

## **Local Government Board Review: Sorell and Tasman Council Amalgamation**

We make this submission as we are strongly in favour of the amalgamation of the Tasman and Sorell councils. We believe that the benefits of such an amalgamation would far outweigh any issues that may arise.

We are ratepayers of the Tasman Council area and have been for 15 years. We have built a house at Sloping Main and have been permanent residents of the Tasman Council area for 9 years.

There are a range of reasons why we support amalgamation and we list them below:

### **Economic benefits**

- Improved resource sharing for developmental projects
- Combined expertise of staff will lead to greater rigour in planning, and management
- Ultimately there should be efficiencies in being able to largely have a single approach/system for payroll, website, administration etc

However, in some instances there may be a need to maintain two separate entities for the safety and efficiency of each council area. For example, having road work crews from Sorell and Tasman Councils, having emergency evacuation centres and management teams in each council area.

### **Social benefits**

- Both council areas have unique assets that they bring to the table. For example, the Tasman area has many features that are tourist drawcards (the Port Arthur Historic site, Three Capes Track, salmon industry, national parks). The Sorell Council area has greater range of businesses and is a services hub.

- The sense of a combined community will mean that there will be more interaction between the two areas as promotion of events etc in both council areas will expose people to more opportunities
- There will be a bigger rate base for the combined council to use to improve facilities and support community events. This will also lead to greater social interaction between residents of the two geographical areas.

As there is the natural tendency towards many people not wanting to change the status quo, we have listed a range of ideas that would allay the fears some have about council amalgamations.

- Representative fairness for community members from both council areas needs to be addressed. Having dedicated seats on the new council that are reserved for Tasman representatives would be essential.
- State that the aim is for rate rises to be kept to a minimum or make a guarantee they will not rise in the next two years.
- Have the election of the new council representatives occur quickly.
- Ensure that there is some positive action from the new entity within the first 6 months.
- During the transition phase to have a part-time presence of Tasman staff available to deal with paying rates and managing hall bookings.
- If there are surplus staff, have an emphasis on natural attrition and redundancies rather than forced terminations.

We sincerely hope that the amalgamation between Tasman and Sorell Councils occurs because we see that it is in the best interests of our very small rate payer base to join with a larger council area that has a very real and natural connection to the Tasman community.

**Carol & Bert Dorgelo**