

President's Update #2

Shire of Donnybrook Balingup 2 February 2024



Welcome to my second update as President of the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup. As we move into the new year, Council is focusing on forward thinking, with three strategic planning sessions scheduled in February.

Our goal is to develop a discipline of progressive future thinking, where we explore topics as they emerge and engage early with our community well before decisions are made at our Ordinary Council Meetings. To this aim, Councillors will hold Concept Forums or Workshops on the first and second Wednesday of each month.

Beyond strategic planning, January has been a busy month for me as my family was visiting from Sydney. Nonetheless, I was privileged to attend the Auspire Australia Day Launch at the Perth Zoo on 18 January. I found the Launch inspiring in its messaging and genuine efforts towards the creation of an inclusive event.

The **Australia Day Brunch** organised by the Shire at Ayers Gardens was a very memorable event for me and for many members of our community attending. The atmosphere was both lively yet peaceful, with plenty of community conversations, queues of people eager to get some of the delicious-smelling cooking, great music, and vintage car displays – all set in our beautiful townscape. I had the privilege of conferring Citizenship for two 'brand new' Australians, and presented the Shire's Community Citizen of the Year (COTY) awards to very deserving recipients. Prior to the Brunch in Donnybrook, Australia Day Breakfasts were organised by community groups in Balingup and Yabberup, with a Sundowner organised in Noggerup.



ABOVE: President MacCarthy presenting at the Citizenship Ceremony (26 January, 2024).

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Australia Day continues to evolve as an inclusive event, and this year's national theme was to "Reflect, Respect and Celebrate." I was interested to learn at the Auspire Australia Day Council Launch that just half of all Australians celebrate Australia Day. It is my sincere hope that Australia Day continues to evolve as a diverse occasion where every Australian, whether they are First Nations Peoples, people whose families have lived here for generations, or our newest Australians, all feel comfortable to *reflect, respect and celebrate* how we have all come through the best and worst times of our shared history. Feedback on the day was very heartwarming, and I genuinely look forward to next year's event.

Contributing to the success of our Australia Day event were many local clubs and organisations. On behalf of everyone attending, our appreciation and thanks for this memorable event go to the following:

- The First Donnybrook Scouts Group for keeping the event clean and Covid-safe, as well as distributing Shire 2024 calendars,
- The Donnybrook Lions Club for being wonderful chefs at the sausage sizzle,
- The Donnybrook Community Garden members for providing refreshments,
- The Country Women's Association ladies who provided delicious fruit salad and granola cups,
- My fellow electoral candidate Vic Hayes and members of the Vintage and Classic Car Clubs for organising their amazing exhibitions,
- Our renowned Donnybrook Butchers, Fruitbarn, and Supa IGA who supplied the food,
- The Blackwood United Football Club for acting as security overnight for the equipment that was set up the day before the event, and
- Events West for the sound equipment management and hire, as well as the performance from Groove Addiction.

I would also like to thank the Shire's Community Development Team, Corporate Services Team, and the Parks and Garden crew for pulling the whole event together.

Bringing January activities to a close, a **Special Meeting of Council**, was held on 24 January, when Councillors accepted Expressions of Interest for the role of Independent External Members of the Audit & Risk Committee. I warmly welcome the newly accepted members of the committee, Mr Ian Telfer and Mr Angelo Loguidice, who will be on board for a two-year term.

Also at the Special Meeting, Council accepted the Shire's Annual Report for 2022/2023 and set the date for the **Annual General Meeting of Electors**, which will be on Thursday 22 February at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall on Bentley Street, Donnybrook. I look forward to seeing you there.

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Thank you for taking the time to read my updates. Please continue to reach out to me, or any of your Councillors, with your thoughts, suggestions or concerns. We are here to listen and collaborate.

I am available at the Council Chambers every Wednesday. If you would like to make a time to meet, please call me on 0474 846 510. I am also working with Donnybrook Community Radio to set up an interview that will take place after each Ordinary Council Meeting that will provide a debrief of all decisions made on that day.

ENDS.

Vivienne MacCarthy
President for the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup