



Shire of Donnybrook Balingup

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Commissioner's Update (#5)

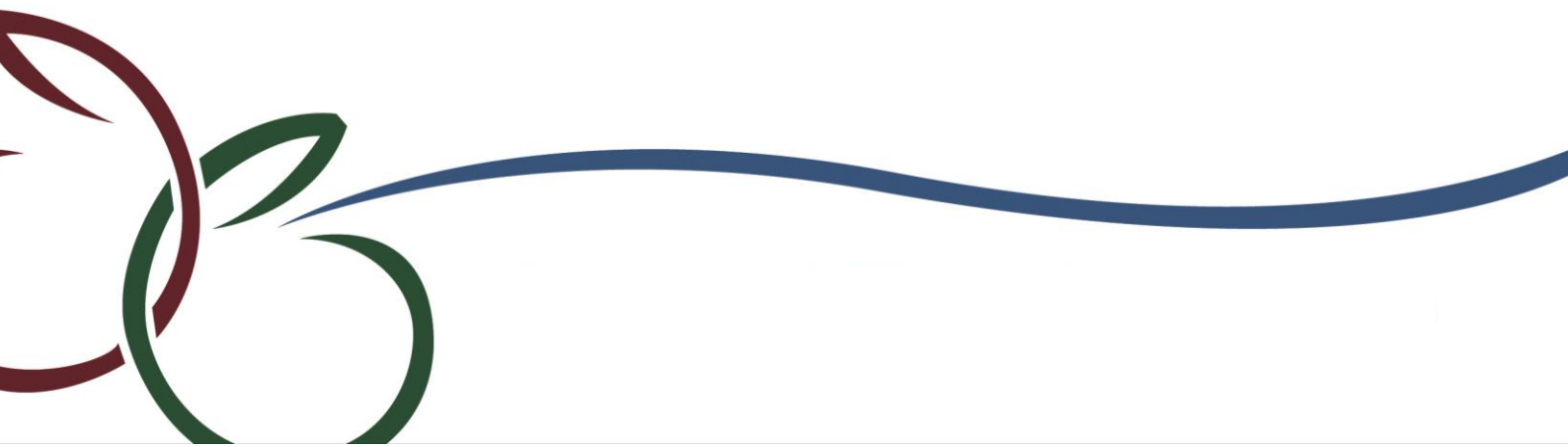
27 January 2023

I had not intended doing an update quite so quickly, however I do feel the need to respond to some commentary doing the rounds on social media. As I have indicated before, I do not intend to use social media as a primary communication mechanism and would prefer people to receive their information directly from me.

Generally speaking, I will ignore social media commentary that is uninformed or disrespectful to anyone. However, in this instance I am told that I have supposedly visited the Artisans store for the purpose of promoting the purchase of an asbestos riddled building as an alternative to supporting the "museum project" as it is referred to. This is simply not true and has caused some anxiety or distress to a number of people.

I did visit the Artisans shop just before Christmas when I was walking with the CEO on our way to the Shire Offices on SW Highway. The visit was at my instigation as I happen to love artisan products. We had a nice chat with a couple of people in the shop and I took the opportunity to purchase some Christmas gifts for my family. During the chat I was asked a question about some Crown land and the lease arrangements that applied. I indicated I wasn't aware of the site in question nor the arrangements but undertook to follow up at a later stage to get more details. On a subsequent visit I popped back in and indicated that I had promised to follow up. As the person who raised the issue wasn't in that day I said I would make contact later. I have not yet had a chance to do so as the fire activity took priority.

As I have consistently indicated I am happy to meet or discuss matters so if in any doubt please reach out and ask.





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On a more positive note, it was a pleasure to take part in the Citizenship Ceremony and Citizen of the Year Awards at the Amphitheatre yesterday. Congratulations to our three new Australian Citizens and to our two Award winners. As Award winners, both Geoff McMullen and Ben Anderson epitomise what community service is about.

The Special Council Meeting on Wednesday afternoon also went well and I thank those who came along. The business of the meeting was not controversial and enabled the Annual Financial Statements to be signed off and two tender outcomes progress. I did indicate at that meeting that I am anticipating providing some more detailed information on the VC Mitchell development and other contentious issues over coming weeks. I am still meeting with people and forming views so any sense that I have a predetermined outcome in mind is wrong.

The date for the Annual Electors Meeting has now been set for Tuesday the 7th March at 6pm. The meeting will be held in the Donnybrook Town Hall.

I have enjoyed a couple of days in Balingup this week and as indicated am continuing to meet with a range of people. This is in an attempt to ascertain the broadest range of views possible. Strong divisions still exist and people need to look beyond individuals and past grievances to identify what skills and capabilities they think are important in rebuilding the trust and confidence necessary to ensure good governance. I can assist and support this process but there must be a preparedness to move forward.

Take care and as the school holidays draw to an end, be careful on the roads as another School year starts.

Gail McGowan

Commissioner of the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup

