



MEDIA RELEASE

13 December 2019

Council votes to progress Cygnet Medical Centre sale

At its Ordinary Meeting on 11 December 2019, the Huon Valley Council agreed to sell the public land containing the Cygnet Medical Centre at 14 George Street, Cygnet upon selection of a suitable medical services provider via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

In making its decision, Council considered the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal (RMPAT) hearing which confirmed Council's decision to sell, the outcomes of the public meeting held on 14 October 2019 at the Huonville Town Hall, and the potential outcomes of an EOI process for the sale.

The motions and comments against the sale which were presented at the public meeting were addressed in the report to Council, along with details of how the process has been carried out by Councillors and Council officers in accordance with good governance principles since Council first resolved its intention to sell the centre in September 2018.

The report addressed allegations of misinformation, lack of good governance and lack of transparency made against Council, and included responses to the allegations to ensure that the public was informed. Although the allegations and responses were not discussed at the Council meeting, the information is freely available to the public within the report.

A number of Councillor workshops have taken place to review the matter thoroughly, however no decisions have been made behind closed doors. Any and all directives provided to the General Manager have been to ensure that no matter what decision is made, the best outcome is achieved for the community.

Huon Valley Council Deputy Mayor Sally Doyle said Council had considered all possible courses of action in relation to its continued ownership or sale of the medical centre.

"Council weighed the pros and cons of all potential options, including selling the centre, leasing the centre on a long-term basis, and options for continued ownership," said Cr Doyle.

Having considered the matter thoroughly, Councillors came to the 11 December meeting well-informed and ready to make a decision.

"It was decided that selling the centre is the best course of action to ensure that consistent and stable medical services are provided to the people of Cygnet and surrounds in the long term – this is our main goal to support the wellbeing of the community," said Cr Doyle.

Other key reasons that Council decided to proceed with the sale included:

1. To retain quality medical services and consistency of general practitioners.

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Huon Valley Council

communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au



2. To transfer the obligation to run a medical centre from the Council to a medical practice.
3. To achieve stability of medical services at the centre.
4. To remove the risk of Council being required to repay the Commonwealth funding.
5. To prevent a situation where the community may be subject to a rate or charge for supporting the medical centre.
6. To achieve an outcome where the medical centre is used for that purpose of delivering primary medical care in the long term.

At the 11 December meeting, an alternative motion was considered to provide a floor for the sale price at current valuation, but the motion was lost as it may have locked the Council into a sale for a certain price without being able to look at other innovative ways of achieving best value for money.

“This has been a very difficult decision for Councillors to consider, with differing views held throughout the Huon Valley community,” said Cr Doyle. “However, the best outcomes for the whole Huon Valley community have been front of mind throughout the whole process.”

Updates on the EOI process will be provided on the Council’s website at www.huonvalley.com.au as they become available.

For more information: Deputy Mayor Sally Doyle (03) 6264 0300

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communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au