



Shire of Busselton E-News March/April 2007

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MESSAGE FROM THE SHIRE PRESIDENT

Despite the many issues the Shire is facing, such as the debate on the hospital referendum, Jetty and associated land development proposals, CCC hearings etc; it is pleasing to note from quarterly reports that the focus on the Corporate plan has been maintained with good progress being achieved. I congratulate all involved for their efforts.

From a Council perspective it continues to function well, despite being without question a difficult time. Councils are elected to provide governance through the decision making process and often it is faced with differing community opinion on issues, however it has to make the decision it sees as the best for the community as a whole. Of course some are displeased while some are satisfied, that is the nature of the role in local government, in cases where consultation provides a clear view it is somewhat easier. Council will continue to have the courage to make the decisions it sees as being right.

Kevin Douglas Shire President

MEETINGS OF COUNCIL

The agendas and minutes of Council's meetings can be located on the Shire's website at:

<http://www.busselton.wa.gov.au/indexpages/indexagendaminutes.htm>

LOCKE ESTATE - OPEN DAY INVITATION **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24 at Locke Estate**

COMMUNITY URGED TO HAVE INPUT INTO LOCKE ESTATE REVIEW

As you may be aware, the Shire of Busselton has engaged Connell Wagner to undertake community and stakeholder consultation into the future use of Locke Estate.

As part of that consultation process members of the public are invited to attend an open day on Saturday February 24 at Locke Estate.

The open day is designed to provide an opportunity for the public to view this unique site to allow informed submissions on the future use of the reserve to be made.

Interested community members are urged to contact Anne Grove for further details regarding open times.
anneg@busselton.wa.gov.au

The Locke Estate is a unique beachfront location on Caves Road, and incorporates 15 leases that expire in 2011. The agreements are with both religious and community groups operating recreational campsites. The site is State land under the management of the Shire of Busselton.

The site provides a valuable service to youth, elderly and disadvantaged groups and has played an important part in the lives of many West Australians over several decades.

Locke Estate comprises some important remnant vegetation and provides one of the last stands of peppermint woodland. It is also a habitat for the endangered Western Ringtail Possum.

The Shire of Busselton's Director of Community and Organisational Development, Matthew Smith, said input into the future of Locke Estate from lessees, site managers, the local community and businesses would be valuable in determining how the site should look and operate in the future.

"The Shire of Busselton has no preconceived ideas on how this unique site should look in the future. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, is on public record that the reserve will remain an 'A' classification ensuring it is retained for community/public benefit," Mr Smith said.

"While the economic value of the land might be recognised, we want to determine what the social and environmental value of the land is to the broader community. We understand that many people in both the Busselton and surrounding communities are keen to have input into the future of the site, so the consultants are designing a range of methods to achieve this.

"There are crucial environmental issues that need to be considered to ensure long term sustainability. The beachfront is subject to foreshore stabilization works due to coastal erosion that is continuing to threaten camp infrastructure and beach amenity.

"Management of all of these environmental issues will be crucial in future concept planning for the site. The lessees have also expressed concern about these issues, so we want to work with them to determine the best way to manage the site for the future."

Connell Wagner will conduct the consultation program that includes workshops with directly affected stakeholders. Comment sheets will be placed at campsites, and key locations in Busselton and Dunsborough for interested community members to complete.

The first round of workshops is planned for mid-March, and the project team has already commenced discussions with lessees and other key organizations.

"This will ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their opinion on the future of the site," Mr Smith said.

Information from consultation will be considered by Council prior to recommendations on the future of the reserve being submitted to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure who will make final decisions on the site's future.

REFERENDUM UPDATE

Cr Wes Hartley has given notice of his intention to move that the Council acknowledges its previous decision to proceed with a referendum on the issue of the preferred location for the new Busselton Hospital and to appoint the Electoral Commissioner to conduct the referendum. This matter is listed for consideration at the 28 February, 2007 meeting of Council.

AGM DECISIONS / MOU

The Council at its last meeting considered a motion from the Electors' Meeting that sought to have the Council annul the Memorandum of Understanding with the State Government.

The Council resolved that it would reconfirm its commitment to the MOU as a document of significant strategic importance, however, acknowledged the community concerns regarding the jetty project.

It is the intention of the Council to endeavour to ensure a more inclusive process with any future projects to be considered under the MOU.

ACCESS & INCLUSION PLAN

The Shire of Busselton's Disability Access & Inclusion Plan will be implemented to encompass the needs of all members of the community. It has a particular focus on nurturing a community where diversity, difference and a sense of identity is respected and valued. These values are underpinned by a commitment to the creation of fair and equitable access for all residents and visitors to the shire, its facilities and services.

On Tuesday, 30 January 2007 the Inaugural meeting of the Access & Inclusion Planning Committee was held in the Shire offices. This committee will meet quarterly and will ensure that priority work and projects of the plan are progressed.

The plan can be viewed on the Shire's website via the following link:

http://www.busselton.wa.gov.au/publications/reports_plans_brochures/access_and_inclusion_plan.pdf

For further information please contact the Community Development Officer on 9781 0496.

UPGRADE FOR VASSE RIVER ENTRY POINT TO BUSSELTON

The Shire of Busselton was recently awarded State Government Black Spot funding to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Peel Terrace and Causeway Road, in the interests of improving road safety. Construction of the roundabout is expected to be completed this year. To maximise the opportunity to enhance the access point to the town, a design workshop was held involving Shire engineers and planning staff, urban design and art consultants.

The design workshop looked at various upgrade opportunities within the surrounding area, with the aim of improving pedestrian access and safety and to support both existing and greater community use of the site. Design considerations included treatments for the road infrastructure, bollards, lighting and potential public art and interpretive trails.

Shire President, Kevin Douglas said "The site itself contains a number of features, both natural and man made. These include the Waljin Aboriginal Garden, Rotary Park and weekend market area, playground, Busselton Visitor Centre, the Old Butter Factory, Heritage Park, picnic areas on the Vasse River and St Mary's historic stone church. The planned road works offer an opportunity to enhance community enjoyment and provide safer access to the area."

Councillors and community members of the Busselton 2020 project group were invited to attend an informal presentation and discussion of the main concepts on January 12th, immediately following the design workshop. Discussion and consultation will be held with key stakeholders over the next few months to gather further input towards the artistic elements of the design and community use of the area.

MEELUP REGIONAL PARK - FUTURE MANAGEMENT

A proposal to investigate the possibility of handing over responsibility of the Meelup Regional Park to the State Government's Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has been received favourably by the Executive and the Meelup Park Management Committee.

For a number of months the Shire of Busselton's Director of Community Infrastructure has been concerned about the high workload of the Committee, the increasingly onerous compliance requirements that are being placed on the Shire in carrying out its responsibilities for Meelup Regional Park and the fundamental role the Shire has with respect to management of regional parks.

It is felt that the time has come to consider a hand over of the Meelup Regional Park to the DEC for a number of reasons, each of which on their own may not justify consideration of this proposal, but collectively carry sufficient merit for this proposal to be pursued.

The current chairman, Don McDonald, is spending an average of 20 hours per week in his role and does not see this as diminishing in the future. The Committee currently has administrative assistance and requires significant staff support, which is also increasing. There are currently three committee vacancies which have been advertised unsuccessfully. Word of mouth contact with community members is now being sought to

attempt to fill these vacancies. In summary there are resource issues affecting the Committee and staff in carrying out the management responsibilities for the Park.

Increasing compliance requirements such as heritage issues, clearing permit requirements and the Contaminated Sites Act are impacting on management of the Park requiring more intensive and professional management and creating even greater responsibility for the Management Committee.

Although the Shire has successfully managed the Park for many years now it is felt that this is not "core business" of the Shire. It is considered that a government department, whose core business is the management of parks, would be the appropriate Park Manager. The managerial and technical expertise required to manage parks such as the Meelup Regional Park is contained within an organisation such as the DEC, who have extensive in-house expertise and already provide technical expertise services routinely to the existing Management Committee. The expertise that the DEC has and the economies of scale that they are able to achieve should enable effective management of the Park.

The Meelup Park Management Committee's recommendation will come to the Council by way of a report, for Council consideration. The Committee has committed to investigating the possibility of a handover with open consultation with the Committee and the community. It is to be noted that this is in no way a commitment to a handover, but to exploring the idea to weigh up the merits or otherwise of the proposal.

There are of course many questions to be asked such as the status of the Meelup and Castle Rock foreshore car park areas, guaranteeing the preservation of the land as an A class Reserve and the role of the Committee under new management. These questions and many others will be developed and explored in close consultation with the Committee and the DEC. Initial contacts with the DEC have indicated that they are prepared to discuss this matter further with the Shire. Once the report on this issue is put before Council, staff will take direction from the outcome of that resolution before proceeding.

ECO PARK / BUNKERS BAY

At its meeting on the 31st January Council endorsed the process to investigate the feasibility of an Eco Park at Bunkers Bay. A reference group will be established of key interested stakeholders to provide advice to the consultant undertaking the study which will assess environmental, social and economic issues.

Shire President, Kevin Douglas said "Council is aware that the trend of caravan parks closing or being redeveloped has been occurring for some time in the Shire and at an increased rate in recent years, and therefore endorsed that this issue be looked at as part of the Shire's Corporate Plan. I feel that it is important, both socially and economically, to maintain the affordability for families to come to the area and enjoy our pristine environment. It is also important that environmental issues are considered. Low impact development that blends with our environment would provide a wealth of enjoyment for years to come."

Economic Development Officer, Paul Martin said that "it's not just a local issue but also a national one. It is estimated that over 200 caravan parks have closed across Australia in the last 10 years, mostly due to land use issues".

"It is becoming more likely that in the future only those sites owned by the State Government (which may be vested with local government) will be financially feasible to develop into caravan or eco parks in areas with high land values" Mr Martin said.

Initial staff investigations have identified two sites that are large enough in size and in appropriate locations that could support such a park. One is on the corner of Cape Naturaliste Road and Bunker Bay Road. This site is 66 hectares in size and is vested with the Shire for the purpose of Camping and Recreation. Obviously only a small amount of the site would need to be investigated for such a park, and Council would then have the option to offer the remainder to the State to increase the Leeuwin Naturaliste National Park.

Environmental issues will form a major component of the feasibility study and given that it contains a section previously used for gravel extraction it could provide a location for a park with minimal impact upon the environment.

"The Bunker Bay site is also within a cluster of tourism activity which includes the Cape Naturaliste Lighthouse and the Bunker Bay Resort. The establishment of an Eco Park in this area would add value to the tourism experience" said Mr Martin.

The other site is Locke Estate however staff have recommended that its investigation be delayed, for investigation as a caravan park, until the outcomes of the Reserve's long term use and recommendations from stakeholders and the community are known.

SMITH'S BEACH - DRAFT 'DEVELOPMENT GUIDE PLAN' (DGP)

At its meeting on 13th December, 2006 Council considered the Smith's Beach draft DGP and resolved to allow the Plan to be advertised for community consultation purposes.

In considering the draft DGP Council noted its concerns in relation to the proposed development, however the failure to meet the requirements of clause 25 and other requirements of the Town Planning Scheme was considered by the Shire to be of a nature that would still allow advertising to the community.

On that basis Council adopted the draft DGP for community consultation subject to those concerns being addressed.

Once Shire staff are confident that the all of the requirements of Council's resolution are fulfilled as intended, the draft DGP will be placed on formal public exhibition.

Advertising is anticipated to take place in late April.

SHIRE LEADS THE WAY IN TOURISM PLANNING

Tourism is a major economic driver and significant industry in Busselton. Accordingly, the Shire of Busselton has commenced formulation of a tourism planning process to address the strategic land use needs of tourism and the increasing pressure on land and resources in this area. The Shire is one of the first local authorities in the State to accept this challenge.

The Shire has contracted Sustainable Development Facilitation (SDF) to work with the community and industry to prepare a Local Tourism Planning Strategy. Tim Shingles, the Shire's Manager of Strategic Planning, says "The Strategy will help to ensure that the demand for tourism development in the Shire is addressed over strategic time frames, and current and future tourism opportunities of the area are maximised".

The main purpose of the Strategy is to ensure a logical rationale for determining the future land allocation, planning controls and infrastructure needs for tourism in the area.

The Strategy will have a particular focus on land use and development. The process will include recognising the existing and potential level of tourism development that can be sustainably accommodated. When completed, the Strategy will help to guide tourism industry growth that will result in economic benefits and responsible environmental management as well other benefits to the community.

The Strategy will respond to the 'Tourism Planning Taskforce Report' published by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure which encourages local governments to address strategic tourism needs for future generations.

The Strategy will also be used to inform the development of the Shire's Local Planning Strategy and review of the District Town Planning Scheme. SDF will lead the community and tourism industry stakeholders through a strategic planning process culminating in the adoption of a Strategy later in 2007. SDF would like to hear from any organisations or individuals interested in tourism land use and development. Dorothy Lucks of SDF can be contacted on 9582 9228 or through email on sustain@southwest.com.au.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LIBRARIES

The Busselton and Dunsborough Public Libraries introduced *Better Beginnings* in March 2006. Consisting of a series of linked strategies developed to encourage parents to share books and stories with their babies and to establish lifelong links with libraries, the program will be progressively rolled out over the next three years.

As part of the first stage of this program all babies born in the Shire of Busselton now receive a Better Beginnings toolkit, containing a quality children's book and supporting materials to stimulate reading activities and literacy.

Rhymetime and Baby Storytime Sessions are an important part of the *Better Beginnings* program, promoting libraries as fun, friendly, vibrant and exciting places for babies and toddlers. The Busselton Public Library currently holds "Baby Bounce" sessions on the last Friday of the month at 10.30am. The Dunsborough Library commenced "Baby Bounce" sessions in January 2007.

As part of the Better Beginnings program, both libraries will be hosting a series of parent information workshops conducted in partnership with other community agencies covering a variety of topics including speech and language development, play and nutrition.

For further information on this exciting program please contact Patti at the Busselton Public Library on 97541588.

FIND YOUR MISSING PET ON-LINE

The Shire of Busselton now has a Register of Impounded Animals included on its website.



You can visit the site and view photos and descriptions to see if your missing pet has been located or if you are looking to give an animal a new home.

The Shire's website can be found at www.busselton.wa.gov.au and is updated regularly.

If you locate your missing pet on-line contact the Shire on 97810444 to make arrangements for collection.

LEISURE SERVICES PLAN

The Shire's Leisure Services Plan was adopted, in part, by Council at its meeting on 14th February. Council has deferred its decision on all remaining recommendations until the final outcome of the Busselton Jetty Taskforce deliberations and the subsequent impact on Signal Park, Barnard Park and Churchill Park are known.

The Plan is designed to give long term direction to Shire staff and the community as a set of general principles in respect to addressing the leisure infrastructure and services needs of the Shire.

A Leisure Services Plan Working Party will be established to develop and monitor an implementation strategy in response to the emerging needs of the Shire throughout the life of the Plan.

In addition \$20,000 has been identified for placement on the 2007/2008 draft budget to investigate the property acquisition implications of proceeding with a foreshore alignment for the Busselton to Dunsborough cycle/walk trail. While it is understood that some residents may oppose the recommended foreshore alignment of the proposed cycle/walk trail, it is recognised that the long term strategic objectives of a foreshore alignment for the entire length of this trail should always be held as the ultimate goal. The issues that are raised during the investigation process will be the subject of a future report to Council.

Further information can be obtained by calling Mr Allan Whitfield, Manager Community Development on 97810462. [A copy of the Leisure Services Plan can be viewed at www.busselton.wa.gov.au.](http://www.busselton.wa.gov.au)

WARNING ON TIMBER BALCONIES

The Shire of Busselton is advising all owners of timber balconies to perform maintenance checks.

Timber balconies that are poorly maintained have the potential to cause severe injury or death.

Timber balconies have collapsed within the Shire of Busselton resulting in a number of injuries due to inappropriate fastening methods, rotting timber, balconies built without Shire building approval and poor workmanship.

As a safety measure the Shire of Busselton recommends that all homeowners should carefully check support beams and posts looking for rusting nails and soft spongy timber. It is recommended if in doubt that arrangements be made for a professional inspection to determine the structural integrity of your balcony.

For further information please contact Building Services on 97810479.

Disclaimer

Whilst every care is taken to ensure accuracy, the Shire of Busselton cannot guarantee that information expressed here is correct and recommends that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use.