

Burnie Arts Council Response; Teeny Brumby

1. How would you describe the impact on the city in the wake of the decisions announced in May 2021?

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to address some of the questions you have asked on behalf of the Burnie Arts Council.

Understandably there are a number of significant issues and enormous pain felt by the arts community over decisions of our council over this last 4 years, so it is entirely appropriate you request some answers.

The impact has been absolutely horrendous, breaking the hearts of our community. Not just the arts community, but the soul of our people was broken in this process.

I acknowledge there has been a lack of consultation with our arts community, and decisions of council, made in an endeavour to pursue financial sustainability, have brought our city to it's knees.

The pursuit of reducing rates over a 4-5 year period has resulted in a dire financial predicament, as was indicated in the Auditor General's Report of Burnie City Council's financial position.

This however was no excuse for the lack of communication and inclusion of the arts community to bring them along in this process.

2. The 'spirit' of the city feels broken and trust in council is at an all-time low. What is your plan to rebuild community trust and civic pride?

I want to lead with kindness, community focus, trust, and a contagious passion and heart that beats for this city. I intend to restore community pride.

My plan is multifaceted with both tangible and intangible elements. The tangible elements; our city is crying out for a 'face-lift' – it needs some love!

Project #LoveBurnie will launch with many initiatives where an army of community citizens can volunteer their skills and talents to help beautify Burnie. One step at a time, we can each play our part to make a meaningful difference and bring about transformational change!

When we've begun the external clean up and paint job and people can start to see things are indeed changing... we will begin the narrative shift! Arguably perhaps, the most important; changing our mindset (intangible). We will need to "Believe" in Burnie again, speaking life and a new truth that a new day is coming with HOPE for a brighter future!

3. Our reputation within the Tasmanian arts sector has taken a serious blow. What are your plans to salvage this, given the unveiling of the refurbished Arts and Function Centre (or whatever it will be called in the future), is unlikely to be completed until 2024?

This is a really sad reality and one I continue to grapple with. The loss of significant art events have been acutely felt, particularly within our arts community.

There is much work to do in this space and clearly we will need help and assistance by 'those in the know'. Arts is not an area of my own expertise and I will be looking to groups such as yours to help guide this process.

The unveiling of the proposed Burnie Arts and Function Centre precinct will occur next week with a 3D walk through presentation available publicly. The opportunity for the community to comment on this proposed design will be welcomed. I am hopeful that this reimagined precinct will instil hope for a new day to dawn in the arts sector in Burnie.

4. With the benefit of hindsight, what key decisions, or actions which flowed from those decisions, could have been handled differently?

There is no doubt about it, councils handling of the many different decisions made over this last 4 years have been handled poorly. Greater engagement with our community and various community groups is vital moving forward. We MUST improve.

The closures and loss of services has been perhaps the most dire of our decisions as a council. The future of community engagement will look different under my leadership and I commit to greater levels of transparency, while honouring the community by way of deliberate engagement with the arts community. It's certainly time to ignite the heart beat of Burnie once again.

Teeny Brumby
Councillor of Burnie City Council
Mayoral Candidate 2022