

# Priority Projects

## State Budget Submission 2024



Version: 1 – Date: February 2024

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# Purpose built Early Learning Centre for St Marys

## Project Overview

Break O'Day Council would like the parties contesting the next Tasmanian State Election to provide a commitment that should they form Government they will construct a new, St Marys Early Learning Centre on vacant land which is available at the St Marys District High School grounds.

This is an innovative and unique opportunity that can bring significant benefits to the St Marys and surrounding communities through provision of a dedicated Early Learning Hub where Kindergarten and long day care can co-exist with school based programs. This is important in ensuring we can facilitate new families moving to, and working in our community.

This new Centre will address the highly deficient facilities of the current Early Learning Centre and the increasing demand on this service whilst offering a space for children of the community with benefits of shared resources, increased participation and maximised utilisation.

## Background

Currently the St Marys Early Learning Centre is housed in the old Matron's house located adjacent to the St Marys Community Health Centre. This is a small building that the centre has tried to retro-fit to create a suitable childcare space. While the staff at the centre should be commended on their efforts to make the most of what little they have, this space, simply put is not-fit-for-purpose now, and certainly cannot facilitate the growth our population is currently experiencing.

Below is a series of photos taken at the centre that shows how impractical and difficult the current site is to manage.

The image below shows the combined kitchen/office space. Due to the nature of this area, the staff are currently unable to fulfil the legal obligation to provide a separate and private space to discuss delicate matters with parents. To get around this, the staff have a waiver in place and often 'walk and talk' with parents around the property as the manager is unable to leave the premise to meet in a more suitable location.





The below images show the sleep/storage area. Of a night time staff use the cots to pack toys and other learning materials in to. These are then unpacked during the day to allow use of the cots for infants sleeping. You will notice that this space is right next to an exit. It also houses cupboards where play equipment is stored. This makes it difficult for staff to access these materials while children are napping. It is almost unfathomable that a place a child sleeps is also used for storage. In urban areas this would be considered totally unacceptable by parents and employees alike. However, regional and isolated areas continue to make do as best they can. This does not make it acceptable.



These images show the facility's bathroom/change area/laundry. This space is impractically small and is forced to facilitate a range of uses including; more storage as there is simply no where else to house cleaning equipment etc, a changing area, a bathroom for the children, a bathroom for employees and laundry space. As shown by all areas within the facility, little privacy is offered to all parties.



The implementation of Tasmania's Child and Youth Safety Framework places a heightened focus on creating safe spaces within Childcare Centres. This will involve not only stringent safety protocols but also the design and layout of the Centre. Childcare facilities will be required to prioritise safe environments that reduce risks, with features like secure fencing, child-proofed areas, and well-trained staff to monitor and ensure child safety. The framework will prompt Childcare Centres to allocate resources to create spaces that are physically and emotionally secure, fostering an atmosphere where children can learn and play without fear, thereby ensuring their overall well-being and development. Given the requirement to comply with this Framework and the problems which we have identified with the current Centre, this reinforces through the actions of the State Government, the need for a new Centre to be built.

The St Marys Early Learning Centre is currently at full capacity and offers 10 places for children. It has a staff of three on at all times, as dictated by legislation, and a total staffing of nine people to provide care to these children throughout the week. Due to the small number of spaces staff are repeatedly having to turn down new and existing families who would like to increase their days of care.

Childcare is a significant barrier to employment in the Break O’Day area and particularly the Fingal Valley. For a Local Government area like ours who must grow our working age population to survive economically – this is a serious concern. Council hears stories of people being unable to take up employment opportunities in the area as they are unable to find care for their children. Also, because the Centre is unable to offer existing clients more days of childcare, there are families wanting to work more but are unable to. This is creating a compounding problem for our area whose population is ageing but also increasing.

## Discussion

### **SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION**

As shown by the 2021 Census results, the Break O’Day region has had nearly an 11% increase in population. An unprecedented amount of these new residents are in the prime working age group including parents with young children. As such, the requirement of spaces within child education and care facilities has increased exponentially.

Our area is one of the most isolated and lowest SEIFA index (911) areas in Tasmania and is experiencing a low median income per household, \$836 (ABS 2021). Ensuring that parents in the area seeking, or taking up employment have the opportunity to access childcare is fundamental in their ability to remain in the area. This in turn is crucial to ensuring economic growth as well as population retention. As recognised by the Federal Government, a barrier to parents accessing child care is its cost to families. In St Marys, access to child care is not inhibited by cost but by access to adequate facilities and space.

The exponential increase of demand on early learning services is demonstrated by Thrive Group’s 2018 request to increase St Marys Early Learning Service space from 10 to 15 children per day. Three years after this request, the desired space has increased to 35 children per day. This demonstrates the incapability of the current facilities to service the increase of working age groups in the area including the provision of after and before school care.

### **STATE GOVERNMENT ALIGNMENT – EARLY LEARNING FOR THREE YEAR OLDS**

The Tasmanian Government has committed to a new Early Learning for Three Year Old Project which will offer up to 15 hours a week of quality, age appropriate, play based learning. The program will be place based and flexible to community needs.

Five communities across Tasmania have been selected to work together to establish the trial. Townships in our area including St Helens, St Marys, Beaumaris, Scamander and Fingal are in this pilot cohort.

Given the current supply constraints in St Marys and the wider Fingal Valley area, it is imperative that a new Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) facility be developed so local families can have an opportunity to participate in this great initiative.

### **RELOCATION TO ST MARYS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL WILL FOSTER IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

In 2018, a collaboration of community groups identified the unique and innovative opportunity to relocate the St Marys Early Learning Service to the District High School. This relocation was supported by the Launching into Learning program, St Marys District School Association Inc, Building Blocks, Hub4Health and Thrive Group.

This collaboration resulted in the development of a concept plan which is shown in this submission. This proposed facility design and relocation would fill not only the existing need, but ensure the area is prepared for the future in terms of Early Learning and Education.

The proposed centre utilises its convenient location on school grounds to act as a hub for multiple levels of education and services. An integrated service model offers benefits of economic efficiency providing a collaborative space where kindergarten and long and short (before, during and after school) day care can co-exist with school based programs such as Launching into Learning, Building Blocks Mobile Early Childhood and Parenting Support Programs.

***On the following page you will find the Architects Concept drawing and floor plan.***

This design and relocation will allow easier access for parents who have school aged children as they would only have to drop-off and collect from one point. It would also allow the Early Learning Centre to implement before school and after school care as they would easily be able to take and collect children from the school. Currently the distance is too great for staff to be able to walk to the school and collect children making after and before school care impossible to implement.

The State Government has a unique and important opportunity to contribute to the health, education and future of the children of the Fingal Valley and East Coast. Already isolated within Tasmania, the provision of such a facility and the beneficial services it brings, ensure that the children within our area are not left behind.

A relocation would allow cross educational outcomes with the school. This has been known to boost a child's confidence when transitioning from care to school as well as foster stronger educational outcomes. This is evidenced in the State Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy when talking about a child's first 1000 days of life – *"There is a wealth of evidence that shows interventions and support for families and their children during this critical time (first 1000 days) can have long term positive impacts on a child's health and wellbeing."*

#### **REPURPOSING THE EXISTING BUILDING**

As mentioned above, the current Centre is located in the old Matron's house in the grounds of the St Marys Community Health Centre.

Currently the Centre is experiencing a demand in services and runs its community nurse program from the surgery itself. By relocating the Centre the building could again be used by the Tasmanian Health Service and other health services to provide or increase health services in our area. Access to health services is an ongoing issue within the Break O'Day area that is only being compounded, like the childcare centre services, by an increase in our population. This is a highly topical situation that the State Government should be acutely aware of given what has been happening in relation to the provision of General Practice services at St Marys over the last nine months.

Alternatively the building could be repurposed to accommodate for Doctors working at the St Marys Community Health Centre. Many regional areas are experiencing challenges attracting doctors to their areas, providing accommodation for GPs could be an incentive.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW 1: EXTERIOR: MAIN ENTRY 1



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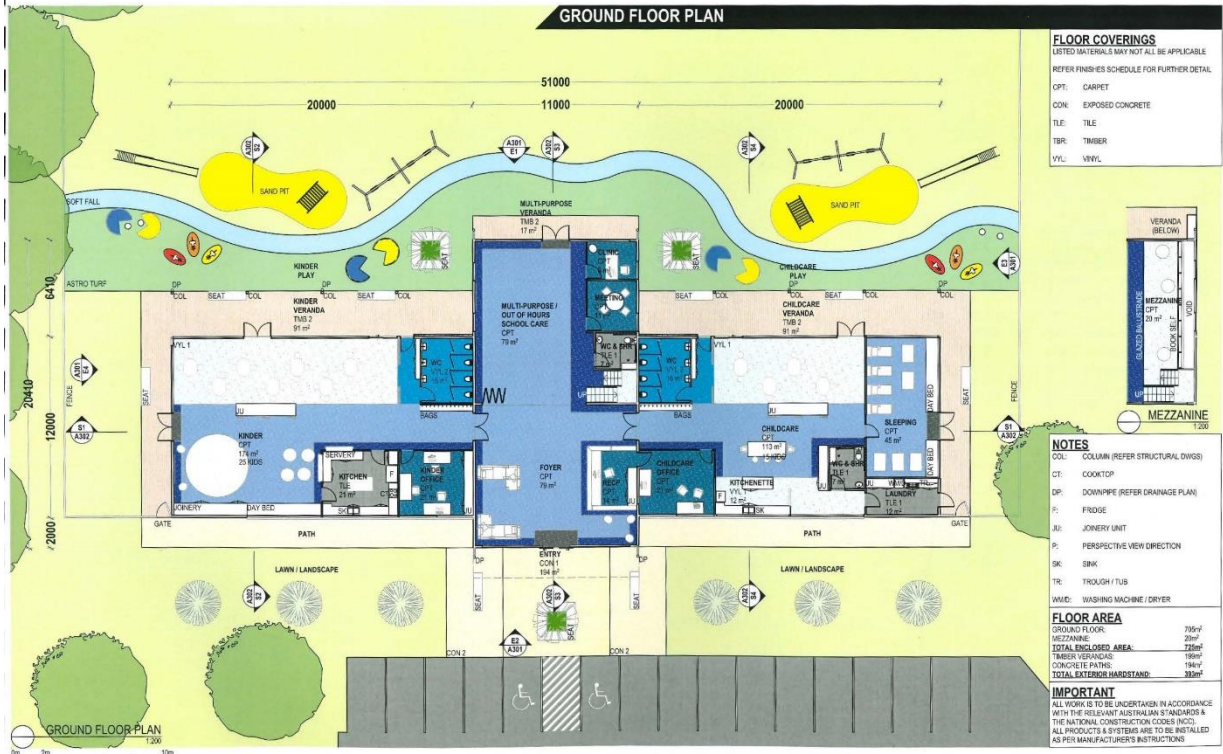
**EARLY LEARNING, CHILD AND CARE CENTRE**  
 CLIENT: ST MARYS DISTRICT SCHOOL  
 PROJECT ADDRESS: 12 COLLEGE STREET, LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

SCALE: 1:200 (A3)

DATE: 23 May 17  
 ISSUE: SKETCH DESIGN  
 DWG: ADM1  
 ALL DIMENSIONS ARE SUBJECT TO ST. MARYS APPROVALS

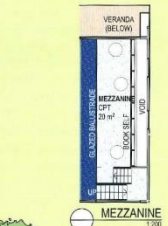


GROUND FLOOR PLAN



**FLOOR COVERINGS**  
 LISTED MATERIALS MAY NOT ALL BE APPLICABLE  
 REFER FINISHES SCHEDULE FOR FURTHER DETAIL

- CPT: CARPET
- CON: EXPOSED CONCRETE
- TLE: TILE
- TBR: TIMBER
- VVL: VINYL



- NOTES**
- COL: COLUMN (REFER STRUCTURAL DWGS)
  - CO: COOKTOP
  - DP: DOWNPIPE (REFER DRAINAGE PLAN)
  - F: FRIDGE
  - JU: JOINERY UNIT
  - P: PERSPECTIVE VIEW DIRECTION
  - SK: SINK
  - TR: TROUGH / TUB
  - WMD: WASHING MACHINE / DRYER

**FLOOR AREA**

GROUND FLOOR	735m <sup>2</sup>
MEZZANINE	23m <sup>2</sup>
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED AREA</b>	<b>758m<sup>2</sup></b>
TIMBER VERANDAS	196m <sup>2</sup>
CONCRETE PATHS	184m <sup>2</sup>
<b>TOTAL EXTERIOR HARDSTAND</b>	<b>380m<sup>2</sup></b>

**IMPORTANT**  
 ALL WORK IS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS & THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION CODES (NCC). ALL PRODUCTS & SYSTEMS ARE TO BE INSTALLED AS PER MANUFACTURER'S INSTRUCTIONS

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## Summation

The current St Marys Early Learning Centre is not-fit-for-purpose, is at capacity and is unable to facilitate the needs of the community. A purpose built facility is required and Break O'Day Council will require the State Government to commit to investigate, design and construct a new facility.

Break O'Day Council believes the most suitable location for the new facility would be on the St Marys District High School land – land owned and managed by the State Government.

The development and relocation of a new facility would have many benefits for our community including;

- Increased access to childcare and early learning services
- Increased learning opportunities
- Facilitation of more services including after and before school care
- Facilitation of employment opportunities for new and existing residents requiring child care to enter the work force
- Increased number of children that can access childcare in the area

## Request

**The Break O'Day Council is seeking a commitment from the both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election they will construct a new Early Learning Centre on vacant land which is available at the St Marys District High School grounds.**

# Relocation of St Helens District High School

## Project Overview

Break O'Day Council understands that periodically Schools will go through a very major upgrade to extend their life and ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The Council believes that when this is due to happen at St Helens, consideration should also be given to the option of relocating the St Helens District High School to the St Helens Sports Complex.

Relocating the school will be a significant operation requiring funding investment and substantial planning. The Council would like both parties contesting the next Tasmanian State Election to provide a commitment to exploring this option at the appropriate time should they form Government.

## Background

The St Helens District High School (SHDHS) offers education from Kindergarten through to grade 12 and is located adjacent to the St Helens CBD on the corner of Groom and Circassion Streets. It is one of two public schools located in the Break O'Day area, the second being St Marys District School.

The SHDHS enrolments fluctuate between 500 and 550 enrolments a year. As a public school, SHDHS is unable to turn away a student this means even when at capacity, the school must continue to take enrolments and then seek the resourcing to support them.

The 2021 Census revealed that the Break O'Day area has experienced almost an 11% increase in our population. Some of this growth has come from young families moving to the area; In 2016 there were 1621 families in our area, in 2021 there were 1876. Anecdotally we are seeing the effect of this on the ground, for example; the local childcare centre is at capacity. We are also experiencing a housing shortage which is having a negative effect on those wishing to move to the area for work.

A lack of childcare, the housing crisis and large class sizes at the school are all major obstacles for families who want to move to our area to work and live.





## Discussion

The Break O'Day region is experiencing an increased demand on childcare services which in a couple of years will be transitioned to the local schools.

The SHDHS is struggling to cater for its existing students. The school's catchment area is from Scamander to Pyengana and north almost as far as Weldborough whilst also taking in the Binalong Bay and the Bay of Fires areas.

Due to the amount of students at the school, the school been forced to 'roster' recess and lunch times so that all students can have access to the school ovals and play areas. This is because there is currently not enough room to allow all the students to use these areas at the same time. This includes conducting special activities at lunch and recess times to keep students occupied. The kindergarten has been forced to move to a building on the other side of Groom Street, far from an ideal situation.

The lack of play area is partially a result of the construction of the Trade Training Centre which provides educational facilities for grades 11 and 12. The new, state-of-the-art facility was built in 2009 and now occupies part of the land utilised by SHDHS previously. The use of this facility for Department of Education purposes is a point of frustration within the community as it restricts the capacity of the Centre to cater to training and professional development needs in the wider community.

### **WHY MOVE THE SCHOOL TO THE ST HELENS SPORTS COMPLEX?**

The St Helens Sports Complex and Recreation Ground is a large area located only a few kms from the existing school. The facility includes a large sport Stadium with change room and toilet facilities as well as indoor courts for tennis, netball and basketball, a kiosk and viewing area of the outdoor netball courts. Also located at the Sports Ground is an athletics ground, soccer field, cycling velodrome, cricket pitch and football grounds.

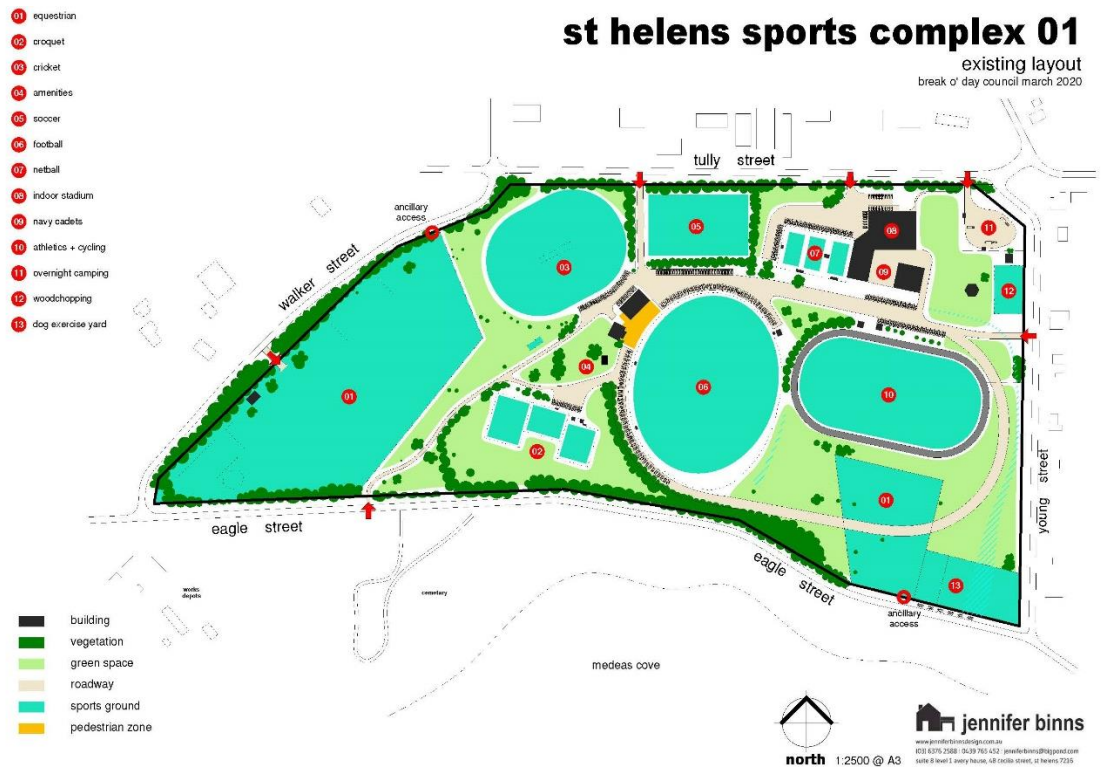
Surrounding this area is Council owned land, zoned Recreational that could potentially be re-purposed to facilitate the move of the school.

Another growing issue at the current site of the SHDHS is traffic congestion and access to parking. School buses pull up outside the school in Groom Street which limits access to parking for parents doing school pick-ups and drop-offs. Circassion Street also has limited parking, which further complicates traffic congestion at school drop-off and pick-up times. Parking for staff on the site is basically non-existent and results in staff parking in the streets which further impacts on traffic flows and available parking.

The Sports Complex on the other hand has ample off street parking and room to distinguish a bus collection zone and parent zone. This would not only benefit students and parents at the school but the rest of the community using these streets during peak times.

Council regularly hears concerns from the community around the safety of the students at the start and the end of the school day because young students are forced to cross the street. Again this is further complicated by the narrowness of the streets with all the parked cars greatly reducing visibility for any oncoming traffic for both drivers and students crossing the road. It must also be noted that there is no designated pedestrian crossing in the street where the school buses operate which means teaching staff must act as "traffic monitors" assisting young students to cross the roads at drop-off and pick-up. The relocation of the Kindergarten to a building on the other side of Groom Street has exacerbated the safety risk of students crossing a congested street. Apart from the movement of buses, this section of the street also sees large trucks pulling out of the exit of the local Hardware store which is directly opposite the school bus area.





**Benefits to relocation of SHDHS to the St Helens Sports Ground include:**

**SPACE TO EXPAND IN THE FUTURE:**

The St Helens Sports Ground occupies 21.38 hectares with the potential to expand its current footprint.

**STUDENT USE OF COUNCIL SPORTS FACILITIES:**

As community use of the Stadium generally occurs after work hours, students would be able to use the current stadium, court and athletics areas during class time without conflicts.

**GREAT AREA FOR PARKING FOR STAFF/PARENTS/VISITORS:**

The current available, designated parking space at the Sports Ground is approx. 139. This could easily be expanded and redesigned with designated spaces for staff parking, bus zones and a safe student drop-off and pick up zone.

**GREATER HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR STUDENTS**

Providing access to state-of-the-art sporting facilities and more recreation areas for students will foster better wellbeing for students as well as a passion for sports.

**SHARED RESOURCES:**

It is proposed that the sporting facilities will remain the property of Council. This means that there is opportunity for Council and the Department of Education to share the costs of maintenance. For example; mowing and grounds maintenance of the sporting ovals.

**Relocating the school would also have significant advantages to the community that include:**

**BETTER TRAFFIC FLOW AROUND THE CBD**

As the school is located adjacent to the CBD of St Helens, relocation would mean reducing the traffic congestion experienced through peak times. Buses and parents would no longer have to pull out of Circassion and Groom Street on to Cecilia Street – the main street in St Helens, and would instead be able to use Tully Street, a more direct route through the township.

**INCREASED USE OF PUBLIC FACILITIES**

Currently the Stadium is underutilised, particularly during school hours. Allowing the students of SHDHS to access these state-of-the-art facilities would mean it would increase its community value. Additionally by allowing the students access to the other sports grounds would ensure there was not a duplication of facilities in the area.

**A POOL COULD POSSIBLY BE BUILT AND JOINTLY FINANCED BY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND COUNCIL.**

In keeping with the idea of shared resources, a pool could also be built with shared financial management between the Department of Education and Council.

A community pool is something that our community has been requesting for years and Council has made provision in our 2023-2024 Budget to undertake a feasibility study to explore options and opportunities. The Council and a Community Working Group are currently working through developing a consultant’s brief to undertake this study.

One of the main hurdles we face in constructing a pool is managing the facility and ongoing maintenance costs. By partnering with the DoE, the addition of a pool to the Break O’Day community would ensure no duplication of community facilities and ensure funding sustainability.

**CONSIDERATION OF EXPANDING THE CURRENT RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

Like most of Tasmania, Break O’Day has an ageing population. Currently our median age is 56, more than 10 years older than the State’s average. According to Dr Lisa Denny, a Workforce Demographer and Adjunct Associate Professor with the Institute for Social Change, University of Tasmania, by 2034 over 47% of our population will be older than 65 years. Our research, through our new resident survey, has found almost 50% of people currently moving to our area are over the age of 55. This means that we must consider housing for this cohort.

Medea Park is the current aged care facility in St Helens and provides accommodation for 35 High Care residents and 20 Low Care residents with two respite care rooms.

With data showing that our population is ageing paired with evidence from our New Resident Survey, we can conclude that the demand for this facility is only going to increase in coming years.

Medea Park is located at the rear of SHDHS and if the school was relocated, could provide opportunity for expansion of this facility. Alternatively, St Helens child care centre is also located in this area and could utilise part of the school site.

**Request:**

**The Break O’Day Council is seeking a commitment from both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election they would investigate the relocation of the St Helens District High School to the St Helens Sports Complex as part of considering options for any future major upgrading of the current site.**

# Bay of Fires Master Plan

## Project Overview

Break O’Day Council would like the parties contesting the next Tasmanian State Election to recognise the growing attraction, and importance of the Bay of Fires as a tourism destination by ensuring its environmental and economic sustainability. This can be done by providing additional funding for the development of a Bay of Fires Master Plan. This Plan aims to both future proof the larapuna/Bay of Fires area as well as educate visitors on how to enjoy the area with minimal impact.

## Background

The Bay of Fires has always been a popular tourist destination however in the last decade this iconic Tasmanian location has been gaining more and more international recognition. This has started prompting people to put a visit to the area on their bucket list.

Internationally renowned travel guide, Lonely Planet dubbed the Bay of Fires the world’s ‘hottest’ travel destination in 2009 and since then visitation to our area has only grown. Tourism Tasmania regularly uses this naturally beautiful area in their own tourism campaigns. Most recently the Bay of Fires was featured and promoted through the *Come down for Air* campaign.

The Bay of Fires is a naturally beautiful place, famous for pristine white sands, clear turquoise waters and the orange lichen covered rocks. It is this natural beauty and seeming remoteness that attracts visitors and must be protected, not just for tourism dollars, but because of its natural beauty as well as its cultural and social significance.

Work on a Bay of Fires Master Plan has been substantially commenced with the establishment of a Bay of Fires Master Plan Steering Committee comprising of community members and representatives from stakeholder groups; Parks and Wildlife Service, local Aboriginal Elder, local Environmental group, and East Coast Tasmania Tourism. The group have established a Communication Plan, a scope for a consultant and following a public tender process have now selected a preferred consultant to undertake this work.

***Image Below: The Bay of Fires – courtesy of East Coast Tasmania Tourism.***



## Discussion

In the last few years, tourists 'loving' our natural attractions to 'death' has become a reality. Iconic locations like neighbouring coastal destination Freycinet, have been under pressure from increasing tourism. So much so, that it prompted the State Government to develop the Freycinet Master Plan in order to future proof and protect the area.

The reason the Freycinet Master Plan was developed was because the area was experiencing significant issues relating to an increase of visitation and the demand placed on the environment as well as public infrastructure. Some of the issues the Freycinet Master Plan addresses are the same or similar to those being experienced in the Bay of Fires now, for example: Traffic and parking congestion, crowding, seasonality, brand impact, rubbish, weeds and pathogens, ecological values, bushfire etc.

Rather than waiting till after the damage has been done and responding to issues that arise from increased visitation, Break O'Day Council feels it is imperative we consider these impacts and how to plan for them now. Development of a Master Plan will allow all stakeholders including, community and Government agencies to understand and plan for the challenges the Bay of Fires faces. A Masterplan will also provide a framework for how all stakeholders can work together to ensure the protection of this culturally significant area.

The East Coast of Tasmania is the second most dependent region on Tourism in the nation – we want visitors to come to our area to support our business community but we need to make sure when they visit they are having a positive experience and minimal impact on the environment. Right now, we are fast approaching a tipping point that could irreparably damage ecological values of the area and permanently damage the brand of the area and therefor Tasmania's brand as a desirable place to visit.

The East Coast of Tasmania experienced 350,000 visitors between September 2022 and September 2023. 204,000 of these tourists visited the Bay of Fires making it the 7<sup>th</sup> most visited destination in the State. Despite this high level of visitation and importance to the tourism market, the Bay of Fires, and northern east coast remains significantly underfunded. For example, Flinders Island recently received more than \$1million to upgrade RV access, which certainly sits outside the 'positive impact' approach, and the island experiences approximately 7,500 visitors annually (Figures from Flinders Island Business Centre), less than 4% of the visitation experienced by the Bay of Fires.

While the T30 Strategy focuses on positive impact tourism and enjoying the Tasmanian environment sustainably, the Government has continued to push for an increase in visitation without first understanding the impacts this will have on the environment, particularly in regional areas. In recent years, and certainly in the T30 Strategy, the importance of getting visitors out to regional areas is a focus. This is supported by the construction of the two new Spirit of Tasmania ships which will see an increased capacity of 40%.

The Bay of Fires is already a hugely popular area for self-drive tourists and caravaners. This is largely due to the 330 odd free camping spots in the Bay of Fires. This summer in December and January, the area was jam packed with campers and with no designated camping sites, they park anywhere and everywhere, including on the native vegetation. The minimal provision of toilets and no rubbish bins in the area is not adequate to cater for this influx which means people leave their waste and rubbish around these environmentally vulnerable areas.



Break O'Day Council believes there must be a partnership approach to addressing the many challenges in the Bay of Fires area considering the majority of the land is owned and managed by Parks and Wildlife. Break O'Day Council believes that the development of the Master Plan is one of the most important and necessary documents concerning the future of one of the most visited areas in the state. This belief means that we are committed both financially and in-kind to taking the lead on this project, however without the land manager's input and financial commitment, this document will not be possible and will lose all importance and validity.

Both the State and Council to date, have committed \$50,000 cash each to the project. In addition to this, Council has been providing the Project Management and administrative support to the project as well as meeting the costs of an independent Chairperson for the project. It is estimated that Council has contributed over \$10,000 in cash and resources and it is expected that this will increase to \$25,000 by the end of the project above the \$50,000 commitment already made to the project.

An additional commitment from the State Government of up to \$75,000 is required to ensure that the project delivers the maximum benefit to Parks and Wildlife Service, the community and visitors. This would allow the development of a Plan which reflects the importance and the cultural and natural values of this area as well as ensures its protection for generations to come.

The development of over 100km of Mountain Bike Trails in the Break O'Day area has seen visitation to our region grow. The internationally acclaimed Bay of Fires Trail, which ends right on Swimcart Beach in the Bay of Fires, is proving to be a very popular ride. The Bay of Fires Trail has been featured by MTB media outlets like FLOW MTB, Revolution and Australian Mountain Bike and covered by MTB's godfather, Hans Rey. All agree that this trail will become a must do for mountain bike riders, which in turn will put more pressure on the infrastructure and the natural environment of the area. Since opening in November 2019, more than 17,000 people have ridden this trail.

The MTB market is recognised for its tribal nature and connection through social media channels like Instagram and Facebook but also Strava and Trail Forks. They regularly share their rides and experiences and this peer to peer connection is considered more reputable than any formal advertising. This means that one negative experience can have a huge impact on visitation to an area.

Aside from the danger of being 'loved to death' the Bay of Fires has long had an issue with education around its heritage and cultural value which a Master Plan would also address.

The business community and even some community members regularly report to Council that visitors find it hard to locate the Bay of Fires, this is both a signage and education issue. As the Bay of Fires is not just one location but rather a section of coastline, visitors regularly make the mistake of looking for one Bay of Fires or just think that Binalong Bay is the Bay of Fires. The turn-off to the Bay of Fires and the Gardens is also confusing and easily missed.

A Bay of Fires Master Plan would help with all the issues and challenges raised above but most importantly would enable protection of this important environmental and economic destination.

The Break O'Day Council remains strongly committed to working with the Tasmanian Government to develop the Bay of Fires Master Plan.

## Alignment with Government Strategy

The State Government's recent T30 Visitor Economy Strategy shows a significant shift in approach to the tourism industry by placing intended importance on 'Positive Impact Tourism'. T30's vision, "By 2030, the visitor economy will continue to be valued by Tasmanians for its positive impact to our environment, prosperity and way of life, and Tasmania will be valued by visitors for being a genuinely different experience," as well as its identified values, this clearly put the Bay of Fires Master Plan well within the scope of the State's own strategic direction.

Aside from aligning with the fundamental and core values of positive impact, the Bay of Fires Master Plan also aligns with several activities outlined in the Action Plan including;

### **INFRASTRUCTURE:**

1. Implement a visitor economy infrastructure governance model to provide direction and oversight to priority-based infrastructure planning and delivery.
2. Develop a 10-year visitor economy infrastructure plan, with industry and local government, to support future growth that benefits locals and visitors and aligns investment across access, capacity and experiences and is focussed on priority public infrastructure projects including national parks, roads, airports and aviation investments, events and local council infrastructure.
3. Work with all levels of government to fund and progress the 10-year infrastructure plan
4. Work with all levels of government and the Regional Tourism Organisations to identify and advocate for immediate and longer-term infrastructure planning and investment, particularly in regional areas.
5. Work with government to inform clear priorities for infrastructure investment and advocate for bipartisan support at all levels of government.
6. Maximise the opportunity for regions from the arrival of the new Spirit of Tasmania vessels, including planning for and investing in facilities and services to meet contemporary touring market and regional infrastructure needs.
7. Support development of diverse accessible infrastructure and facilities

### **DEMAND:**

1. Build our long-term brand awareness and consideration via culture brand campaigns that differentiate Tasmania.
2. Curate a content program that highlights the Tasmanian experience via Road Trips, Events, Tasmanian Aboriginal experiences, Positive Impact and focus pillars.

### **PRODUCT:**

1. Support development and diversification of product in core Tasmanian experiences (nature, heritage and history, arts and culture) and new and emerging propositions (wellness, sustainability and Tasmanian Aboriginal experiences).
2. Support appropriate and responsible commercial visitor activities and investment in product and experiences that leverage Tasmania's unique national parks and wilderness areas.

#### **TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE:**

1. Tasmanian Aboriginal people Through engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, businesses and organisations develop a process of co-design and shared decision-making with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, work to ensure that the Tasmanian Government's framework and programs of capacity building and tailored business support for Tasmanian Aboriginal tourism businesses are in alignment with identified aspirations and goals, and sit within the Closing the Gap National Agreement – Tasmanian Implementation Plan and its four priority reform areas.

#### **RESEARCH:**

1. Invest in community data and research to inform our approach to destination planning and management.

#### **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT:**

1. Collaborate on ways to improve visitor management to minimise the impact of visitor activity on their amenity and conservation value.
2. Work across government to embed the principles of this strategy into planning and policy provisions as they relate to the visitor economy.
3. Develop an approach to carrying capacity, considering cumulative impacts, limits and thresholds and investigate options to manage impacts and growth.
4. Develop a framework, centred in this Strategy and in collaboration with local government that guides regionally centred destination management responding to destination challenges and opportunities.
5. Align Destination Management Plans to the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy.

## **Summation**

Without an adequately funded Master Plan for the Bay of Fires:

- The natural values of the area will be compromised by the increasing visitation to the area
- The cultural heritage of the area cannot be developed and used as an educational tool
- Visitors will continue to experience issues locating the Bay of Fires.

## **Total Budget cost**

**\$200,000 (including \$75,000 including \$25,000 Project Management)**

## **Request**

**The Break O'Day Council is seeking a commitment from both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election, they will provide \$125,000 to undertake a Bay of Fires Master Plan.**

# Alternative Route to St Marys Pass

## Project Overview

St Marys Pass is 176 years old this year and has not changed much since it was first constructed except for some modernisation in certain areas.

The use of the road has however changed from a minimally used road for horse and cart and draught horse teams to a highly used main access road that services large trucks through to recreational vehicles and bicycles.

The Council would like the parties contesting the next Tasmanian State Election to provide a commitment to construct an alternative route from St Marys to the townships of the East Coast. This would flow on from the investigation which the State Government currently has underway.

Currently the main access route to the townships of the East Coast is via St Marys Pass. This Road is narrow and windy and consistently experiences rock falls, landslips and road pavement failures. The other alternative route to the East Coast if there are any issues on the St Marys Pass – which there frequently are, is via the Elephant Pass. This road experiences many of the same issues to St Marys Pass and is not suitable for large vehicles or vehicles towing boats or caravans.

The only other two access route to the East Coast is via Lake Leake or the Scottsdale Sideling– both of these routes add significant travel time and in the case of the route via Scottsdale – the Sideling and the Weldborough Pass often experience similar issues to St Marys Pass.

With the use of this road increasing, including an increase of heavy vehicles as well as the general size of vehicles on the road, it is Council's position that St Marys Pass is becoming unfit for purpose.

## Background

Previous, elected State Governments have conducted preliminary investigations into developing an alternate route to the East Coast rather than St Marys Pass.

In 2007 the State Government undertook initial investigations to develop the 'S' Road as an alternative route from St Marys to coastal townships.

'S' Road is a forestry road that links Upper Scamander Road with German Town Road and Top Marshes Road South West of St Marys. It is 26km long and currently unsealed. St Marys Pass is 17km long and the Elephant Pass is 44km long.

In 2011 the Tasmanian Government undertook a Draft Audit that investigated alternative routes for St Marys Pass, Elephant Pass and Welborough Pass. This report again examined using the 'S' Road with costs anticipated to be around \$11.5 million.

Break O'Day Council was not convinced that all alternative routes had been considered by the Tasmanian Government and in March 2023 demonstrated to Department of State Growth officers that in fact an alternative which had not been considered existed.. Council demonstrated there is potential to construct a different route that in part runs in parallel to the worst part of the St Marys Pass further to the south of the existing route. It would link back into the existing route before the bottom of the St Marys Pass.



We believe that the next Tasmanian Government should develop a construction plan and funding model for the project and provide the necessary funding in the forward estimates.

## Discussion

The road which forms the St Marys Pass was surveyed in 1841 and was built by convict labour between 1843 and 1846. Since that time it has had numerous improvements made to create the road we have now. But, effectively it has the same basic characteristics as to what it had when completed 176 years ago. Obviously it was 'fit for purpose' then for horse and carts as well as similar forms of transport. We have moved on over the last 176 years and Council believes it is time to recognise that the time has come to recognise that the St Marys Pass is no longer 'fit for purpose' in the modern context.

St Helens and the Break O'Day Region are experiencing population growth, the 2021 census data showed that our population had grown by almost 11%. Many of these new residents are in the prime working age bracket and may live in Fingal and St Marys but be travelling to St Helens for work or vice versa. Our visitation has also continuing to grow with the popularity of the St Helens MTB trails as well as growing interest from mainlanders in holidaying in our area. This September St Helens had 202,000 visitors. A large number of visitors to our area are caravaners or boaties – this means that they are driving large vehicles and/or towing heavy vehicles.

The Tasmanian Government's T30 Visitor Economy Strategy shows a significant shift in how Tasmania should be promoted and the visitor economy maintained. One areas of focus is the distribution of visitors to regional areas as well as enhancing self-drive experiences. The East Coast of Tasmania is already a hot spot for self-drive tourists especially caravaners. The Government's promotion of the Great Eastern Drive has already seen this number increase and we expect that these numbers will increase again when the new Spirits of Tasmania with their increased capacity come on-line.

The promotion and essentially, scale-up, of self-drive holidays means that more visitors are hiring cars, caravans or bringing their own vehicles and camper vans or trailers with them. This means that our roads are therefore experiencing not just an increase in traffic but an increase in heavy vehicles. Factors such as the narrowness of St Marys Pass, an increase in large vehicles using the pass and, vehicles in general becoming larger, there is a significant decrease in the safety on this main access road to the East Coast.

Every time St Marys Pass closes it affects the local economy. It means that many large vehicles transporting to the Coast must go the long way round – this can incur increased transport costs. It also means that many residents are cut-off from their places of employment and children cannot get to school. It also means that visitors are not able to travel to the coast and our business miss out.

This also works in reverse – Coastal residents are cut-off from the major service centre of Launceston which means residents are unable to access certain services not found on the coast – this means Launceston is also impacted economically.

Due to a substantial weather event, on 27 October 2022 the Department of State Growth was forced to close St Marys Pass when substantial failures occurred including landslides and undercutting of the pavement. Repairs were completed just before the busy Christmas holiday season fortunately as having St Marys Pass closed would have had catastrophic economic impacts for our business community and the wider community.

# St Marys Pass closed off

CLANCY  
BALEN



HEAVY rain has caused significant damage to Esk Main Road along St Marys Pass, with urgent repairs being planned to reopen the main route to the east coast.

The road was closed yesterday after a rockslide caused by intense rainfall over the past week blocked the route.

The Department of State

Growth warned investigations indicated potential for "further intense slippage and undermining of the road at the landslip site".

In a statement on Thursday afternoon, the Department said immediate repairs to the road had been organised, with the work would commence as soon as it was safe.

It is estimated the work will take about four weeks to complete.

"The work will involve building a wall to support the



St Marys Pass is closed

road from below and the removal of material to stabilise the embankment above the road," the statement read.

Break O'Day mayor Mick Tucker said the closure of the pass highlighted the need for a new access route to the east coast.

"In Council's view, this closure only highlights how this road, the main access route to the East Coast, is not fit for purpose," Cr Tucker said.

"The east coast is a remote area - further away from a major city centre than the West Coast - and at times like these we become even more remote."

Cr Tucker said as the region's population grew and tourist numbers increased, there was a pressing need to address road access to the municipality.

"Many of these people are towing boats and caravans and the pass is becoming increasingly unsafe for this travel," he said.

"Council hopes that the State Government will be able to get the Pass reopen as soon as possible but we also hope that this will make them consider seriously de-

veloping a new access route to the east coast."

Alternative routes include Lake Leake Road and Elephant Pass, which is under a reduced speed limit.

The Department said it was monitoring Elephant Pass for any safety issues if heavy rainfall persisted, and has urged drivers to limit their travel in the area where possible.

For information on the route visit at [www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts](http://www.police.tas.gov.au/community-alerts)

## Article from the Examiner October 28, 2022

As a result of having to close St Marys Pass, the Department of State Growth were forced to divert traffic via the Elephant Pass or Lake Leake Roads, this has a significant impact on travel times;

- Launceston to St Helens via St Marys Pass – 166kms – 2 hrs 2mins
- Launceston to St Helens via Elephant Pass – 195kms – 2hrs 30mins
- Launceston to St Helens via Lake Leake Road – 237kms – 3hrs 1min

Queenstown's remoteness on Tasmania's West Coast is recognised by the State Government and this remoteness often factors in the State's decision making process. In reality, St Helens is also remote, by some standards even more remote. When St Marys Pass closes, this remoteness is increased.

Break O'Day Council would like the Tasmanian Government to recognise the remoteness of St Helens and factor this in when making decisions regarding our area.

Below is a comparison of remoteness based on access to the nearest major city centre between St Helens and Queenstown to illustrate the remoteness of St Helens.

- St Helens to Launceston is 166kms and 2hrs 2mins
- Queenstown to Burnie is 152kms and 1hr 55 mins
- St Helens to Hobart is 252kms and 3hrs 15min
- Queenstown to Hobart is 249kms and 3hrs 35min

# More chaos on East Coast

BY CLANCY BALEN

RESIDENTS on the East Coast have been dealt another blow after issues have been discovered with the Elephant Pass.

One lane has been closed on a short section of Elephant Pass due to cracks in the road which may pose a risk to road users, according to RoadsTas.

The road remains open and temporary traffic signals have been installed to manage traffic through the 150-metre lane closure.

In a statement, RoadsTas said they are working to understand the extent of the issue and what needs to be done, however continuing wet weather may have an impact.

"We are continuing to monitor the length of Elephant Pass Road and will alert the public if there is any change to current road conditions".

"Road users are asked to drive with caution and look out for the lane closure."

Esk Main Road through St Marys Pass will remain closed for repairs following



St Marys Pass is closed

a landslip.

The road was closed due to the potential for further slippage of material and undermining of the road at the landslip site.

Assessment and design is

underway and work will start once it is safe to do so. It is estimated to take up to four weeks to complete, depending on weather.

Geotechnical investigations are also being done on

other sections of St Marys Pass to identify any other work that needs to be done.

RoadsTas encourage road users to limit travel through this area if possible and, for those travelling to or from

the south, to consider using Lake Leake Road as an alternative.

Heavy rain has also caused significant damage to Esk Main Road along St Marys Pass, and the route could be

“

Road users are asked to drive with caution and look out for the lane closure.

closed for four weeks.

The road was closed on Wednesday after a rockslide caused by intense rainfall over the past week blocked the route.

The Department of State Growth warned investigations indicated potential for "further intense slippage and undermining of the road at the landslip site".

In a statement on Thursday afternoon, the Department said immediate repairs to the road had been organised, with the work would commence as soon as it was safe.

The work will involve building a wall to support the road from below and it is estimated that it will take about four weeks to complete.

## Article from the Examiner: October 29, 2022

Further compounding the access issue to St Helens is the state of the Elephant Pass. This road has also experienced longitudinal stress fractures over several hundred metres requiring the closure of one lane to traffic. It would be fair to assume that if the St Marys Pass had not been closed, that the Elephant Pass Road would have been closed during October-December 2022 due to these failures.

## Summation

- St Marys Pass is not-fit-for-purpose. It is narrow and windy and regularly experiences landslips and rock slides as well as failing pavement.
- There is an increase in heavy vehicles on the Pass. Many visitors to our area come to camp and fish and therefore are driving heavy vehicles and towing— they are unable to use Elephant Pass and so must add significant travel time to get to the Coast.
- Regular closing of the pass has economic impacts – both for the coast and Launceston.
- The East Coast is growing – with population and visitation on the increase it is important that fit-for-purpose access to the coast is provided.



## Request:

The Break O’Day Council is seeking a commitment from the both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election they would

1. Commit to replacing the St Marys Pass with an alternative route that is ‘fit-for-purpose’ for the next century.
2. Fund the development of a business case to replace the St Marys Pass with an alternative route.
3. Provide the necessary funding in the forward estimates to meet its share of the projected replacement cost with the Federal Government being lobbied to meet its share of the cost.

Images: Landslip and clean-up works on St Marys Pass after the October Flood event.





# Georges Bay Multi-User Foreshore Track- Parnella Linkage

## Project Overview

The extension of the Georges Bay Multi-User Track will see the completion of a project the community has wanted Council to deliver for more than 30 years. Not only will the construction of this missing link provide connectivity for the townships of Akaroa and Stieglitz to the main town of St Helens, it will provide a scenic walk way for visitors and locals alike that showcases our area's unique scenery.

Break O'Day Council would like both parties contesting the next State Election to provide funding to construct the final extension to the Georges Bay Multi-User track and provide advocacy support in seeking Federal funding to complete the project.

This funding will allow a connection with the existing path at O'Connors Beach through to Stieglitz including the designated landslip zone at Parnella. This project will have two major benefits:

1. The project will protect this known landslip area from current as well as future coastal erosion currently impacting the residential area.
2. Connect the township of St Helens to the rapidly growing Stieglitz area which will have health, social and economic benefits for the area.
3. Provide a safe, off-road track for pedestrian and cyclists from Stieglitz to the centre of St Helens.

Once this is completed the multi-user track will stretch approximately 7 km around Georges Bay.

## Background

The township of St Helens is bordered by Georges Bay with locals and visitors alike utilising the bay for a range of recreational activities both on and off the water. The Bay is a family friendly area that offers access to six jetties, five barbecue areas, five public toilets, three playgrounds, Skate Park and recreational space as well as numerous beaches.

The vision to create a cycle path/walkway linking the various residential areas around Georges Bay goes back 30 years or more and in November 2020, Break O'Day Council opened the latest stage of the extension to the Georges Bay Multi-User track. This work connected the existing track to the wharf area and therefore provides an off-road connection from the centre of St Helens to Lions Park, on the corner of St Helens Point Road as well as to the Flagstaff Mountain Bike (MTB) trailhead. This project would not have been possible without Federal Government funding.

For decades Break O'Day Council has been asked by the community to establish an off-road walkway in the Parnella area. This correspondence commonly references safety concerns around walkers and cyclists using the road to walk in to town. With an increase in cyclists, visitors and residents in the Stieglitz area, these concerns are being more frequently raised with both Councillors and the General Manager.

Safety and connectivity aside, the residential area of Parnella, which borders Georges Bay and St Helens Point Road, has been declared a landslip area since 1981. Council, Mineral Resources Tasmania and Parks and Wildlife Service have examined ways to mitigate and contain further deterioration of this already developed residential area which has included the completion in the last five years of

comprehensive stormwater works that seek to channel run-off water away from the area. However, these works will not protect the area from coastal erosion as a result of wave action.

Despite the disconnection, the track is heavily utilised by locals and visitors. Over the three months from October 2023 to December 2023 the trail counter on the multi-user track recorded more than 18,500 movements. Now that the extension through to the St Helens Wharf has been completed, the track is getting even more use by locals and visitors alike from children and workers commuting to and from work and school each morning and evening to visitors accessing the trailhead from the centre of town and vice versa.

## Discussion

Council believes that the completion of this track will have significant benefits for our community including:

- Healthy lifestyle – by facilitating residents and visitors to walk/ride all the way from Stieglitz to the centre of the St Helens Township or the St Helens MTB Flagstaff Trailhead.
- Safety – Will allow riders and walkers to get off the main road which is narrow with poor visibility in some areas, particularly Aerodrome hill.
- Connectivity – connecting not just the locals with the township and MTB trails but tourists staying at one of the several caravan parks and accommodation providers in this area.
- Economic – allowing easy access to the centre of the St Helens township attracting visitors to spend more time enjoying the diversity of the Bay.
- Environmental Sustainability – by future proofing and mitigating further landslip from ongoing erosion, climate change and consequential tidal and coastal inundation.

## Demand for Infrastructure – Visitation and Population Growth

Since the introduction of the St Helens MTB Network in 2019 we have seen a rapid and significant increase in visitation to our area. This increase in visitation is putting pressure on our road network as we are not only seeing a general increase in visitation, but an increase in heavy vehicles like caravans and vehicles towing boats. We are also seeing an increased number of cyclists and walkers on our roads, particularly in the Stieglitz area, this has raised concerns for safety from locals and visitors alike.

According to the Tourism Tasmania Visitor Information Survey for the March 2023 quarter, St Helens achieved an impressive 31% growth in visitor numbers when compared to 2019, setting a new visitation record. The latest figures from the September 2023 quarter saw St Helens experiencing 202,000 visitors, 65,000 more than the previous September and almost double what was experienced in September 2022. This is evidence of the significant visitation growth the area is continuing to experience.

According to the Tasmanian Visitor Survey, approximately 64% of visitors that mountain bike in Tasmania, do so on the East Coast. According to Break O Day Council's July 2022 Local Business Survey, accommodation providers have seen a 29% increase of 3 night stays compared to summer 2021. Tourists are visiting in greater numbers and prolonging their visits.

Further to an increase in visitation, the Break O'Day region has experienced almost an 11% increase in population from 2016 – 2021. The townships of Stieglitz and Akaroa that will be connected to the main township of St Helens once the multi-user track is completed, have a significantly high median age (60years) than the rest of our municipality. This demographic characteristic highlights the importance of

addressing the accessibility and mobility needs of our local residents. The proposed linkage promises immeasurable social and physical benefits to our community.

Stieglitz has been identified as a key area that could be expanded to accommodate population growth, with a substantial amount of available land already designated for residential development. The expansion of the multi-user track would allow existing and new residents pedestrian and cycle access right to the St Helens CBD, local school, Doctor Surgery etc.

Due to the construction of the St Helens Mountain Bike Network, Stieglitz has experienced development growth including the construction of a large holiday accommodation complex valued at more than \$10M with plans to expand in the near future. The holiday park includes 26 family friendly cabins, 45 powered camp sites as well as a restaurant catering for up to 200 guests.

Having witnessed the success of the recently completed extension to the multi-user track as well as the community's desire to see a safe, off road path suitable for cyclists and walkers from Stieglitz to St this project is a priority for Break O'Day Council and our community.

## Landslip Mitigation

The Parnella area was declared a landslip area in 1981, unfortunately there had already been residential development in the area. Since then there have been numerous reports and examinations of the area to determine the main causes for landslip and how best to mitigate landslip.

In 2013, Mineral Resources Tasmania undertook a Geomorphological mapping and a review of past investigations. This report concluded that the slips in the area were largely related to 'weather and other climatic fluctuations'. The report examined the effect of the following factors on the land;

- Vegetation clearing – this has largely ceased since the 1980s once the area was officially declared a landslip area.
- Drainage Methods – Council has undertaken significant work in this space to ensure stormwater is diverted away from affected areas. This was at a cost of approx. \$4 Million.
- Weather – This related specifically to significant rain events, which has been largely mitigated by Council's storm water works.
- Shoreline erosion – This was attributed to tidal fluctuations and wave scouring. It was indicated by the report that land stability could be achieved with the implementation of a rock wall.

In 2016, Burbury Consulting undertook an engineering review of Coastal Erosion and Mitigation Measures for Parnella Landslip confirming that shoreline erosion was a contributing factor to the landslip.

Through their findings, Burbury presented seven options for mitigating coastal erosion with the construction of a rock wall the preferred option for several reasons:

- Provides good protection.
- Cost effective.
- Access to material – there is suitable rock material available in our area (This was used to construct the recently completed sections of the Georges Bay Multi-User Track.)
- Multi-use – could also be used as a shared pathway.
- Can be accessed easily.

- Can be built upon if required.

## Conclusion

Having considered these reports as well as our experience in building the extension to the Multi-User track, Council has determined that a rock wall would be the best solution to mitigating landslip as well as provide pedestrian and bike access to the Stieglitz area. Moreover the new track would complete a networked trail from Stieglitz to the centre of the main township for active and passive transport. The existing topography of Georges Bay, the extraordinary growth in vehicle traffic on the road network and constraints in creating a footpath network around the bay, support a more considered approach to future infrastructure provision. The fully connected multi-user trail would provide the community and visitors a separate and considered option to walk, ride and travel around the bay.

## Construction

Construction methods to be utilised will be similar to those used to construct the Multi-User Track extension completed in 2020. This involved placement of crushed rock material, a geofabric barrier and rock armouring topped with a compacted gravel surface. The constructed pathway has an approximate width of 2.5 metres as well as a locally designed and constructed elevated walkway and bridge. Over summer the existing track was highly utilised by locals, visitors, walkers and cyclists alike.

## Methodology

The project construction will involve five different construction methods to ensure the validity and success of the project. These methods take into consideration the goals of; 1. Mitigating landslip and, 2. creating a multi-user track that connects St Helens with the township of Stieglitz. Each one will be applied as appropriate to existing natural or previously-modified landforms. The methods are as follows;

Approx. Location	Method
<b>Section 1.</b> O'Connors Beach area	Removal of vegetation Rehabilitation of the existing structure
<b>Section 2.</b> Aerodrome Hill area	Partial reconstruction of the existing gravel pathway and wave protection
<b>Section 3.</b> Parnella beach area	Construction of a boardwalk at top of beach Localised erosion treatment – geofabric and rock armouring
<b>Section 4.</b> Parnella Landslip area	Construction of gravel walkway – similar to the new section Erosion treatment – geofabric, rock armouring
<b>Section 5.</b> Stieglitz jetty area	Rehabilitation of existing pathway Extension of existing pathway

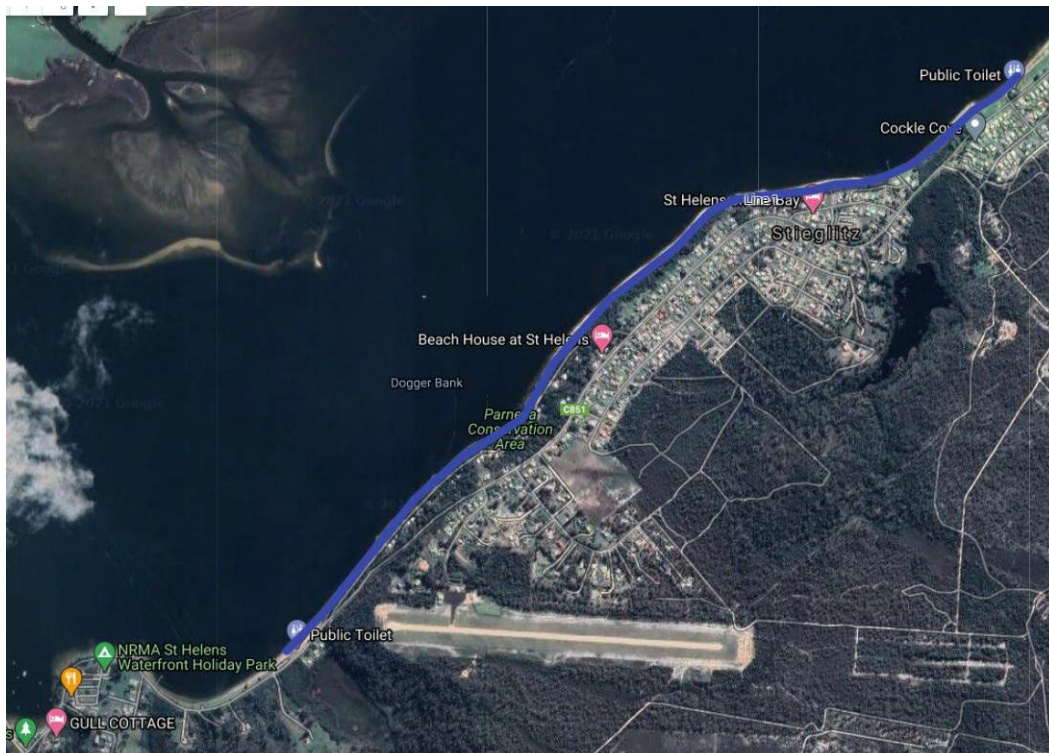


## Costing

The cost estimates detailed below are based on recent construction activity unit rates from the extension project completed in November 2020 and other projects. As we are finding, cost estimates are increasing substantially due to the current levels of projects under construction around Tasmania.

Preliminary Costs		Cost \$
Design & Approvals		75,000
Construction Costs	Length (m)	
Section 1.	400	120,000
Section 2.	940	1,800,000
Section 3.	970	1,390,000
Section 4.	250	1,025,000
Section 5.	380	75,000
Contingency		375,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,940</b>	<b>4,860,000</b>

Pictured below; Area of the proposed works.



## Approval Process

The identified works involve a section of Crown Land which is under the control of Parks & Wildlife Service. A Reserve Activity Assessment will be required for consideration by Park & Wildlife Service prior to the Land Use Planning & Approvals Act requirements.

Supporting information required will include the following:

Action	Status	Source	Estimated Completion Date
Pathway Design	<b>Drafted</b> Subject to consequential changes.	BODC	December 2021
Land Owner Consent	<b>Not commenced</b> Requires pathway design to be completed	Parks & Wildlife Service Crown Land Services	February 2024
Ecological Assessment	<b>In progress</b>	ECOtas	June 2024
Aboriginal Heritage Assessment	Awaiting advice as to whether required		June 2024
EPBC Approval	<b>Yet to be determined</b> Awaiting completion of Ecological Assessment	ECOtas	December 2024
Reserve Activity Assessment	<b>Not commenced</b> Relies on preceding activity completion	BODC and Parks & Wildlife Service	December 2024
Land Use Planning Approval	<b>Not commenced</b> Requires Landowner Consent	BODC via Rebecca Green & Associates	March 2025

## Funding Model

The proposed funding model relies on securing funding from the State Government to supplement the funds which Council have made available to this stage and likely future commitments.

FUNDING	fy 2024/25	fy 2025/26	fy 2026/27	Total
Federal Government		2,500,000	800,000	3,300,000
State Government		500,000	500,000	1,000,000
Break O'Day Council	260,000	300,000		560,000
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>3,300,000</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>	<b>4,860,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Design & Approvals	75,000			75,000
Construction	185,000	3,300,000	1,300,000	4,785,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>3,300,000</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>	<b>4,860,000</b>

## Election Request:

The Break O'Day Council is seeking the following commitments from major parties through the forthcoming State Election process:

1. The Break O'Day Council is seeking a commitment from the both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election they would publicly commit to providing \$1,000,000 over two years towards the construction cost of the project which is currently estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$4.86 million.
2. That the State Government will provide advocacy support to the Break O'Day Council to assist with securing Federal funding of \$3.3million.

# St Marys Health – Commitment to service provision

## Project Overview

In 2023 the St Marys Community were devastated when their only doctor decided to leave his private practice which he had operated for over 16 years. This meant that the community could be left without a GP and the St Marys Community Health Centre would no longer be able to offer in-patient services or a 24 hour emergency service. While this issue has since been resolved, it highlighted the volatile and unstable nature of health service provision in remote and regional communities like St Marys.

With this in mind, Break O’Day Council and the Break O’Day community are seeking a commitment from the newly elected State Government to ensure ongoing provision of service for the St Marys Community Health Centre. This service must consider the immediate needs of the community as well as reflect the changing needs of the community into the future.

## Background

As a small regional Council, we are very closely connected to our community and we are generally their first port-of-call when an issue or challenge arises in the community. In June 2022 Council and Councillors started receiving correspondence from concerned St Marys community members that their much loved doctor, Cyril Latt, had announced his intention to move on from his practice

Dr Latt had been operating for more than 16 years in the community and was well respected throughout the Fingal Valley. Dr Latt’s private practice operated from the St Marys Community Health Centre and he was also employed by the Tasmanian Health Service under the Rural Medical Officers Award as the supervising GP at the Centre. At the time he announced his resignation, Dr Latt had been unable to attract another doctor to take over the practice. He had recently signed a new Contract with the Tasmanian Health Service to provide the necessary coverage for the Community Health Centre to avoid the closure of the in-patient facility. A single GP providing an ongoing 24hour/7day coverage was not sustainable.

Once word got out, the St Marys community, were rightly concerned that this would mean the loss of not just their GP but also, access to emergency and outpatient services.

The St Marys Community Health Centre provides a 24/7 Emergency and Outpatient service as well as a limited in-patient service through eight acute/palliative care beds and hosts a range of allied health services such as:

- Continence Service
- Child Health and Parenting Service
- Community Health Nursing Needs
- Dementia Service
- Community Physiotherapy Service

While Council and the Government cannot interfere in private business, this situation highlighted the volatile nature of health service provision in the Fingal Valley communities and the need for an ongoing commitment from the State Government to ensure essential health services would not be lost from the community and should actually be improved



## Discussion

When Dr Latt announced his resignation the St Marys community were very quick to rally together arranging public forums, writing to council and politicians and pushing the State Government to come and discuss their concerns with them. They were very vocal, very active and well-coordinated and proactive in airing their concerns.

Below are copies of newspaper articles from the Examiner:

**Examiner 26 June 2023**



Around 120 residents of St Marys showed up to Saturday's meeting to voice their concerns for an overstressed health service. Picture supplied.

## St Marys residents want action

Charmaine Manuel

CONCERNED residents of St Marys had a chance to air their frustrations at a public meeting on Saturday about an overburdened GP and emergency service that is staffed by one doctor.

Despite Premier Jeremy Rockliff announcing the town's only doctor would remain for the next two years, residents remained concerned over understaffing and the long-term future of the St Marys Community Health Centre.

There were "lots of platitudes" from politicians, St Marys resident Carole Hilton said, but the community wanted to see more activity.

She said the overall mood of the two-hour meeting was

**We have politicians sitting in Canberra and they make decisions and they don't understand how those decisions flow down into a regional and rural community.**

one of frustration.

"Politicians come from time to time, say all the right things but nothing really changes," Mrs Hilton said.

The community wanted to see more action and learn how things were progressing, Ms Hilton said.

During the meeting, Break O Day Council Mayor Mick Tucker called on the State Liberal and Labor parties "to set in concrete a fully worded document they will always support and never close the St Marys hospital".

"We need that endorsement," councillor Tucker said. "We have politicians sitting in Canberra and they make decisions and they don't understand how those decisions flow down into a regional and rural communi-

ty." He said regional Australia needed to be recognised for its remoteness.

Politicians, including independent Lyons MHA John Tucker, Labor Lyons MHA Jen Butler, Labor Lyons MHR Brian Mitchell and two representatives from the health department attended.

The concerns have been brewing since December last year, when residents raised the possibility of losing the only doctor, Dr Cyril Latt, who runs a private practice and provides emergency medical services.

Another resident Barbara Longue said during Saturday's meeting that there were "some very real issues" beyond whether the doctor had signed a contract or not.

"We have the issues that

the nurses have expressed across the state with their pay and specifically with the contract with the state."

Mrs Hilton said Dr Latt's patient load, which caters beyond St Marys to cover a large area of the East Coast, remained a problem. He is on call 24/7 and, she said, he needed a break as well.

Mrs Hilton said there had also been no succession planning if the doctor was to leave. She said it would potentially threaten the viability of the community centre, which also has a podiatrist, lymphadema clinic, community centre, meals on wheels and other facilities. Other issues are insufficient nurses and paid paramedics for the town, which relies on a volunteer ambulance service.

## Fears after St Marys' only doctor quits

Charmaine Manuel

ST MARYS' only doctor Cyril Swe Latt has resigned from his position, realising the fears of the small town that he has looked after for 16 years.

"Regretfully, I would like to let you all know that I submitted my resignation (after 16 years) this morning," Dr Latt wrote on a Facebook community group.

There have been fears brewing about this possibility since last year when Break O Day council expressed concern about the town losing its only doctor.

Dr Latt ran a private bulk-billed GP service and staffed the town's emergency services department. He catered to over 1800 patients,

including residents from St Marys but also drew patients from Fingal and Legana, as this was the only bulk-billed GP in the area.

"I would like to thank all my patients and their families and, in particular, all the amazing staff from St Marys Community Health for the last 16 years," he wrote in his Facebook resignation post.

"My last day will be November 17 2023. I am taking a long overdue holiday before deciding where my future will be."

In June, Lyons independent John Tucker asked then-health minister Jeremy Rockliff in Question Time whether St Marys would soon be without a general practitioner.

Mr Rockliff said it was his understanding that Dr Latt had recently signed on to remain

there for two years.

"I am advised that Dr Latt has recently signed a two-year position as a rural medical practitioner to provide ongoing services to the St Marys District Hospital.

"I want to assure everyone our government is committed to the ongoing operation of the St Marys District Hospital as it provides critical health services as we know for the region, and we want to see this continue."

Dr Latt was contacted to confirm if he had resigned from both GP and emergency services.

On August 15, current Health Minister Guy Barnett said alternatives were being explored to ensure the continuity of medical services at the St Marys Community Health Centre if

Dr Cyril Latt chose to leave.

"I can provide an assurance that the St Marys community will have access to ongoing health and medical services," Mr Barnett said. "My department is working hard on this matter to continue the operations of the St Marys General Practice."

Concerns about Dr Latt leaving the community led to the formation of a lobby group composed of nearly 50 local residents.

Labor MPs Rebecca White, Anita Dow and Jen Butler released a joint statement thanking Dr Latt for his service.

"Dr Latt has been let down badly by the previous health minister Premier Jeremy Rockliff, and the current minister and Member for Lyons Guy Barnett."

The State Health Minister at the time, Guy Barnett attended one of the community forums and was able to reassure community that the Government would not allow the doors of the Health Centre to close. This saw the Minister working with Ochre Medical to take over the contract for the St Marys Community Health Centre and through this Ochre Medical came to an arrangement with Dr Latt to take over his private General Practice.

While this was a great outcome for the community, looking long-term, St Marys and the Fingal Valley communities could easily be placed in a similar situation in years to come. It is common knowledge in the health sector that it is difficult to attract GPs to regional areas.

Ochre Medical already operates in St Helens and the practice here, in the largest township on the East Coast, still struggles to attract doctors. It was this very fact that initially concerned St Marys residents when they were told Ochre would be taking over the St Marys practice.

With an ageing and growing population, the continuity of health services is paramount to the ongoing wellbeing of our communities. Situations such as this create massive anxiety in the communities that rely on these services and throughout this recent situation, there was a fear that the St Marys Community Health Centre would be downgraded and the in-patient beds closed. This fear raises its head every time that services are disrupted at the Centre.

Council and the community need formal understanding, recognition and most importantly, a commitment from the major parties that 24/7 Health Services in St Marys will continue now and into the future.

The community at the meeting attended by Minister Barnett, made it very clear they believe there is an opportunity to expand and improve the delivery of allied health and health services in the Fingal Valley. The Council has always held concerns regarding the effectiveness and cost efficiency of the 'drive in – drive out' nature of service provision by multiple providers working in the same space. The Council believes that there is an opportunity to redefine the model of service delivery in rural communities such as St Marys and the Fingal Valley.

## Election Request

The Break O'Day Council is seeking a commitment from the both the Labor and Liberal parties that should they form Government at the next Tasmanian State Election they would commit to ensuring:

1. Continuity of the full range of in-patient and emergency care services at the St Marys Community Health Centre
2. Working with the community and Council to better understand the health needs of the community through updating the Health Needs Analysis of the Break O'Day community.
3. Examine the opportunity to redefine the service delivery model for allied health services whilst maintaining, supporting and encouraging a diverse range of allied health services to operate in St Marys and the Fingal Valley.



Photo Credit: The Examiner June 26, 2023. Approximately 120 residents in attendance at a community meeting regarding the continuation of Health Services in the Fingal Valley.