MEDIA RELEASE
Friday 21 September 2012

Doing Things Better
- Building Stronger and Better Councils

Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head Council General Manager Greg Winton and Burnie City Council General Manager Andrew Wardlaw were joined today with Burnie Mayor Steve Kons, Waratah-Wynyard Acting Mayor Alwyn Friedersdorff and Circular Head Mayor Daryl Quilliam to outline the progress of talks to find natural synergies between the three Councils.

“Initially these talks have centred on both Waratah-Wynyard and Burnie City Councils working together on a range of areas of common interest,” Mr Winton said.

“Circular Head Council is now also a party to these talks not only because of the many opportunities presented so far, but also because it makes sense to do so considering the resource-sharing arrangement in place between Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head.”

Mr Winton said while work is still ongoing in relation to what sort of things will be of benefit to all three Councils, a number of strategic opportunities have been identified including health, education, transport infrastructure where working together will achieve mutual benefits for the wider region.

“All three organisations are now also exploring operational areas where the Council can work together to provide more efficient services to the community,” Burnie City Council General Manager Andrew Wardlaw said.
“One good example of this work so far is the decision to have a combined approach to insurance brokerage, which will have an immediate economic benefit to all three organisations. Although this is only a minor example, we hope it leads to more positive arrangements.

“Another key benefit of working together is the increased possibility of gaining regional funding.”

Mr Winton said there were many benefits to come from this partnership, but he wanted to make it clear that it was not about amalgamations or reducing staff numbers.

“Rather this arrangement it is about finding synergies, sharing expertise, building strength in numbers and is a natural progression of the resource sharing arrangement currently in place between Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head.”

Further benefits of this approach may be financial savings, improved service delivery, more effective use of professional skills and/or addressing skills shortages.

“It just makes sense that we look for opportunities to share resources when possible. It’s important to keep the ball rolling on this otherwise it will be all talk and no action. It’s positive to see this progressing and it will benefit the region if we stick at it,” Burnie Mayor Steve Kons said.

Waratah-Wynyard Acting Mayor Alwyn Friedersdorff said the ongoing talks had included everything from holding regional forums on topical issues to Occupational Health & Safety.

“There’s no doubt that in today’s age Councils need to demonstrate leadership when it comes to finding ways to work smarter and better to achieve the best outcome for their ratepayers,” Cr Friedersdorff said.

Circular Head Mayor Daryl Quilliam said Council officers had been very receptive to the idea and saw the talks as a great opportunity to strengthen the region.
“As a collective group all three Councils will now be able to address a wide range of issues while also looking at operational opportunities presented by the arrangement,” Mayor Quilliam said.

ENDS

Further media enquiries may be directed to:

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Authorised for general media distribution by Greg Winton, General Manager, Waratah-Wynyard Council and Circular Head Council and Andrew Wardlaw, General Manager, Burnie City Council on Friday 21 September 2012.