

President's Update #3

Shire of Donnybrook Balingup 5 March 2024



February has been a busy month for Councillors and Shire Staff, having held our February Agenda Briefing, our Ordinary Council Meeting, and the Annual General Meeting of Electors. Two external Committee Meetings were also held.

On Tuesday 6 February, Councillor Alexis Davy and I attended a Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils (WBAC) Board Meeting with CEO Dr Garry Hunt PSM in Nannup. At the start of March, the WBAC's 'All Shires' meeting will be held in Balingup, which brings together Councillors and CEOs from all member Shires. We will also see regional stakeholders, and foster collaborative discussions and share insights from our various roles and locations. In the later half of February, the South West Country Zone meeting was held in Bunbury and was followed by the South West Development Commission's Strategic Planning Session, with the CEO and I attending both sessions.

Also during February, CEO Garry Hunt and I had the pleasure of attending the launch of the feasibility study into the recommissioning of the Bunbury-Greenbushes Railway. The study stands separate to the Talison Lithium feasibility study, and proposes that tourist and passenger services will enhance the region by providing valuable high-yield tourism opportunities and commuter services.

With regional enhancement still in mind, your Councillors and I have been working hard to build our knowledge of the Shire by attending three workshops. At our first workshop, the Director of Operations and Director of Finance and Corporate both presented the broad scope of their responsibilities and the many services their departments offer to the community. I was astounded by the breadth of knowledge and expertise that we require in our CEO and Executive Team.

These presentations supported our second workshop, where Councillors explored the skills and capabilities we will look for from prospective CEO candidates during the CEO recruitment process. Output from the workshop will be captured in a first draft job description and selection criteria.

Our third workshop included an overview of the Planning function, presented by our new Manager of Development Services, Michelle Dennis, who presented an eye-popping view of the complexities of the Planning approval process. Councillors also had the opportunity for a site visit and presentation on the VC Mitchell Park (VCMP) Project from Director of Operations. I was pleased to see rigorous project management principles being applied. Happy fact: just 2% of construction* materials were sent to landfill, with the remaining 98% avoiding landfill entirely. An update and timeline of the project is available on the Shire's website on the VCMP Project page.

On other matters, I am pleased to share that we have received grant funding from the Department of Communities for \$2,374 toward a Youth Week event at the Pump Track building during Youth Week (5 – 12 April 2024). The Shire will contribute a further \$3,000 from the Youth Programs budget of \$8,860. The event will target Youth aged 12 to 24 within our community.



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The Shire also received \$275,000 in funding for the Greenbushes-Grimwade Road, as a part of the Main Roads WA Commodity Route Funding (CRF). The Shire will co-contribute \$137,500, which will bring the total works funding for this road to \$412,500. Sealing the area specified in the project will improve safety as well as seal a section of gravel road between 2 sealed sections.

I hope you all enjoy family and fun over the Easter break and have the opportunity to participate in the Apple Festival activities and Apple Festival Ball.

** Please note that the article published in the Preston Press has a typo, with the figure relating to construction waste and not demolition waste.*

ENDS.

Vivienne MacCarthy
President for the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup