



COUNCIL COMMENTS

The cooler months are here and so are the tourists. All residents are encouraged to do their bit to promote our town and keep it looking good. We have been receiving many compliments on our main street looking nice and tidy. The lawns and gardens are looking spectacular at the moment with the roses in bloom.

DIGITAL TELEVISION

Most residents would have seen the roll out of digital television that will be happening all across Australia and that we will require televisions or set top boxes that are digital ready. This will eventually come to Mount Magnet as well.

The roll out plan for Digital television into the Metropolitan area of WA is set to happen early in 2013 and then into the regional areas in late 2013. Therefore there is no rush to purchase the equipment.

Currently ABC is being broadcast in digital signal in Mount Magnet, but this is the only channel. For further information on this, you may wish to look up the information on the ABC website at www.abc.net.au

STREET CLEANUP

Many thanks to the people involved in the street clean up for the movie premier. This certainly made our town look better on the day.

There were several cleanups, the CDEP went through the streets on the Thursday before the film. Students from the school picked up rubbish in the school area and oval which also collected several bags of rubbish. There were also several volunteers on Saturday morning that went through the main street, Attwood Street and surrounds to pick up rubbish.

Many thanks to the individuals who gave up their time for this. In a little over an hour on the Saturday, about 12 bags of rubbish were picked up. It would certainly be preferred if people used the rubbish bins placed around town.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Shire and the Tourist Information Centre Inc have reached an agreement to have the Shire staff operate the Tourist Centre for the next five years.

Currently the centre is to be renovated to provide insulation, reverse cycle air conditioning and reduce the dust entering the area. Once these works are complete, the centre will be opened again. In the mean time, Tourist Information is available from the Post Office, Shire Office or Caravan Park.

Applications have been received for the Casual Part Time position of Tourist Information Officer. It is hoped that several people will be able to job-share this position to ensure that the centre is manned adequately at all times.

WILDFLOWER SEEDS

An initiative that came out of the Tourism Advisory Council was for the Shire to purchase wildflower seeds to be spread around town and for the residents that are interested. The Shire has purchased several varieties of wildflowers which are now available from the office.

All residents wishing to have a display of wild flowers are encouraged to pick up seeds from the office. In order to ensure they are wide spread, there is a small allocation for residents. Seeds have also been scattered over the shire parks and gardens in the area.

Each year we will be trying to add to the selection of wildflowers to ensure that the town has a nice display for the tourists that are passing through.

2009/2010 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Several things are currently being considered for the 2009/2010 budget. These are some of the capital projects being considered. Please note that the budget has not been finalised and they are only to be considered, not guaranteed to be a part of the budget.

Construction of Youth Centre/Shed (Project 1A)

The youth centre currently operates out of the old school in one of the old classrooms. Parts of the building are heritage listed and council is concerned about the damage if the centre is continued to be used as a youth centre and the practicality of its size.

To allow for more facilities for youth, Council is considering the erection of a large shed structure to house the Youth Centre at the Tennis Courts. This will also provide an office area for the Sports and Recreation Officer. The requirement of the new facility was also identified in the Sports and Recreation Masterplan.

The practicality of this is that the centre will be close to where the youth congregate, will have more space and also facilities that they can access. By shifting them to the tennis courts, they also have access to the BMX track, main oval for football, tennis, etc, and also the skateboard area.

With the Sports and Recreation Officer promoting sporting activities, the shift to this area was seen as being able to provide more for the youth of Mount Magnet and to give more options for activities.

Bidi Bidi Playgroup Centre (Project 1B)

If the new youth centre goes ahead, then a new function will be required for the old school rooms.

Council has been approached by Bidi Bidi for a location to house a Playgroup Centre. This old school rooms being in a central location provides an ideal area for this.

The current concept is to shift the current Playgroup from the old hospital and have a joint centre operated by the two groups either jointly or individually according to their own wishes.

Bidi Bidi has received funding for the setup of the centre under the Royalties for Regions funding. It is hoped that with minimal funding from Council to assist with the preparation of the old school and shifting of the current playgroup facilities, the new centralised playgroup can be housed in a location where families can also have easy access to other facilities such as the library and town business area.

Regional Arts Centre (Project 1C)

Following on from the shifting of the playgroup is a new use for the Old Hospital.

The Old Hospital facility is extremely run down and well overdue for extensive repairs. It was seen that the best option may be to use the materials from the unused sections to repair the used sections. These repairs would be only a short term fix and the building would get smaller and smaller until it finally did not exist or was unusable.

Rather than allowing the facility to decline until it is finally condemned, council wants to use the Regional Projects Funding from the Royalties for Regions allocations to repair the facility. This way, the actual cost of the repairs is funded as a benefit for the region and not a direct cost to the Mount Magnet Ratepayers.

For this to happen, the building must be used for something regional.

Several years ago, the Midwest Development Commission asked council to consider a location for a possible Indigenous arts Centre and council agreed in principle to help to support this initiative.

Since then, the Midwest development Centre has received funding from the Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and Arts and is looking to proceed with the Arts Centre. This would be able to provide assistance to artists all over the Murchison Region, not just Mount Magnet.

To build on this, instead of having just an Indigenous Arts Centre, the Old Hospital will be considered a Regional Arts Centre. Due to the many rooms and facilities, it has the capacity to do more than just Indigenous Arts. It can also still house the current craft groups that are in the facility and possibly a lot more.

The regional Arts Centre will be able to provide local artists with materials for their work and also a place for the paintings to be displayed. Being in the quiet area on the outskirts of town, some artists may even be able to have classes or such to improve the works for the centre.

The Regional Arts Centre is another attraction for tourists and may also attract buyers of the works to our region. Therefore, this project also is part of councils commitment to improve tourism in Mount Magnet.

The repairs to the old Hospital will be progressive over the years of the Royalties for Regions funding without a major impact to the residents. If council was to fund these repairs out of ordinary funds, then it would not be possible. If council was to attempt to build a facility of similar size and multi functional, then this would be at a huge cost to the residents.

Project 1 Together 1A, 1b & 1C

The three projects are an ambitious project for the Shire, but we see this as a best possible way to have the facilities for the additional functions to the community and a best possible use for the facilities without having to outlay huge costs at ratepayers expenses.

The three projects are all reliant on each other to happen for the next to be able to proceed or other arrangements may be required to facilitate all functions in Mount Magnet.

Project 2

Installation of reverse cycle air conditioning in the Anzac Hall. This will provide heating and cooling for the facility to allow its use to be more versatile. The reverse cycle air-conditioning will also be a lot quieter than the current evaporative units.

The old evaporative units will be used in the Youth Centre Shed if possible. There the sound will not be as important a factor and it will provide cooling for the centre.

Project 3

Curtains for screen and windows at Anzac Hall. Part of the refurbishment of ANZAC Hall is for a black curtain for the stage and also blinds for the windows. The blinds for the windows will allow for movies to be screened during daylight hours and increase the functionality of the facility.

Project 4

Security Fencing around the Recreation Centre. The building at the Recreation Grounds will have a fence surrounding it. This is to stem the graffiti and vandalism to the facility and try to prevent a re-occurrence of fire damage.

Project 5

Baramia Creek widening. To assist the water run off through the town creek, the culverts will be removed from Naughton Street returning this section into a floodway again and the town section of the creek widened. This should allow the water to flow better through town and reduce the risk of flooding.

Project 6

Construction of a Museum Building. We will be looking at the Royalties for Regions allocations and sourcing all other funding opportunities for the construction of the museum building. Council will likely have another public meeting with regards to this project once funding is known.

There are other works that will be considered in the budget, but these are the major items being considered currently.

AMALGAMATIONS

Most of you have already heard about the State Government pushing councils to consider the possibility of amalgamations with their neighbours. As a part of this, Council is required to submit a report to the State Government by the 31st August 2009 for possible options or to dismiss the possibility of amalgamations if not practical.

As a part of this report, Council is seeking responses from the members of the public to find out of what may be the concerns of the public if councils are amalgamated and what the benefits may be. Attached is a questionnaire which we would like to be filled out and returned as early as possible to enable the report to be written or by the 31st July as a final call for submissions.

For the report to be submitted to Council there will be several options that will be considered. These will include:

(Option 1) The possibility of all Murchison Zone councils amalgamating including:

- Shire of Mount Magnet
- Shire of Yalgoo
- Shire of Sandstone
- Shire of Cue
- Shire of Murchison
- Shire of Meekatharra

(Option 2) The possibility of some of the Shires amalgamating including:

- Shire of Mount Magnet
- Shire of Sandstone
- Shire of Cue

Shire of Yalgoo

(Option 3) The possibility of the Shire of Mount Magnet amalgamating with one of these shires'

Shire of Yalgoo
Shire of Cue
Shire of Sandstone

(Option 4) The Shire of Mount Magnet remain as it is but work co-operatively with the other Shires of the Murchison for cost savings where possible.

Option 1

Advantages:

- One council for State government to deal with instead of 6
- Reduced number of Councillors reducing governance costs
- Greater purchasing power of the shire.
- Centralising of administration functions reducing staff requirements.
- Greater ability to attract staff full time instead of consultants, i.e.: Health Officer, Planning Officer, Shire Engineer.
- Centralised computer services reducing cost of licences for software

Disadvantages:

- The area of ratepayers that this 'Super Shire' would cover would be approximately ****.
- In order to ensure that services are still provided to all the towns, the current shire offices would still remain in use as sub-centres of the main administration office, therefore running costs would remain.
- This will cause reduced representation as there is likely to be only 1 Councillor from each Shire.
- Organisational structure likely to be segregated into a divisional structure. CEO's will likely become Directors of the 'Super Shire' and most administration staff will remain. Therefore the savings is only minimal.
- Capital expenditure may be centralised in one town to the detriment of the other towns.
- Outside works crew is likely to remain the same to ensure that roadworks can be completed, therefore there is no savings.
- No guarantee that the 'Super Shire' will be based in Mount Magnet.
- Wherever the main administration centre is likely to be based, it is likely to require a new administration centre to house all employees.
- Services may be centralised or allocated to a specific sub-centre. Ratepayers may need to speak to someone in Meekatharra about rating matters rather than going to your local office.
- Loss of identity of smaller communities.
- Cost to link all offices with IT and telecommunications adequately could be costly.

Option 2

Advantages:

- Similar the Option 1 with additional
- Mount Magnet would be the central and largest town and may be used for the main administration centre.

Disadvantages:

- Similar to Option 1 with additional.
- The area of ratepayers that this 'Super Shire' would cover would be approximately ****.
- This will cause reduced representation as there is likely to be only 2 Councillors from each Shire.

Option 3

Advantages

- Reduction in Councillor numbers and Administration Staff
- Centralising of Administration functions for shire

Disadvantages

- In order to ensure that services are still provided to all the towns, the current shire offices would still remain in use as sub-centres of the main administration office, therefore running costs would remain.
- Outside works crew is likely to remain the same to ensure that roadworks can be completed, therefore there is no savings.
- Capital expenditure would need to be balanced to ensure that a them and us attitude does not result.
- Reductions in numbers of Councillors and staff only minimal, so the savings is only minimal.

Option 4

Advantages

- Councils retain individual identity.
- Savings can still be made by working co-operatively with our neighbours
- Ratepayers have a greater say in what happens in 'their town'
- Access to all shire services in own town
- Greater ability to attract staff full time fro all Councils instead of consultants, i.e.: Health Officer, Planning Officer, Shire Engineer.

Disadvantages

- State Government is required to work with more councils.
- Governance costs may be lightly higher

AMALGAMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions and return this sheet to the Administration Centre or deposit in the 'Shire Questionnaires' box at the Post Office.

Question 1: which of the following is your preferred option:

- All Councils in the Murchison Zone Amalgamate
- The Shires of Mount Magnet, Yalgoo, Cue and Sandstone amalgamate
- The Shire of Mount Magnet amalgamates with (please mark additional box):
 - Shire of Sandstone
 - Shire of Cue
 - Shire of Yalgoo
- Shire of Mount Magnet to remain as is but work co-operatively with other Councils where possible
- No changes what-so-ever.

Question 2: Mount Magnet currently has 9 Councillors. Would you like to see this number:

- Reduced to 8
- Reduced to 7
- Increased
- Remain the same

Question 3: What are your concerns over the amalgamation of Councils:

Question 4: as a ratepayer/resident, Do you believe that you will be better off or worse off if Council amalgamates with other Shires? Why?:



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MOUNT MAGNET

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TO THE HOUSEHOLDER