



## Shire of Donnybrook Balingup

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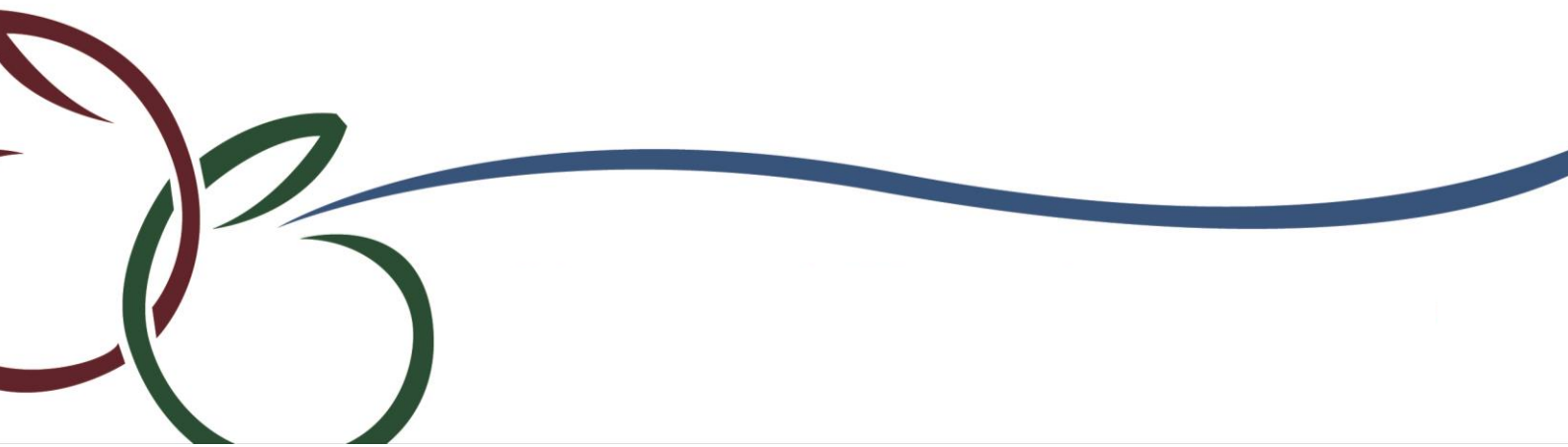
### Commissioner's Update (#11)

12 May 2023

Hello all, it is good to be back into the swing of things and getting organised for what looks like a very full Ordinary Council Meeting Agenda for the 24th May.

This week saw a preliminary meeting with staff from the Electoral Commission to discuss arrangements for the Council Elections on 21<sup>st</sup> October. Last week I spoke briefly with senior staff from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to gauge their thoughts on how we transition from having a Commissioner back to an elected Council. Those discussions will continue over coming months.

I've also been encouraged by discussions I've had with people either interested in standing in the election, and how people might be made to feel a bit more confident to put their hand up if they're currently unsure. This includes some great ideas about providing mentoring and support for those who might be interested. It is something I would encourage you to actively turn your mind to, as the success of the Council will very much depend on both the calibre of the elected representatives, and the support they are given to do their job as effectively as they can. Having witnessed first-hand some of the amazing work done by community groups and volunteers across the district, I am confident that there are many out there who would make fantastic Local Government Councillors. Stay tuned for further information on what is involved and how you might play a part.





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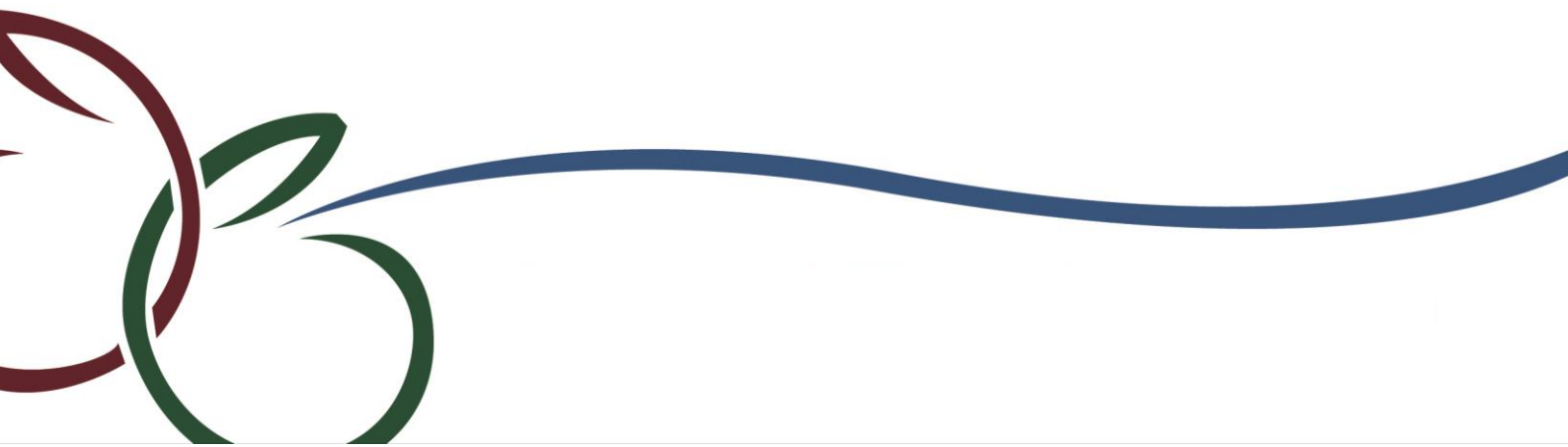
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The last week has also seen the release of the Federal and State Budgets along with the passage through the Parliament of the first tranche of reforms to the Local Government Legislation. Staff are currently analysing the impact across the board, but specific reform measures such as the introduction of optional preferential voting will have quite a significant impact alone. Several the other reform measures are also in train although some of the more noteworthy ones, such as direct election of Mayors or Shire Presidents, only apply to the larger Councils. The reforms will become law once they are proclaimed by the Governor, which should happen in the next few weeks.

Shire staff are busy working on the formulation of the annual budget for 2023/24. This involves a huge amount of work and will need to factor in a raft of information. You may have seen media reports over the past week or so about Western Power seeking to substantially increase charges for street lighting, which requires them to make a case for an increase to the Economic Regulation Authority. Several of the metropolitan councils have been very vocal about the potential impact, and we will be monitoring the situation closely. While the impact on our Shire doesn't run to the millions, it is none-the-less crucial to be aware of.

When I was down last week, we had a Special Council Meeting to consider a regional contract for waste management services. Several Shires have joined together in an exercise to get the best value for money across the region. It is a great example of collaboration at a regional level, and while we are not able to disclose the outcome until all the participating Shires have considered the proposal, we are very supportive of the approach taken. Thank you to the City of Bunbury for coordinating the tender and evaluation process. The reality is that waste management is one of the significant challenges facing all Councils and the cost of waste management continues to increase. It's a timely reminder that everyone has a role to play in the waste reduction journey.





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The Finance team at the Shire is also doing a desktop review of the Long Term Financial Plan which is one of the most important documents produced.

Congratulations to all involved in the BACH (Balingup Arts and Cultural Hub) activities held last weekend. A small team of volunteers has done an amazing job in really bringing a dream to life and transforming the Balingup Town Hall into a cultural Mecca.

In other news, work is continuing on obtaining quotes for CCTV cameras at the Pump Track. This is proving a bit challenging because we are required to obtain three quotes as well as make sure cameras are compatible with particular IT systems. We are hopeful that this will be progressed soon. Staff are also working with the Football Club about concerns expressed that the new lights are creating a traffic hazard. I am told some changes are on the way.

Finally, I give my best wishes to Jade Olliveir, one of the great Administrative Officers at the Shire. Jade will be leaving us soon to join her fiancé in the US and embark on an exciting new chapter in her life. The end of April also saw the departure of Archana Arun who has taken up a new role with the Shire of Capel. We wish both Jade and Archana well and thank them for their contribution to the Shire. Both will be missed.

***Gail McGowan***

**Commissioner of the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup**

