



Shire of Donnybrook Balingup

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Commissioner's Update (#9)

31 March 2023

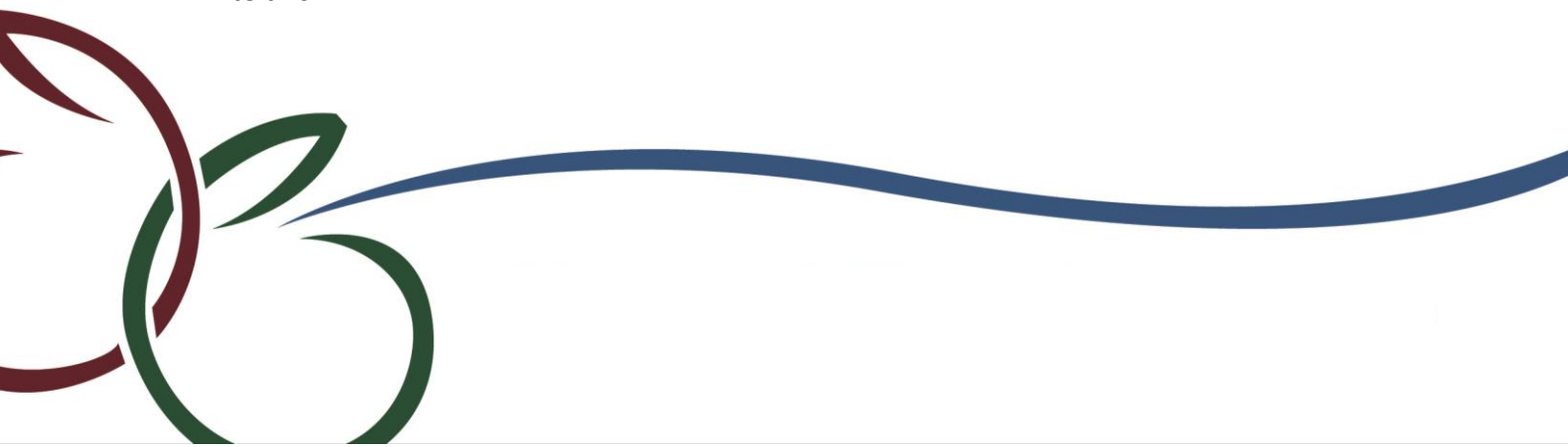
Even though I cannot claim to be a fan of Winter, it was fabulous to wake up to the sound of rain this morning.

Let's hope it signals the start of a great season, but manages to hold off for the Donnybrook Festival and the Balingup Small Farm Field Day!

Things have continued moving at a steady pace, and I felt that the Council Meeting last week was very productive. The Local Planning Strategy will now be referred to the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) for approval to advertise. The WAPC has up to 90 days to provide feedback and advise of any amendments. I would not anticipate anything substantial by way of amendments, so for now I encourage people to have a look at the material on the Shire website or make contact with the Planning team.

We had an interesting deputation on the issue of mining tenements and the co-existence with the industry, as well as the broader Shire vision for the Preston Valley. This was centred around tourism and agribusiness, with a report to further this line of thinking that will be prepared for the May Ordinary Council Meeting I sense this is an issue that many in the community will have strong views on.

I also made the commitment to proceed to the next phase of the VC Mitchell Park Project, moving from Schematic Design to Detailed Design. This is now underway, and I've been highly impressed by the way in which Ross (Rosco) Marshall and Ronnie Hurst have been working with user groups on the project. A stand-out question asked of me at the meeting was if residents in the immediate vicinity of the precinct be consulted? I can say they definitely **will** be consulted, and a stakeholder engagement strategy is being worked on as I write this.





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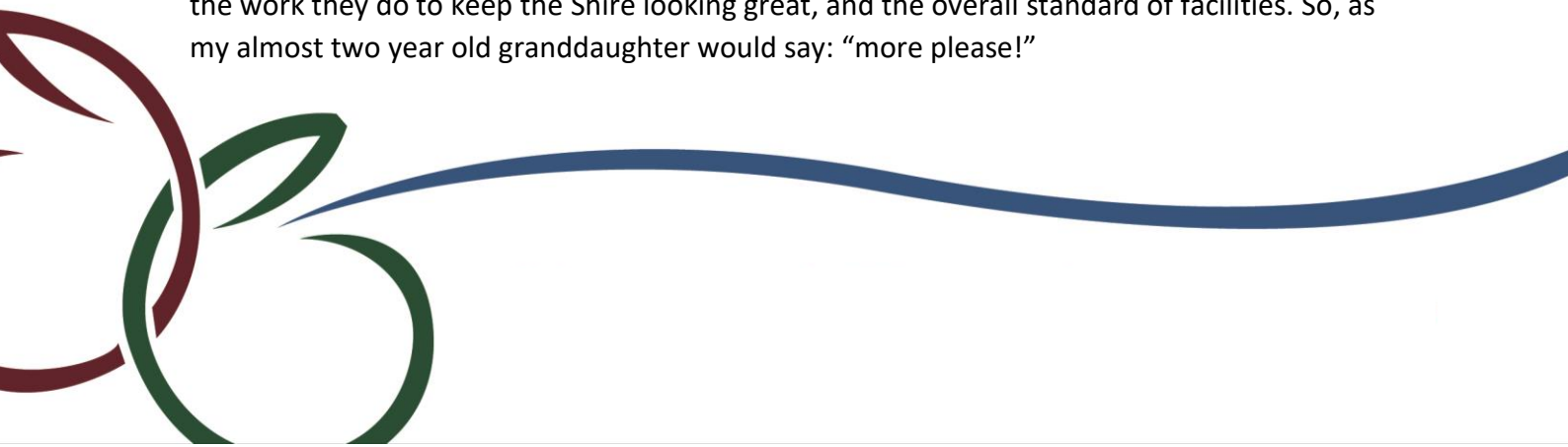
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Alongside this, Ronnie Hurst has completed his desktop review, which will be shared with user groups before being published on the VC Mitchell information section of the Shire website. The most important thing I find from this is that Ronnie has not identified any significant issues, but has raised a few points worthy of further consideration. The intention is to continue to use both Ronnie and Rosco as the key contacts on the project, with Rosco leading and Ronnie assisting in more of an independent advisory capacity under the terms of his contract.

I'd like to also give a special shout out to the Donnybrook Police, and Peter and Eileen at Riversea Painting for their great response following the unfortunate graffiti incident that occurred in Donnybrook a couple of weeks ago. Peter was out removing the graffiti before it had time to cure and before many people were even aware it had happened. Shire staff provided the video footage from the CCTV cameras to the police who were able to follow up very promptly as well. My understanding is that charges have been laid, so it was a great example of everyone working together to resolve the incident in a swift, efficient manner. I'm also told that the task was made easier because of the anti-graffiti treatment on the walls, further reiterating this as a wonderful example of everyone collaborating.

Some more positive news to share comes from Stuart Drummond and Susie Delaporte, who have been doing some really good work towards our economic development and community engagement. With the bushfires hopefully behind us, Susie is able to focus more broadly in her role as Senior Community Engagement Officer, and Stuart is working on an Economic Development Strategy. Susie is also making her debut as a Ted-X speaker in Perth this weekend, which is a huge personal accomplishment. I wish her well.

Having been in the Commissioner role for just over three months now, I am really pleased to report I sense a turning of the tide. I am seeing more and more examples of people collaborating, and a more positive tone overall. I visited the Shire Depot yesterday, and thought some of the responses to my question about what members of the team were most proud of were worth sharing. The responses boiled down to the pride they feel in working as a team, and the boost they get when members of the community compliment them on the work they do to keep the Shire looking great, and the overall standard of facilities. So, as my almost two year old granddaughter would say: "more please!"





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I also felt very privileged to be invited to Storytime at the Donnybrook Community Library this morning. Storytime is on at 10am on Friday mornings, and today's attendees ranged in age from almost two to five. I give my thanks to Andrea and the Library Team for coordinating some nursery rhymes, book reading and an apple related activity. I had to leave before the Easter Egg Hunt but I am sure everyone went away very happy!

As previously advised, I will be away overseas during April. My timeline sees my last visit to the Shire during 6-8 April, and I will be gone from Easter Monday until April 28. I expect to be back down on May 2. I will do my best to respond to urgent issues while I am away, but I also expect to have very limited access to my emails during that time.

As this will be my last update before I leave, please take care on the roads over Easter! I hope you all enjoy the school holiday break and take care of each other.

Gail McGowan

Commissioner of the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup

