2001.
- One submission was received from Mr Terence Seymour of Kings Meadows.

Comment:

Mr Seymour is thanked for taking the time to make a submission on our Annual Report. However, a response is appropriate in respect of some of Mr Seymour's criticisms.

Recycling and Waste Management.

The Minutes of the AGM 27/11/2000 indicate that Mr Seymour asked two questions on notice relating to:

- When will Council participate in a recycling strategy?
- When will Council consider setting up a consultative committee on waste management?

The answers in writing (page 7) provided a positive response indicating that at the appropriate time and in consultation with both the NTMO and the State Government (Partnership Agreement) Council will participate in both a waste management strategy and any regional consultative committee.

However, there was no move, during the period covered by the Annual Report, by the NTMO to form any regional consultative committee on the issues. There is currently a proposal before the NTMO to form a regional advisory group to consider the management of solid waste and hazardous waste material. Launceston will contribute to this proposed group.

3 Annual Report 2000/2001...(Cont'd)

Recycling Depot at 119 Hobart Road.

Mr Seymour indicates that he has had no official response from the Mayor on this issue.

However, the matter of establishing a recycling depot on Council land at 119 Hobart Road has been discussed with Mr Seymour by Council's Strategic Development Manager.

Some of the issues to be considered in respect of such a proposal include:

- The impact a depot may have on a commercial enterprise currently operating a recycling business in the area.
- The investigation of whether existing private sites may be better placed to provide the service.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Annual Report of the Launceston City Council for the financial year 2000/2001 be received.

The presentation of Council's Annual Report was made by Alderman J Lees, Mayor, Alderman A Waddle, Deputy Mayor and Alderman R McKendrick.

Mrs Patricia Ratcliffe commented that the Annual Report should have made mention of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery's part in publishing the John West Essays.

DECISION: 19/11/01

RESOLUTION:

Moved Silvia Smith MLC, seconded Debbie Lee.

That the Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

4 Performance Overview and Strategic Directions Report by the General Manager.

AUTHOR: M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

DECISION STATEMENT:

To receive a report from the General Manager on Council's performance situation, strategic plan and the organisation's structures.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

The General Manager gave a report in which he outlined the Key Performance Indicators of Council, compared with the State Local Government Industry Key Performance indicators.

- Revenue was \$68.96 million - 68% of this was rates revenue, with fees and charges generating 15.4%.
 - Revenue per capita was \$1073/head.
 - Grant dependence – 8.9%.
- Expenditure was \$65.24 million – 71% was spent on infrastructure maintenance (water, roads, waste management and recreation)
- Debt – Council's debt was averaging \$8 million, \$2 million was borrowed during 2001. Council's debt servicing rate was 4% compared with the industry average of 5.8%.
- Safety – The number of lost time injuries is decreasing.
- Resident Satisfaction – The overall satisfaction rating for Council was 77%.

The General Manager outlined two key changes to the Launceston City Council's Strategic plan –

- **Business and Employment – aim to nurture and support existing businesses within Launceston and help to ensure their continued existence and development.**

4 Performance Overview and Strategic Directions Report by the General Manager....(Cont'd)

- **Governance – aim to develop connections which increase Launceston’s sense of community – improve the city’s social capital.**

The General Manager also commented on the Local Government Board’s General Review of Council to be conducted between December 2001 and April 2002. He indicated that the community will be invited to participate through submissions and meetings.

The General manager thanked the Aldermen, his management team and the staff for their support and contribution to Council’s overall performance for the year.

The Mayor thanked the General Manager for his report.

DECISION: 19/11/01

RESOLUTION:

Moved Nevin Donaldson, seconded Elaine Bushby.

That the Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

5 Questions on Notice

AUTHOR: M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

RECOMMENDATION

That the questions received and the answers provided be noted.

Questions on Notice were invited from the public on 27th October and 9th November, 2001. The following questions were received from Mr Terence Seymour of Kings Meadows.

Q1 What has been the Launceston City Council's financial contribution to the advertising campaign for the new water pricing policy and has it proved to be an effective campaign in terms of reduced water consumption and educating the Launceston residents about the new water pricing policy?

Answer:

The promotional campaign for the new water pricing policy had a budget of \$73,250. The State Government agreed to contribute \$30,000 and other Councils \$13,250.

It is too early to determine the success of the campaign.

Q2 There is likely to be resentment from tourists visiting Launceston for having to pay to visit the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, have there been studies or projections done on possible loss of tourists and if so have these studies been able to determine if tourists will visit a free Launceston attraction over the paid one?

Answer:

The introduction of an admission charge for tourists visiting the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery applies only to adults, children up to the age of 18 have free access. As the Museum at Inveresk is a new facility without an established visitor profile. It is difficult to make any projections on the likely impact of the introduction of visitor charges to visitor numbers.

5 Questions on Notice...(Cont'd)

Q3 With the imminent opening of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Galleries at Inveresk what progress has there been on developing an interactive web site for the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery?

Answer:

As part of the Youth Access Program funded by the Ian Potter Foundation the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery is currently in the process of developing a new web site. It is anticipated that this site will be in operation by 23 November 2001.

Q4 The timing of the eLaunceston Councilch@t is not convenient for many people, would it be possible to schedule Lunch Time Council Ch@ts?

Answer:

This service has almost run its trial period. At the conclusion of the trial the service will be reviewed in consultation with Telstra. All aspects of the service, including the timing schedule will be evaluated then.

Q5 At present the Launceston City Council web site has no archives of council agendas or council minutes, it has been left up to a private citizen to create an archive, when will improvements be made to the Council web site that will enable a full archive of Council Agendas and Minutes, as well as greater interaction with the Launceston Community?

Answer:

Council's web site is currently undergoing review. We are aware that the site can be improved in regard to the provision of a history/archive of Council's agendas and minutes. It is anticipated that by the end of January 2002, the site will comply in this regard.

5 Questions on Notice...(Cont'd)

Q6 Now that the Mowbray Shopping Centre Redevelopment has been completed when will real consultation occur with Kings Meadows Residents on facilities and improvements in their area, to date there has been consultation only with the business community?

Answer:

Real consultation will occur when we have something to show those with an interest in Kings Meadows. We are still trying to overcome basic technical problems involved in traffic management issues. For example to move Telstra pits to allow better traffic flow has been costed in the region of \$160,000. This is more than the cost of the road works at this point. Until issues like this are resolved there will be no reasonable set of options to present to the public.

Q7 Re the Mowbray Shopping Centre Redevelopment could there be an evaluation of the effectiveness of the street furniture, with special attention given to their ability to be maintained free of litter and weeds, especially the conical tree guards?

Answer:

There could be an evaluation of the matters listed. However, it does not feature on the current works programme. With the back log of works and the desire to keep operational costs under control it is highly unlikely that such a study will be carried out.

Q8 What Council funds have been committed or expended on dredging the Tamar River in the vicinity of the Old Seaport Complex, for the benefit of that development?

Answer:

Questions 8 and 9 have been responded to jointly (see below).

5 Questions on Notice...(Cont'd)

Q9 Has the developer of the Old Seaport project contributed towards dredging costs, if so how much?

Answer:

Dredging in the Tamar and North Esk Rivers is undertaken by the Upper Tamar River Improvement Authority (UTRIA) – a Joint Authority of which Launceston City Council is only one member. Whilst the questions are more appropriate to be asked of that Authority, the following information can be provided.

In relation to the area of the river adjoining the Old Seaport development UTRIA has made two decisions:

1. To dredge a maximum of 7,000m³ or to RL -2.3m in-front of the new public board walk to be built adjoining the Old Seaport development. (29th August 2001).
2. To offer to dredge additional material for the proposed marina for the developer at the marginal cost of dredging operations. Old Seaport will fully fund this operation. (19th October 2001).

UTRIA's charter gives it the responsibility to consider dredging for flood protection, navigation, recreation and amenity. RL -2.3m represents approximately 300mm below what UTRIA considers to be low tide. UTRIA made this decision on the basis that it was its responsibility to dredge to this level, even if there had been no marina proposed, so as to provide amenity to the proposed boardwalk. At the stage of the initial decision the development of the proposed marina had not been confirmed.

All up UTRIA expect to dredge a total of about 12,000m³ from this area. This quantity will be roughly split between UTRIA's responsibility and the requirements of the Old Seaport.

DECISION: 19/12/01

RESOLUTION:

Moved Alderman A C Peck, seconded Alderman R J Sands.

That the Recommendation be adopted.

CARRIED

6 Motions on Notice

AUTHOR: M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

Motions on Notice were invited from the public on 27th October and 8th November, 2001.

No motions were received.

7 Questions Not on Notice

AUTHOR: M Reynolds (Corporate Secretary)

DECISION STATEMENT:

To consider questions from the floor.

RULES:

- Speakers to state their name and address.
- Questions to be put through the Chair.
- Responses may be made by the Mayor, Aldermen or Officers present. If a verbal reply cannot be given, the question will be taken on notice and a written reply provided as soon as possible.

Question 1 - Dick James – Welman Street – Water Pricing

- (1) It has been five months since the decision to introduce the two part water pricing system and bills have not been sent?
- (2) Does the Launceston City Council plan to address the inequities in the two part water pricing system?
- (3) Why did Launceston City Council even enter into the two part water pricing policy?

Mr Michael Tidey gave answers to each of the questions –

- (1) The first bills under the new system are about to be sent out.
- (2) Launceston City Council commissioned a review into the two part water pricing system, many people have differing views as to the equity or otherwise of the two part system.
- (3) There has been a long process of water reform in Australia, the Confederation of Australian Governments has looked at ways to improve the system of water supply. Launceston City Council believes that the two part system is the best way to provide water.

The Mayor further added that water is a precious resource and it is important to get a fair, user pays system which discourages the wastage of water.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 2 – Dr E Ratcliffe – George Street – Planning Legislation as it Affects Launceston.

Dr Ratcliffe indicated that in recent years, the character of the admired historic areas within the City of Launceston has been increasingly damaged by visual intrusions of low quality and aggressive appearance, including buildings and signery.

Objections by citizens have been met by the explanation that the Local Government and other Acts no longer give the Launceston City Council power to exercise discretion in such matters, where this would serve the local interest.

A return and enhancement of these powers should be sought as a matter of urgency.

It is essential that a reasonable local discretion should be regained in view of the low standard of urban design permitted in the Capital and elsewhere in Tasmania, and the importance to a realistic future for Launceston of the maintenance and enhancement of its unique character.

The use of the terms “historic areas” implies a need for the power to designate such areas and to exercise some control over the quality of the development within them.

Dr Ratcliffe requested Council to consider the following notice of motion:

That the Launceston City Council seek from the State Parliament a renewal of powers to control planning and development within the municipality and particularly within the historic areas, by seeking amendment to the relevant acts, and, if necessary, the passage of a new City of Launceston Act.

The Mayor thanked Dr Ratcliffe for his motion and indicated that at the Council meeting earlier in the day the Council had moved a motion to get more control over planning issues. Most Aldermen were less than satisfied with the present situation and any support that could be provided by the community would be appreciated. The Mayor suggested Council would take the issue on board as a process was underway to re-evaluate and improve the system.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 3 – Max Plummer – Ronnerby Street – Newnham – Water Pricing

- (1) Mr Plummer made reference to a petition signed by 11,000 ratepayers, which was submitted to State parliament on the water pricing issue. He suggested Council had made mistake in implementing the new system with a 3 component water pricing rather than 2 and inquired as to what Council was going to do about the system?

Alderman Brookes – Chairman of the Two Part Water Pricing Review Committee – answered the question –

- The current charge is set and has been gazetted and can't be changed for this year.
- The Committee is looking for dialogue with the State Government with regards the use of Federal or State Grants for providing a subsidy to ratepayers.
- The change has shifted the major payment area from commercial to domestic properties.
- When the report is finished it will be tabled at a Council Meeting and be available to the public.
- The mayor indicated that the introduction of the new system was not to raise extra revenue, in that the revenue collected will be similar to previous years.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 4 – Joseph Zahariev – Sheridan Court –

Mr Zahariev made a statement – No question.

Question 5 – Jamie Pinner – Elphin Road – Newstead - Youth

(1) What is the Launceston City Council doing to create opportunities for youth so they don't have to leave the state?

The Mayor took the question indicating that Launceston City Council is working with Telstra with the provision of the E-lab and e-Launceston to provide improved amenities for young people. The Council is also working with TAFE Tasmania and using partnerships to provide opportunities to improve the skills of young people.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 6 – Stacey Johnstone – Hill Street – West Launceston - Youth

- (1) What is the Launceston City Council doing to fill the gap re service delivery for young people?

The Mayor answered that the Launceston City Council is using the Youth Advisory Group and the Northern Youth Consultative Committee to work with service providers to ensure that young people have the amenities they require.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 7 – Terrence Seymour – Innocent Street – Kings Meadows – Cataract Gorge -

- (1) Will the Launceston City Council state publicly that there will be no admission fees to the new developed gorge?
- (2) Will the Launceston City Council prevent commercial intrusion into the Gorge?

The Mayor answered that the Council plans for entry to the Gorge to remain as it is currently.

There is already some commercial activities in the Gorge, however Council will maintain the cultural and recreational amenity of the Gorge by not approving inappropriate development in the Gorge.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 8 - Alice Delphine – Forster Street – Invermay – Water Meters -

- (1) Will the Launceston City Council install water meters in properties where there are currently none?

Mr Michael Tidey – Manager Corporate Services – answered the question.

There are some ongoing problems overcoming the difficulties in providing water meters in some situations. Where there are a number of units serviced by one meter, currently the bill will be sent to the Body Corporate and it is their responsibility to ensure payment.

Mr Geoff Brayford – Manager Infrastructure Assets – added to the answer.

There are less than 200 properties out of 25,000 where a water meter is still to be installed.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 9 – Anne Collins – Regent Street – Waverley – Strategic Planning

- (1) Can the Launceston City Council do anything to encourage the State Government to assist Harris Scarfe remain a viable business to retain jobs in Launceston?

The Mayor answered that Council does not believe it can help. Council lacks the political clout and financial resources to help in a meaningful way.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 10 – Terence Seymour – Innocent Street – Kings Meadows

- (1) Could Total Workforce be asked to ensure that weeds, litter and cigarette butts are removed from the centre of the metal cones more frequently as part of the new Mowbray redevelopment?
- (2) Am I correct to assume that the Launceston City Council imposed the \$10 entry fee to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery on adults from outside the municipality without a clear understanding of the effect this would have on tourist numbers?

The first question was taken on notice for the Mayor to clarify with Total Workforce and Infrastructure Assets (the asset specifier) what cleaning arrangements are presently in place.

Regarding question 2, the Mayor indicated that the decision was well considered and well discussed and research carried out prior to the introduction of the entry fee to the QVMAG was thorough.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 11 – Patricia Ratcliffe – George Street – Trees

(1) What is the Launceston City Council doing to preserve significant trees in the municipality?

(2) Are there any trees over which the Council has no control?

The Mayor answered that the overall policy is to preserve trees that can be retained. The Launceston City Council employs a professional arborist to provide advice on trees within the municipality.

The answer to the second question was that the Council does not have control over trees on private property outside of a scenic protection zone.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 12 – Mark Youngman – Wentworth Street – Youth Mentoring

- (1) Is there a policy with regard to providing a mentoring programme for young people, similar to that provided by some mainland states?

The Mayor referred to Council's support for the Youth Parliament and Student Leaders Group as examples of programmes designed to encourage self development for youth.

Alderman Dickenson spoke on the Student Leadership Group and the involvement of youth in this programme.

The Mayor also referred to the Council's Strategic Plan which has 3 objectives relating to youth:

- (1) Consult with young people on matters affecting them.
- (2) Promote and help create employment opportunities.
- (3) Facilitate opportunities which help promote self reliance.

The Mayor indicated that while Council may not have a specific mentoring programme for youth, it does have clear objectives to assist youth.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 13 – Jim Dickenson – Trevallyn Road – Heritage/Planning

- (1) Is it possible for the Launceston City Council to develop ways or incentives to lower the staff turnover in the Launceston City Council planning area, so as to improve continuity in the planning approach?

The Mayor responded that the Launceston City Council is no different to a number of other Councils in the difficulty experienced in attracting and retaining planners. There is a shortage of planners Australia wide. Talks have been held in conjunction with the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the University of Tasmania on the possibility of providing a course to train planners in Tasmania. But the short answer is that planners move on as they are in demand.

7 Questions Not on Notice...(Cont'd)

Question 14 – Lorraine Frankling – Walden Street – Smog Pollution

- (1) What is Launceston City Council doing to help alleviate the smog problem in Launceston which is getting worse each winter?

Mr Ian Abernethy – Manager Strategic Development – answered that the Federal Government has provided \$2.1 million dollars worth of funding to alleviate the wood smoke problem. \$1.5 million is to be used in a wood heater buy back scheme which is a 2 year programme. As part of the overall project to reduce wood smoke pollution there is also an education programme and an enforcement programme.

8 MEETING CLOSURE

The Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.10 pm.