



EXPERIENCE REGIONAL WA

We'll see you in Mingenew!

COUNCIL UPDATE 5 APRIL 2019

The months are flying by – can you believe we are almost a quarter of the way through 2019?

Message from the Shire President

It has been a typically busy month at Council. At our March meeting the Shire's Deputy President Crispian Lucken resigned. I would like to sincerely thank Cris for all his contributions since his election as a Councillor in 2014 and as Deputy President in 2017.

In light of Cr Lucken's departure, Council held a Special Meeting on April 3, at which Cr Robert Newton was elected Deputy President. Cr Newton will serve in that position up to the next scheduled Local Government elections in October and we congratulate him on his appointment. Speaking of elections, Council has also decided to hold an extraordinary election to fill the seat vacated by Cr Lucken. The election will be taking place on Friday 7 June 2019, and I expect you will see a range of communications from the Shire in the coming weeks regarding voting and nominations. Being a Councillor can be both a challenging and rewarding role, and I would encourage anyone interested to give it serious consideration.

Outside of the Council meeting, I have attended several recent meetings regarding mental health services in the region, including with our Local Member and WACHS to discuss improving telehealth facilities here in Mingenew, local Police to talk about responses to mental health emergencies, and I have engaged with the various parties working on the Midwest Wellness Plan. There is an ever-growing voice in our region for better services in this critical area, and I am hopeful that these approaches yield tangible results. I also want to commend the Mingenew Football Club and Mingenew Gringos for their engagement with the Blue Tree Project to help further raise awareness on this matter. The Shire is proud to support this initiative, and I hope the painting event on April 7 is well attended.

Regarding the Shire's economic development, I have also recently attended a Tourism WA workshop on China-ready tourism for our region to learn how the Shire can better position itself to grow our international tourist market. This feeds in to a number of comments during our Strategic Community Planning process regarding the Shire's ongoing focus on growing tourism. Still on the economy, several Councillors and I met with CBH representatives during their recent visit to Mingenew to talk about future plans for the Mingenew facility and the major role that CBH continues to play in our local economy. Economic and population growth are clearly linked, and both are clear goals of our Council and community.

- Cr Helen Newton, Shire President.

Roads

As always, roads are front and centre of our current activities. Our WANDRRA (flood damage) works have been finished and are undergoing final sign-off. In the meantime our crew is currently rebuilding and widening a section of Mingenew-Mullewa Road – please be sure to observe our traffic control, and drive safely around the roadworks.

Before the year is out we have a section of Yandanooka North East Road to widen and seal, and we will be doing some earthworks and widening on Coalseam Road.

Recently Councillors and management conducted a road inspection to see some of the work that has been completed through the year, and to identify some priorities for the coming financial year(s). This information, in addition to traffic count data and feedback from the community will help us to the shape our roadworks budget and Road Hierarchy documentation.

Bridges

Many residents will be aware that both Coalseam Bridge (Coalseam Rd) and Yarragadee Bridge (Mingenew-Mullewa Rd) are on track for upgrade/replacement. This is a process Main Roads are undertaking, and we are able to provide a brief update on both.

Coalseam Bridge:

The Field Inspection for the preparation of Scoping for Bridge Replacement was undertaken on 31 January this year. The resulting Scoping Report is due mid-April. It may take at least another month for the Structural Engineering team to review and finalise. The next steps will be to undertake waterway assessments, geotechnical investigation, develop options and move into the 15% Design Stage. Waterway Engineering is in the process of preparation of a scope for a Waterway Assessment Study, which will likely be completed in 4 months.

Yarragadee Bridge:

The Waterway Assessment for Bridge Replacement is happening at present and expected to be completed in May 2019. Field Inspection for the preparation of a brief for Feasibility study for Bridge Replacement versus any strengthening was undertaken on 31 Jan. The report from this is due at the end of March 2019. As with Coalseam Bridge, Structural Engineering will take about a month to review and finalise the brief. From there a Feasibility Study will take place. If the replacement option is feasible next steps are geotechnical investigation, development of options and moving into 15% Design Stage. If the Strengthening is feasible move into 15% Design Stage.

In short, there is plenty of planning and feasibility work taking place on both bridges at present, and we should know a bit more about Main Roads' preferred options in the coming months.

Tourism

A big congratulations is due to the Mingenew Turf Club for a fantastic race day. A lot of work goes on – both at the Turf Club and in Council – behind the scenes to pull everything together for the event, and wonderful to see such a great result. Premiere events like the Races and Expo are a key part of our 'We'll See You In Mingenew' campaign, and the success of this year's races have us already looking forwards to the 2020 event (which we have heard is going to be the 100th anniversary event).

Shire representatives also attended the Tourism & Promotions Committee's AGM on 20 March to talk about local preparation for this year's tourist season, the upcoming Our Town Television Show shoot, as well as some of the projects that the T&P Committee have under planning at present.

Finally, don't forget that our free public stargazing night is coming up at Yandanooka Hall on 30 March. Everyone is welcome to come down and get some tips on what to look for in the night sky, how to use a telescope and to learn more about the amazing phenomena that we have access to by virtue of our low light pollution levels. You can check out the event page on the Shire's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2282374871773329/>.



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Strategic Planning

Thanks to everyone who made it to the Strategic Community Planning session – we are in the process of putting together the final draft of the document. There has been a lot of engagement through the process, and we are hopeful that this input is reflected in the finished document. If you haven't yet had your say (or want to say more) submissions are open until 29 March. You can find out more about this process by visiting: <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/strategic-plan/>.

Council Meeting Review

Our March Council Meeting took place on 20 March. This month there was a focus on our Audit and Risk Committee, with Council adopting an updated Terms of Reference for the Committee, as well as endorsing the addition of an independent member to the Committee – Mr. Maurice Battliana. Some people will remember Maurice, who served as CEO here in Mingenew several years ago, and is currently the CEO at the Shire of Chapman Valley. His extensive local government experience, coupled with his familiarity with local issues and conditions will be a valuable addition to the Committee.

In WA Local Government the Audit Committee plays a key role in guiding and assisting the Local Government in regard to both financial and internal audit procedures. You can learn more about Audit Committees' functions and responsibilities at: <https://bit.ly/2Hxzqwo>

History

There has been quite a bit of activity in the historical space this month. Shire representatives have engaged with the Mingenew Historical Society to discuss plans they are developing for an interpretive installation focused on the role that grain farming and CBH have played our history.

At the same time, we have received a conservation plan for the Railway Station building, and are in the process of preparing a funding application with a view to completing some of the recommended conservation works, so that we can make the building more functional and accessible for the community.

March 15 saw the official opening of the Littlewell Reserve Project – which was well attended by both locals and former Littlewell Residents alike. For those who haven't yet been down to the Reserve to see the interpretive signs and read about the history that took place there, we strongly recommend it.

We have also added a History section to the Shire website, it provides a brief background into our local history and we plan to continue to add to it over time. You can find it at: <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/shire-history/>.

Community Assistance Scheme Grants

As we are moving through the year, many of our community groups are starting to come into full swing. We want to remind you all that the Shire is trialing a new Community Assistance Scheme program for the coming financial year. It is designed to give the Community a bit more transparency over where the Shire spends it, as well as making it easier for us to meet our reporting requirements with regards to funding and donations.

If your community group has something planned for the coming financial year that you would like Shire assistance with (either in kind or cash), we strongly advise you put in an application. You can find more information about the scheme – as well as application documents – on the Shire website <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/resources/> or by coming into the Shire office to request a hard copy.

Website and Communications

Another reminder: We are also in the process of updating our contact lists for our email and text message database, so if you want to receive (or continue to receive) emails and text messages with Shire updates, please complete the 'Community Register' form at <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/resources/>, or simply come into the Shire office for a form.

Likewise, if you haven't already, be sure to follow the Shire on Facebook for a range of regular updates. We are at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ShireofMingenew>.



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