

From the General Manager - John Brown

It was fantastic news that the Federal Government has provided \$4 million for a new Early Learning Centre at St Marys, to be co-located with St Marys District School. The Thrive staff at the current centre do an incredible job of looking after the children in a building which is 'make do' at best. We know there is a large waiting list which will not get shorter, and more places are desperately needed. In fact, the consultants who prepared the St Marys Childcare Needs Analysis identified that 29 additional places will be needed by 2029, only a few years away. There is also a shortage of qualified carers, and a brand new centre will be wonderful for current carers while making it easier to attract the carers required for increased numbers. This announcement also highlights the importance of doing the homework to support the argument for a new centre. The St Marys Needs Analysis report completed by Ninety Mile Consulting in October last year provided a comprehensive and compelling case. It analysed future demand, considered site options, recommended co-location at the school, and identified the likely construction cost. The information and insights provided by local community members, organisations, service providers and stakeholders played a key role in the depth of the report. Council then shared this information with Federal and State Members of Parliament, clearly outlining the need and the solution. It was a compelling case that largely sold itself. I am sure some key members of the Fingal Valley community have also been in the ear of local Members of Parliament, which helps. If you would like to know more about the analysis, head to Council's website – it is worth reading. We now need to put pressure on the State Government to progress this project, as it will take a couple of years before the centre is built and opens its doors.

Australia Day Awards Recognise Local Contributions



Photo: .Australian Young Citizen of the Year- Claire Ward

Council hosted the Australia Day Awards Celebration on Monday 26 January at Portland Hall, St Helens, bringing the community together to recognise the outstanding contributions of local residents. This year's Australia Day Ambassador was Bianca Welsh, a proud Korean-Australian hospitality leader and mental health advocate. She is co-owner of Stillwater Restaurant and Seven Rooms, founder of mental health consultancy From Experience, a Mental Health First Aid Instructor and host of the 2025 podcast From Experience: The Grief Collection. Mayor Tucker said "Council was delighted to welcome Bianca Welsh to our Australia Day celebrations. Bianca's leadership in business, her commitment to mental health advocacy and her willingness to share her lived experience make her an inspiring role model and a valued guest for our community." Mayor Tucker and Bianca Welsh presented the Australia Day Citizen Awards to the following recipients:



Photo: .Australian Day Citizen of the Year- Deidre "Dee" Arnold

Australian Young Citizen of the Year – Claire Ward

Claire is a quiet achiever who contributes wholeheartedly to her school and community. She volunteers with the St Helens Netball Association, supports fundraisers at the Scamander Sports Complex and consistently demonstrates leadership, reliability and community spirit.

Australia Day Citizen of the Year – Deidre "Dee" Arnold

Dee is an extraordinary volunteer whose warmth, compassion and dedication support families and young children in a community facing significant disadvantage. Despite the loss of her granddaughter Gracie to brain cancer, Dee continues to give selflessly, embodying resilience, generosity and care for others.

Council also recognised local Volunteer Fire Brigades for their invaluable service, thanking volunteers for their dedication, courage and willingness to put community needs first. **CONTINUED >>**

Additional awards presented included: **Mayor's Special Award – Stuart & Judy Muir**, recognised for their contribution to arts, tourism and community support, including assistance during the Stieglitz fires.

Break O'Day Municipal Excellence Awards – Janet Drummond, for her long-standing leadership of the St Marys District School Association Op Shop; and **Christine & Guy Pascoe**, for their extensive volunteer work supporting community health, wellbeing and environmental

initiatives.

Mayor Tucker shared his admiration for the award recipients, saying: "Our Australia Day celebrations are a chance to recognise the people who go above and beyond to serve and uplift our community. Across Break O'Day, there are individuals whose passion, generosity and leadership make a real difference in people's lives and these awards honour their outstanding contributions." Congratulations to all the winners and nominees for their outstanding contributions.

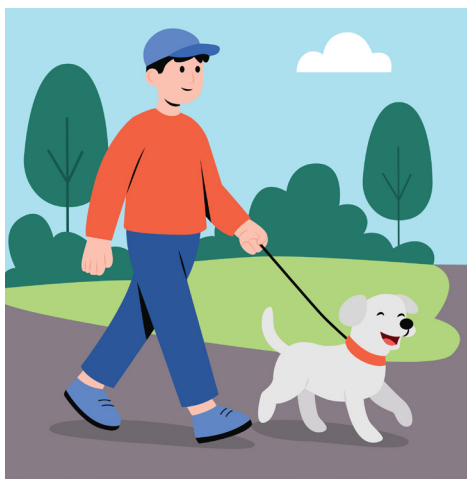
Rainy Day Fun at St Helens History Room

What happens when the weather turns here on the East Coast and there is a town full of visitors wanting to explore the area – families can visit the St Helens History Room where the admission charges won't break the budget. This family was visiting the museum at the St Helens History & Visitor Information Centre when the weather wasn't the best for beaches, however, on asking about the old pedal organ and whether it could be played, the son was able to provide a bracket of three numbers whilst remembering to pump the boards, as of old!



Photo: Family from Bendigo, Victoria

On-Lead Areas: Responsible Dog Ownership



Council reminds dog owners that dogs must be kept on lead along the entire St Helens foreshore walking track, including O'Connors Beach. These locations are designated On Lead areas. On lead means you are holding a lead attached to your dog — not carrying it in your hand or pocket. Keeping dogs on lead helps ensure the foreshore is safe and welcoming for

everyone, including walkers, families, wildlife and other dogs. The Georges Bay foreshore is a popular shared space, which makes it a high-risk area for incidents, along with many local beaches. In all built-up areas, dogs must be on a lead no longer than two metres, in line with the Dog Control Act requirements. Owners are also reminded to pick up after their dog. Council thanks the many responsible dog owners who do the right thing.

Note: Infringements may be issued where requirements are not met. Responsible ownership helps ensure dogs and their owners can continue enjoying the paths around Georges Bay. For information on on-lead and off-lead areas, including a dog exercise areas map, visit www.bodc.tas.gov.au/property/dogs/

IN BRIEF

THINKING AHEAD ABOUT WATER USE IN SCAMANDER

TasWater has advised that ongoing dry conditions and reduced river flows are placing pressure on Scamander's water supply. While no restrictions are currently in place, the system is now being closely monitored and restrictions may be required if conditions continue.

This is a timely opportunity for the community to start thinking about everyday water use. Simple actions — such as shorter showers, watering gardens efficiently, fixing leaks, and running full loads of washing — can make a meaningful difference when water supplies are under strain.

TasWater will continue to monitor the situation and will keep the community informed if restrictions become necessary. Any decisions will be communicated clearly and in advance. By being mindful of water use now, we can help protect local supplies and reduce the need for stricter measures later.

SHARE YOUR BEACH STORY – HELP PROTECT WILDLIFE

Lots of us have been enjoying summer on our beaches this year. Our coastline, enjoyed in many ways, is also home to wildlife that depends on it. But we don't know much about everyone's beach-going. Have you thought about yours? To help balance beach use, NRM North invites you to complete a short survey about how you enjoy north east Tasmania's beaches. You can answer as many questions as you like. The survey is part of NRM North's Defending the Hood project, which helps save the hooded plover from extinction. Later questions focus on shorebirds and dogs on beaches. The project is supported by BirdLife Australia, Parks and Wildlife Service Tasmania, and the Australian Government's Saving Native Species Program. Your answers will help tell the story of how we share our beaches and the challenges, particularly for the valuable shorebirds that live on them. Scan the QR to complete the survey.



Do you care about protecting and enhancing Break O'Day's natural environment?

We're looking for passionate community members with experience in environmental matters to join Council's NRM Committee—and we currently have several vacancies available!

Our NRM Committee brings together voices and knowledge from across the community to help guide local environmental initiatives. If you'd like to be part of shaping the future of our natural spaces, this could be a great

opportunity.

Please register your interest by completing an Expression of Interest Form, copies of which will also be available on Council's website.

Expressions of Interest close on 15 March 2026.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Linda Sznaytko or Polly Buchhorn at our St Helens office on 03 6376 7900.

Garage Sale Trail: Households Made Money and Kept Items out of Landfill

For many households across Break O'Day, the Garage Sale Trail was a chance to clear out cupboards, make some extra cash, and pass on items that still had plenty of life left.

Over the two-weekend event, locals gave more than 1,115 pre-loved items a second life, meaning 35% of items were kept out of landfill. On average, sellers made \$835 each.

The event is a simple and fun way for the community to reduce waste, save money and connect with neighbours. Mayor Mick Tucker said "With the cost of living rising, programs like Garage Sale Trail really matter. They help

residents make some extra money, save on everyday items and keep good quality goods in use instead of sending them to landfill."

The local results highlight the benefits of reuse — helping households save money, strengthen community connections and keep items out of landfill.

Garage Sale Trail runs nationally each November in partnership with local councils. Locals can register for the 2026 event (7–8 and 14–15 November) at www.garagesaletrail.com.au.

WHAT'S ON

The Lighthouse - Every Wednesday

Serving the Break O'Day community, The Lighthouse is a safe place where you can enjoy a free cuppa, hot soup and roll, warm beanies and scarves or a friendly chat. Open every Wednesday, 11am-1pm at the Anglican Hall - 56 Cecilia Street, St Helens.

Break O'Day Chamber of Commerce - Monthly Calendar

The Break O'Day Chamber of Commerce has created a monthly calendar of local events and activities to help showcase what's happening across our region. The Chamber is encouraging local businesses, community groups, and organisations to print and display the calendar to help spread the word. If you'd like to receive future editions, please email the Chamber at sthelenscoc@gmail.com

Bay of Fires Youth Art Prize 2026 - Closes 8 May 2026

Entries are open to children and young people aged 4–18 years. The theme is "No Place Like Home", inviting you to reflect on your connection to place and caring for Country. Entries close 5:00pm, Friday 8 May 2026. FREE ENTRY with over \$1,000 in prizes to be won! For more information, email buildingblocks@fvnh.org.au or contact Tanya on 0400 002 116.

The Craft of an Artist - Saturday 4-5 April 2026

"The Craft of an Artist" is being held at The Panorama Hotel in the Robert Burns room on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 April 2026 between 10am and 4pm each day. Entry to the public for viewing is a donation of a gold coin. The artists that are entering are residents of Tasmania only. There is no prize but all entries are for sale. Cash or EFTPOS is available. Collection is required by the purchaser. Any further information can be given by Keri Sidney on 0419130047 or email to info@bodartists.com

SCAMANDER COASTAL HAZARDS & FLOOD RISK ADAPTION PATHWAYS PROJECT

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and website to have your say! You can comment on the draft Scamander Coastal Hazards and Pathways Adaptation Plan, prepared by SGS Economics and Planning. This report will be released to the public in the coming weeks.

LOCAL MARKETS

St Helens - Every Saturday

Location alternates between the Portland Hall and the Visitor Information Centre Carpark.

St Marys - First Saturday of the month

Held at the St Marys Hall.



Council Works Reports

- Road maintenance grading of Ansons Bay road due for completion early February
- The Scamander Avenue footpath upgrade has been completed
- Footpath maintenance around St Helens
- Kerb and footpath vegetation removal to commence mid-month
- Stormwater capital work in Fingal will be completed by the end of February
- Tree maintenance across municipality underway
- Roadside slashing continues across the month
- Shoulder edging of Ansons Bay Road underway, Mathinna Plains Road to follow

FREE GREEN WASTE DISPOSAL

**EVERY SUNDAY FROM
NOVEMBER TO FEBRUARY**

Waste Transfer Stations:

ST HELENS
SCAMANDER
ST MARYS
ANSONS BAY

WEED MANAGEMENT

- **MTB Trails** - Foxglove
- **Stieglitz** – California thistle
- **St Helens** - Spanish heath
- **St Marys** - Gorse, Spanish heath, broadleaf

DOG STATISTICS

JANUARY 2026

Urban Patrols = 19
Beach Patrols = 17
Infringements = 0
Unregistered Dog = 0
Impounded Dogs = 3

Weed of the Month -Spanish heath

Spanish heath is one of Break O'Day's most serious invasive weeds. It is an early season flowering shrub carrying millions of tiny seeds by late winter. People often unwittingly spread the seeds in spring.

Landowners are obliged to contain and control their Spanish heath and everyone can do their bit to reduce its spread. It requires well timed treatment to control, and the next few months are the best. Start by planning your control strategy and act this autumn.

Spanish heath can be hand dug (roots and cut stems can re-sprout) or treated with herbicides (spraying or using the cut-stump method). Find and treat isolated plants first and follow-up next

season. Slashing dense patches can reduce seeding this season but must be before flowering and is not sufficient for control. Do not mow or slash after flowering and be very 'hygienic' working on and near Spanish heath. Handle any material with flowers very carefully.

Get more detailed information via: www.nre.tas.gov.au/invasive-species/weeds



Aquatic Facility Survey: Don't let decisions be made without you!

Council is being asked to make a decision about a multi-million-dollar swimming pool, but so far only around 330 people out of 7,000+ residents have responded to the community survey — about 4% of Break O'Day, far too few to understand what the community really wants. While the pool may be built in one location, the costs are shared across the entire municipality. Construction is only the beginning. Every public pool in Tasmania carries ongoing maintenance, upgrade and long-term costs that continue year after year. These costs affect Council budgets and household expenses across the community. Both ratepayers and non-ratepayers will feel the impact, as changes to council spending flow through the local economy and influence the cost of living. The key question raised in the feasibility report — and still unanswered by most residents — is simple: are you prepared to pay more to build and maintain a pool? This survey is not just about whether

a pool is a good idea, but what you are personally willing to support, including potential rate impacts and long-term financial implications. If you don't take part, decisions may reflect the views of a small group, not the wider Break O'Day community — including the Fingal Valley and surrounding areas. Even if the pool isn't in your town, the decision affects you. Whether you support or oppose the project, your voice matters. This is your chance to influence the future of Break O'Day. Scan the QR code or visit www.bodc.tas.gov.au/council/current-projects-and-activities/ to complete the survey. Help is available at Council offices, neighbourhood houses, libraries and Online Access Centres. **Survey closes 27 February 2026.**



**“In a world where you can be anything,
be kind.”**
- Clare Pooley