

## **Mayor Kirsten Wise**

### **Questions and Answers Summary**

#### **Q1: How is the Council addressing concerns about rate affordability?**

Over the next four weeks, information will be shared about Ocean Spa, including initial costs for any construction and ongoing operational expenses. This will allow for further questions and discussions. The council is committed to finding efficiencies, having saved \$7 million in last year's budget, which equated to a 7% reduction in rates. At some stage there will need to be a conversation with our community, potentially about reduced levels of service if you're still wanting us to find savings. We will be always coming out and consulting with the wider community before we make any huge changes and potentially there may be another Citizens' Assembly in the future as well.

#### **Q4: What happens if the recommendations from the group do not meet the Council's ambitions?**

The council has no preconceived notions and is open to the group's input. They recognize that affordability will likely be a key concern for the Assembly members. And if that means that our future aquatic facility is more basic than what we might have once anticipated, then that's what it means.

#### **Q5: What is the situation regarding council members and potential changes?**

With a minimum of four new elected members (a third of our council) and a potential new mayor, there is a risk that a new council may overturn existing resolutions. However, Kirsten expressed confidence that most current councillors will remain - but a small risk is there.

#### **Q6: Why is the entrance fee for Ocean Spa so high?**

Ocean Spa is a council-owned facility that was leased for 20 years. Poor management led to significant refurbishment costs when the council regained ownership. The pricing structure is higher because it is considered a tourist offering rather than a community pool, but there are ongoing reviews to make it more affordable for locals.

The council is considering the possibility of leasing Ocean Spa again, but with a more robust contract that could lead to different pricing structures. They are also aiming to ensure that it remains affordable for local residents.