

Resource Sharing

Embedding Shared Resources

Kentish and Latrobe Councils are continuing a significant program to improve both the efficiency of our operations and our financial position by increasing the type and number of resources we share.

The program follows seven years of successful collaboration between Latrobe and Kentish Councils. We were further encouraged when the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government published a report in November 2016 that revealed conservative savings due to resource sharing of \$768,000 across the two Councils in the 2015/16 financial year.

What's involved?

Both Councils are working together to implement the report's recommendations and have several projects underway under the banner of *Embedding Shared Resources*:

- Outdoor Workforce – sharing staff, equipment, skills and work plans in parks and reserves, facility management, road construction and maintenance, and engineering;
- Information Technology and Business Systems – sharing software, systems and procedures to support staff to efficiently do their work;
- Workforce Development and Succession Planning – sharing staff development tools and plans to smooth workload during busy periods such as following a natural disaster;
- Indoor Workforce – sharing staff, procedures, skills and work plans.

Why change anything?

The Tasmanian Government has been encouraging all local councils to consider reforms that are in the interest of ratepayers; improve the level of services for communities; preserve and maintain local representation; and ensure that the financial status of Councils is strengthened.

The elected members of Latrobe and Kentish Councils carefully considered the different ways in which these Tasmanian Government reforms could be achieved and listened to the preferences of their communities. As a result, we chose the path of resource sharing.

When Councils resource share, they remain as separate business entities, operate separate budgets and rating systems, and retain their local representation and identities.

Behind the scenes, they can have common systems, policies, projects and assets to reduce costs and increase utilisation. Staff can also be shared between Councils to help attract and retain employees, improve leave coverage and succession planning, and smooth periods of peak demand such as during natural disasters.

Our *Embedding Shared Resources* project aims to expand the number and type of shared systems, policies, projects and staff in both the outdoor and indoor workforces so that these increased benefits can help to deliver even better services for our communities.

Resource sharing or amalgamation?

When Councils amalgamate, they merge all aspects of their businesses to form a single entity.

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils are not in the process of amalgamating.

Often Councils are motivated to amalgamate to reduce operating costs, gain operating efficiencies and boost their economies of scale. They are worthwhile objectives, especially for smaller Councils such as ours, but there are other ways to achieve these outcomes without the disruption of amalgamating.

Through resource sharing the two Councils are able to balance economic efficiency with maintaining local democracy, keeping a sense of place and a sense of community.

We're committed to resource sharing and delivering efficiencies through cash savings and service improvements.

How is it being managed?

A Municipal Alliance Committee, made up of three Councillors from each Council including each Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the General Manager, operate under a formal agreement to oversee the resource sharing arrangements.

A steering group has been established with members from both Councils and across all departments and a two-year implementation plan has been devised to manage the change.

The program is being assisted by consultants who have experience in similar projects and help provide an independent perspective when facilitating discussion between the two Councils.

When one Council uses the resources of another the cost is proportioned for the length of time for the job. For example, when Latrobe Council uses Kentish Council's grader and grader driver the cost of grader hire and staff time is allocated to Latrobe. Similarly when a Latrobe Council's planner assesses a development application in Kentish, the planner's time is costed to Kentish Council. Ultimately this makes better use of Council equipment and staff time.

What will change for residents when contacting Council?

The way you contact and interact with Council will remain the same.

You'll be able to speak to staff by phone or in person and they'll have the necessary local knowledge, technical expertise and integrated systems to assist with your enquiry. Internal communications systems allow enquiries to be transferred seamlessly so that you can talk to staff members regardless of which Council is their home base.

When you are travelling throughout Latrobe you may see Kentish Council vehicles or staff assisting with road maintenance. Similarly, when visiting a park or reserve in Kentish you may see Latrobe Council staff, equipment or vehicles assisting with maintenance. Staff across the two Councils will be working more closely to pool their expertise and resources and deliver your local services even more efficiently.