



EXPERIENCE REGIONAL WA

We'll see you in Mingenew!

COUNCIL UPDATE 12 June 2019

End of Financial Year is fast approaching, as we are reminded what rain looks like. It's been another big month here at the Shire.

Message from the Shire President

After one of the driest possible starts to a year, finally we have had some rain! Whether you are growing grain or livestock, waiting for wildflowers or simply sick of watching your garden go brown, I'm sure you'll feel that this is a very welcome development for our region.

It has been a busy month in our community, and I was fortunate to attend two fantastic events – the Biggest Morning Tea and the 90th Birthday of the Mingenew Branch of the Country Women's Association. The CWA 90th Birthday was well attended, and a great reminder of the generations of community volunteers who have come before us and continue to contribute to our community in so many ways. Through my family, I have had quite a close relationship with the CWA, and the pride that our local group displayed in reaching this impressive milestone is deserved.

I must also congratulate the volunteers behind the Biggest Morning Tea, who amassed a great turn-out, put on an exception spread, and raised over \$2,000 for the Cancer Council – a terrific effort for a very worthy cause. The attendance and fundraising success is another example of our small community achieving big things.

Speaking of such things, I must also acknowledge the efforts of our Shire CEO Nils Hay and his team, who have successfully secured almost \$900,000 in funding from the WA Government to assist with the ongoing upgrade of the Coalseam Road. Only 14 Shires in WA were successful in obtaining funding through the Commodity Freight Route Fund, and this financial boost is very welcome as Council prepares to consider the 2019/20 Budget.

This week I was also invited to meet with the Minister for Local Government, along with other Shire Presidents and CEOs from the region. The forum focused on the ongoing reform of the Local Government Act, as well as some of the challenges the sector is currently facing; some of which are of its own making, others which are a result of external pressures. It was a reminder that Local Government – like all industries – must continue to evolve and adapt if we are to thrive.

- Cr Helen Newton, Shire President.

Extraordinary Election

The result for the Town Ward election is in! Congratulations to Anthony Smyth (30 votes) and commiserations to Carol Farr (26 votes) on what was a very close outcome.

Our next election will be taking place on 19 October, and will see two Town Ward and two Rural Ward seats available for nomination. For more information, see <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/elections/>.

Corporate Planning and Budget

Following the adoption of our new Strategic Community Plan 2019-2029 on 1 May (see <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/strategic-plan/> for all the details) we are now working on our internal 4-year Corporate Business Plan (CBP). The CBP seeks to break down the goals of the Strategic Community Plan into projects and initiatives that Council can plan, fund, deliver and maintain.

At the same time, Council is developing its budget for the 2019-20 Financial Year, to ensure that we can resource these programs and initiatives. This process always involves a balancing act, as we resource the things we must do (legal compliance, regulatory requirements, acquitting funded projects) whilst also making room for new initiatives and programs to improve our infrastructure and make our community a better place.

You can expect to hear more about both the CBP and budget in the coming months as they are further developed and adopted.

Roads

The past few weeks has seen the completion of 1.5km of widening and reseal work on Yandanooka North East Road, as well as a Road Safety Audit conducted upon that road as well. The Audit helps to identify areas requiring work from a safety perspective, and is a pre-requisite for applying for Black Spot funding to help improve unsafe sections. As many road users will be aware, there are areas of Yandanooka North East Road which could use that kind of upgrade attention, and we will be seeking Black Spot funding to help us to do so.

Our final remaining road project for the financial year is currently well underway on Mingenew-Mullewa Road, where we are widening, reconstructing and resealing another 3 kilometer section. During this period, we will have automatic traffic lights set up on the road. For your safety, and the safety of our staff, please obey these signals. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Through our budget process we are finalizing our 2019-20 road program also. We are planning for a less intense construction program for the coming year, which should free up additional resources for maintenance on both our rural and town roads. That said, it has just been announced that we were successful in our application for \$894,000 of funding to widen a further 9.51km of Coalseam Road. As such, we are one of only 14 Shires in WA to successfully receive funding through the Commodity Freight Route Fund. Naturally, this is a welcome boost to our budget, and will help to accelerate our ongoing upgrade plans for that road.

Bridge Update

We have received an update from Main Roads regarding the ongoing review and replacement of the Coalseam and Yarragadee Bridges:

Coalseam:

- Structural Engineering review was completed in Mid April 2019.
- Feasibility Study needs to be continued for bridge types and alignment options.
- Once the bridge type and the alignment option is finalised, environmental and heritage approvals need to be reviewed.
- Engagement of a Consultant for Waterway assessment and survey happening now. Anticipated completion Sept 2019.
- Next Steps are to undertake geotechnical investigation, developing options and move into 15% Design Stage.

At this stage works are still some time off. The existing bridge and traffic controls will remain in place through the 2019 Harvest at least.



Yarragadee:

- Waterway Assessment for Bridge Replacement is happening now. It is anticipated that it will be completed mid July.
- Project Brief for Feasibility study for Bridge Replacement versus any strengthening was received on 16th May. At this stage Geotechnical Investigations are being organised and Structural Engineering review is continuing.
- Next step - Undertake the Feasibility Study for Replacement versus strengthening.

Council Meeting Review

Following the Special Meeting and Audit and Risk Committee Meeting on May 1, our May Ordinary Council Meeting was quite procedural. One key issue that did come up for discussion was the tidiness and fire risk of blocks in the townsite. The Shire Ranger has since taken this area as a focus; even though we are out of the restricted burning period, our current dry spell means that the risk is still present.

As always, minutes can be found on the Shire website: <https://mingenew.wa.gov.au/minutes/>.

Tourism Update

With the annual tourist season approaching (some would say already under way, with plenty of caravans on the road), the Shire is preparing for another wildflower season. Over the coming months hopefully we will see some great rains, beautiful wildflowers and ongoing promotion of the 'See You In Mingenew' campaign, as well as some new wildflower-focused marketing for this year.

To support these efforts, the Shire CEO – who is also the Chair of WA's Wildflower Country (<http://wildflowercountry.com.au/>), a regional tourism-focused grouping of Shires – has been busy engaging with various bodies to promote our region's superb natural assets. Over the course of June he was invited to present to industry representatives at FACET's 'Capitalising on Western Australia's Unique Flora' Perth forum, as well as meeting with the Tourism WA board in Geraldton to talk about the role of Wildflower Country and raise awareness of not just our wildflowers, but also the potential for astrotourism, trails and farm-based tourism which exists here in the Mid West.

Community Assistance Grants

Our Selection Panel met in May to assess the applications for our Community Assistance Grants. We are happy to announce that the following projects were selected for assistance:

- Checkmate Men's Health – Mingenew CRC
- Community Care Senior's Activities – Mingenew CRC
- Historic Walk Trail – Mingenew Historical Society and Mingenew Tourism & Promotions Committee
- Sister Cameron House Outdoor Renovations – Mingenew Playgroup
- Static Cattle Drove – Mingenew Tourism & Promotions Committee
- Through the Farm Gate Tours – Mingenew Irwin Group

Thanks to all who applied. There is some CAS funding remaining, so expect to see Round 2 released in the new Financial Year. We are also looking into holding some further grant writing workshops in the area ahead of the next round to assist any prospective applicants.

Thank A Volunteer

Our volunteers do a tremendous for this community, and volunteer burnout was a hot topic during the consultation around our Strategic Community Plan. Whilst it can never fully repay the great work that they do, we will be holding a Thank a Volunteer Day Ceremony and BBQ on Thursday 27 June from 3.30pm at the Turf Bar. Please contact the Shire on 9928 1102 or email csa@mingenew.wa.gov.au to RSVP.

Website and Communications

We have been updating our contact lists for our email and text message database. We have finalized our new lists, so if feel you are missing out on important 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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