

## Informal Community Forum Notes – 19 February 2019

### Attendance:

#### Councillors:

Cr KA Hooper	President
Cr MD Willis	Deputy President
Cr BJ Anderson	
Cr LN Boehme	
Cr AR Butler	
Cr RM Crees	
Cr JR Flockart	
Cr PR Patroni	

#### Staff:

G Powell	CEO
K Bartley	Deputy CEO
C Brown	Executive Manager Corporate Services
M Hudson	Executive Manager Engineering Services
V Green	Executive Assistant to CEO

#### Members of the Public:

Pam Forbes, David Morley, Grant Stainer, Mal Harper, Avril Parker, Terry Keitel, Langley Smith, Greg Shea, Ross & Gaynor Hardwick, Michelle Hooper, Hayley Billing, Yvonne Gray, Naedine Cockram, Margaret Krone, Laurie Maiolo, Rosemary Lambert, Teresa Cutri, Brian Campbell, Malcolm Robartson, John Flockart

#### Apologies:

Cr MA Crisafio

Topic:	Query / Discussion Points	Actions / Comment
Cummins Theatre	<p>Langley Smith read a lengthy statement pertaining to various activities at Cummins Theatre.</p> <p>The matters raised the statement regarding the traineeship and value of the Theatre to Council were addressed by the President, Deputy CEO and Theatre Manager.</p>	<p>The President re-confirmed Council's previous comments that the Cummins Theatre is a valued facility and continues to provide an excellent service to the community.</p> <p>The DCEO advised that discussions are being held with the schools and TAFE to further develop traineeships and student programs with the Theatre.</p> <p>Further, it was advised the Service Level Review is still being reviewed by Senior Management prior to presentation to Council.</p>
Public Art Survey Results	<p>Grant Stainer posed the following questions:</p> <p><i>"a) In the Phoenix (1/2/2019, p 17), the Shire states "Given that the community does not wish to use rates to pay for any</i></p>	<p>The President advised that while other examples of Art Strategies were sourced (Busselton &amp; East Fremantle) the</p>



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	<p><i>public art, there is no need for a strategy for public art."</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. My question is why should the source of the funding dictate whether the shire develops a strategy?</i></li> <li><i>2. Would it not be better to develop a strategy, and include in that strategy, options for seeking different funding sources?</i></li> </ol> <p><i>b) The same article also cites the various percentages of people who would be happy with different rate increases (or rates staying the same). There appears to be a potential typo in there "A further 25.8% didn't mind an increase of 25.8%..."</i></p> <p><i>Given that there is a cumulative percentage of people that would not mind a rate increase, the statement that "...the community does not wish to use rates to pay for any public art..." is not as solid as may first appear.</i></p> <p><i>c) My thoughts with public art is that it should steer away from military subjects, as there is already saturation coverage of military stuff in other areas.</i></p> <p><i>I think we should focus on flora and fauna, science fiction/fantasy/imaginary, local people, and lots of colour. Humorous subjects (an idea mentioned in the Phoenix) would also be a good idea. "</i></p>	<p>documents and the work behind them was quite detailed.</p> <p>Council considered that rather than expending time and funds in developing a similar document, art could be undertaken in an ad-hoc, less defined way (similar to that of the recent Military Museum proposal), which could be considered by Council on its merits on a case by case basis, and still obtain a similar outcome.</p> <p>Accessing funding for such a strategy, and then the implementation of public art, is sporadic and tends to require matching funds, which would need to be pulled from other areas of Council's operation.</p> <p>Public Art in the metropolitan area is often funded from contributions from large private developments (ie commercial and corporate construction etc) or a differential rate applied to a particular land use, which isn't applicable to Merredin.</p>
Adult Playground	<p>Mr Stainer posed the following question:</p> <p><i>"Does the Merredin Shire have any plans to implement any adult playground or exercise equipment?"</i></p>	<p>A grant application was recently submitted to SportAus but was unsuccessful.</p> <p>Further applications to other funding sources will be submitted for equipment at Roy Little Park.</p>
Natural Environment	<p>Mr Stainer posed the following questions:</p> <p><i>"a) What plans does the Merredin Shire have to protect remaining vegetation (especially roadside vegetation) and</i></p>	<p>The EMES advised native vegetation is protected under State legislation. Furthermore, in December 2015 the Eucalypt Woodlands of the WA Wheatbelt were listed as a</p>



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	<p><i>large trees such as Salmon Gums (which have a very low to nil recruitment rate)?</i></p> <p><i>b) Does the Merredin Shire have any revegetation plans? “</i></p>	<p>Threatened Ecological Community under the Federal EPBC Act. From a regulation point of view, the Shire considers these protections sufficient. The role the Shire sees for itself is more about education.</p> <p>Since 2011, the Shire has provided opportunities to eligible land managers to participate in revegetation projects through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2012–2017 <i>Connecting Biodiversity Across the Wheatbelt of WA</i> (Federally funded)</li> <li>• 2017–2018 <i>Engaging Landholders to Combat Vegetation Decline within Shire of Merredin</i> (State NRM Office funding)</li> <li>• 2018–2019 <i>Continuing to Combat Vegetation Decline within Shire of Merredin</i> (State NRM Office funding). This project is currently looking for interested and eligible land managers to undertake revegetation projects this winter.</li> </ul> <p>Vermin control is also a concern and it was suggested that with tighter controls in this area local flora and fauna could be better protected. The Shire obtained funding in 2016 for <i>Overcoming barriers to baiting in the Eastern Wheatbelt</i>. Additionally, all of the projects listed above included funding for the protection of native vegetation by fencing and controlling pest animal species.</p> <p>Many vegetation areas in the Shire are State controlled, meaning Council are not</p>



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		involved in the land management. However, the Shire does revegetate exhausted gravel pits as and when they occur.
Climate Change	<p>Mr Stainer posed the following question:</p> <p><i>“Given that climate change is affecting everywhere, including the wheatbelt, what plans does the Merredin Shire have in relation to:</i></p> <p><i>a) Managing or adapting to reduced rainfall?</i></p> <p><i>b) The potential demographic impacts?</i></p> <p><i>c) Impacts of the Shire’s activities?</i></p> <p><i>d) Reducing local greenhouse gas emissions?”</i></p>	<p>The President suggested climate change should be considered as a regional issue, and is something bigger than just the Shire, though noted that each individual can make a difference in their own actions and decisions.</p> <p>Due to the lack of rain it may be necessary for a rationalisation on watering of some parks and gardens as water levels in the Shire are getting very low.</p>
Community Events	<p>It was requested that the dates of other events around town were considered when planning Shire events and shows.</p> <p>A recent show at Cummins Theatre had its date changed so as not to clash with another event, so more dialogue is beginning to occur amongst community groups.</p>	<p>A new events calendar has been created on the Shire website and the CWVC also manage and circulate a list of events. Community Groups are encouraged to submit their events for inclusion on the websites which will assist in event planning.</p> <p>A regional calendar is also proposed and, again, community groups are encouraged to get in touch so their events and activities can be included.</p>
CBH Precinct	<p>It was queried whether, with the expansion of the CBH precinct, Council had made consideration for excess water run-off.</p> <p>The President advised CBH have 2 big areas on site which captured water and direct it to the Shire creek systems. The pumping system for those creek systems has recently been upgraded to increase the water capture.</p> <p>The EMES advised that Railway Dam had also recently had wall repairs undertaken to maximise water capture, adding that any additional</p>	



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	<p>water gained through any source will only benefit the current low water levels.</p> <p>As a side note to the water matter, the President advised that a Policy had recently been adopted and an agreement was being developed with CBH to create a fair system for road maintenance due to amount of grain being shifted over a large area that ratepayers are currently paying for.</p>	
CBD Parking Bays	<p>It was mentioned that the parking bay lines in the CBD, particularly on Barrack Street, needed repainting.</p> <p>The disabled bays were recently renewed however the faint lines for the other bays result in people not parking between the lines.</p> <p>It was also raised that as a courtesy to other road users people could consider how and where they park to enable more efficient use of the bays available.</p>	The EMES advised that the lines would be repainted in accordance with the scheduled program of works
Barrack Street Speed Limit	<p>It was suggested this be reduced to 30kms as children often run straight out in front of vehicles, with the potential for a tragic accident to occur.</p> <p>While parents and schools can teach children about road safety the Police have often been requested to monitor the area more extensively.</p> <p>The EMES added that while Council can't set the speed limits, it can request Main Roads WA for the limit to be reviewed.</p>	
Steel Grates across Drains	It was advised that a number of the steel drain grates along Barrack & Bates Streets needed to have sealant placed around them to stop people from tripping over them.	The EMES advised that investigations are underway to potentially replace the grates with another alternative.
CWVC Public Toilets	A request was made for the toilets to receive a very thorough clean (steam clean of the tiles and walls) every 3-6 months as their general appearance is deteriorating.	The CEO advised the toilets are cleaned twice daily, acknowledging that the cleanliness of the facility depends very much on who uses



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		the toilets during the day and what state they are left in.
Aged Care Referrals	<p>Pam Forbes gave an account of a recent experience trying to obtain medical assistance for a neighbour who did not have family or friends in town.</p> <p>As there is a need for consent from either the individual or their family, it is difficult to obtain care for people who experience health issues without family and who are no longer able to look after themselves.</p> <p>Whilst it was acknowledged that the matter was not part of Council's core business it was suggested that a community committee could be established, or a plan/process developed, to enable people in those circumstances to have the information they need to make the appropriate referrals and receive care.</p>	The CEO took the matter on board, undertaking to investigate the matter further and provide advice and further information to Ms Forbes.
Risen Energy – Merredin Solar Farm	<p>An update on the status of the project was requested.</p> <p>The CEO advised that company management and parliamentarians would be attending Merredin in March for a ground breaking ceremony.</p> <p>Construction is expected to occur over a 12 month period with around 200 jobs available.</p> <p>The farm will consist of around 360,000 panels which are being freighted from the Fremantle Port.</p> <p>A meeting with the principal construction contractor is expected soon.</p>	
Narembeen Gold Mine	<p>With the commencement of operations at the mine the additional traffic along Narembeen Road was raised.</p> <p>The President confirmed the amount of traffic would depend on whether the material would be processed on site or transferred to Westonia for processing, adding that mining</p>	



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	activity generally has significant impacts on road maintenance.	
CWVC	<p>The matter of whether the Visitors Centre could be open on weekends was raised.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the Centre did open on weekends throughout the wildflower season. Further, that the Centre was open on Australia Day with a total of 6 people visiting the Centre.</p> <p>The main issues relate to the cost of staffing over a 7 day period, and being able to roster 2 staff to work during the week and on weekends.</p>	<p>An on-line presence for visitor servicing is being progressed through the WEROC app and other tourism websites, though there is consideration to open with a limited capacity during peak tourism seasons.</p> <p>The President mentioned that all businesses can contribute to providing visitors with tourism information and details on what's available in and around the town and region.</p>
Closing Comments	<p>In closing, the President advised that Council do try to do the best it can with the current resources available, and realise people's expectations may be different.</p> <p>He added that the Harmony Week Twilight Food Festival is being held on 8 March and promises to again be a really great night, with everyone encouraged to attend.</p> <p>Finally, the President thanked everyone for taking the effort to attend and have their say.</p>	