



COUNCIL NEWS

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[A message from the Shire President regarding Rates](#)

Dear Ratepayers

On Monday July 3rd your Council held a special meeting to specifically discuss the effect the current drought / dry season will have on our entire community. Seasons such as this adversely affect not just our Primary Producers but by way of flow-on, the whole community.

Primary Producers and their service industries will have less money to spend on Contractors, Casual Employees, in Local Businesses/Stores and including Holidays in our coastal towns. Basically a severe tightening of the purse strings. Local business proprietors have already begun to feel the effect and several scheduled social events have already reported declining attendances.

Council Rates make up a large proportion of Council's revenue with Council as a rule setting a rate that, coupled with Government Grants, delivers the funds we need to operate for the year. Our staff advises Council on the percentage rates need to be set at to achieve a balanced budget.

This year it was proposed to be a 4% increase in revenue. Your rates will be based on the actual valuation of your property so may go up or down from last year depending on that value which is independently set by the Valuer General.

Council have now resolved to reduce the overall rate rise to 3% which covers inflation but still allows for current levels of operation and service delivery to you our stakeholders. This reduction has been achieved by identifying savings due to the re-introduction of Vehicle Licensing Concessions by the State Parliament and a good hard look at wants vs needs in our budget. Items have been deleted /reduced / postponed to achieve the desired savings.

Whilst acknowledging affected projects are of importance to various sectors of our community, they have only been put on hold to enable this very necessary action. They will not be forgotten just re-prioritised.

Council is always conscious of the need for prudent expenditure of its funds so our executive staff have been advised to look carefully at all expenditure, not just now at budget time but throughout the year.

Council is fully aware that 2017-2018 financial conditions will flow onto the 2018-2019 year with difficulties ongoing for our communities and will bear this in mind with future budgets and expenditure.

We wish everyone the best possible outcome and hope that this measure will go some way to alleviating some of the pressure put on you our ratepayers and residents.

Moira J Girando JP
Shire President

JULY COUNCIL MEETING – DECISIONS

The agendas and minutes of Shire of Coorow Council Meetings are available on the Shire's website www.coorow.wa.gov.au. The following is a summary of the decisions made at the last Council meeting:

CHANGES TO PERMISSION TO COLLECT NATIVE PLANT FRUIT

The permission granted to Mr Tim Gilbertson to collect quandong fruit from plants within reserves and other areas managed by the Shire of Coorow was modified to allow local community members to assist collecting fruit.

REVIEW OF POLICIES – COUNCIL STAFF

The policies relating to Council staff were reviewed with some amendments/deletions.

2017/18 FIRE BREAK NOTICE

The Fire Break Notice for 2017/18 was adopted, with the 'open' burning season starting two weeks earlier in March than last year (see copy in following pages).

PROPOSED FEEDLOT – LOT 10804 COOROW-GREENHEAD RD WARRADARGE

Formal planning consent was granted for the operation of a 12,000 head feedlot upon Lot 10804 Coorow-Green Head Road, Warradarge, subject to conditions.

STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN 2017-2027

'Our Future Coorow 2017-2027', the Strategic Community Plan for the Shire of Coorow was adopted and is available on the Shire's website.

SHIRE OF COOROW – 2017/2018 ANNUAL BUDGET ADOPTION

The Annual Budget was adopted, incorporating an overall rates rise of 3%. A copy is available on the Shire's website.

Additional information about each of these decisions is available on the Shire of Coorow website, www.coorow.wa.gov.au under Council, Minutes, Minutes 2017.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING DATE

Next meeting of Council will be held on Wednesday 16 August 2017 at the Leeman Recreation Centre from 5.00 pm.



SHIRE OF COOROW

ADOPTION OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

'Our Future Coorow 2017-2027', the Strategic Community Plan for the Shire of Coorow was adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 19 July 2017.

The Strategic Community Plan is a fundamental part of Council's forward planning strategy. It will impact of all of the other integrated plans, particularly the Corporate Business Plan and the Long Term Financial Plan.

In reviewing the former Strategic Community Plan, surveys were posted to all ratepayers, advertised in the local newspapers and emailed to people who receive the Shire's newsletter in February 2017. The survey was available in hard copy and online, using Survey Monkey.

A total of 134 surveys were received which represents 12.9% of the Shire's population. 56% of the respondents indicated they lived within the Shire, with 44% from outside the Shire which is indicative of the large number of holiday homes in Leeman and Green Head.

A draft Community Strategic Plan was prepared and made available publically, before a series of community workshops was held in early July 2017 to discuss the results of the community surveys and the draft Community Strategic Plan.

Workshops were held in Coorow, Green Head and Leeman, but were poorly attended. Only one member of the public attended the Coorow workshop, three attended the Green Head workshop and no members of the public attended the Leeman workshop. Follow up phone calls were made to two people who put their apologies in to the Coorow workshop.

As a result of feedback at the Green Head workshop, an additional strategy was included relating to medical services, and one relating to affordable housing was added back in.

A copy of the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 is available on the Shire website, www.coorow.wa.gov.au and at the Administration Centres in Coorow and Leeman.

Free WEBINAR for Prospective Elected Members

Ever thought about nominating to become a Councillor, but you aren't sure if the role is for you? Then be sure to register for this *free* webinar to have all your questions answered.

Topics will include:

- an overview of Local Government
- the Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Council Members
- behavioural expectations of Elected Members
- an overview of the skills required to be a successful Councillor, and
- impacts on Home Life

The **target audience** for this webinar is **anyone** who is thinking about nominating for Local Government election.

You will have an opportunity to ask questions during the Q&A Session at the end of the presentation.

Date: Thursday, **17 August**

Time: 5:00pm - 5:45pm (including presentation and Q&A session)

Be quick to register as places will fill fast.

To register for this free webinar please visit:

www.walga.asn.au/Training/Our-Services/Webinars.aspx



WARNING

ABOUT ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES ON SHIRE ROAD VERGES

CLEARING & BURNING

Clearing is the killing or destruction of, removal of, severing or ringbarking of trunks or stems of or doing any damage to native vegetation. This includes draining or flooding of land, burning of vegetation, grazing of stock or any other act or activity.

It is illegal to clear road verges (even to install a new driveway) without the required permits from the Shire and the Department of Environmental Regulation. Fines range from a \$500 infringement to a \$250,000 penalty.

For more information, refer to the Department of Environmental Regulation website www.der.wa.gov.au/nvp

REMOVING FENCES

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act that an owner or occupier of land must keep in good repair any fence or gate that separates the land from a road reserve.

The Shire is able to insist that a landowner with a boundary adjoining a road re-erect a fence that has previously been removed.

Again, there is a \$5,000 fine and a daily penalty of \$500 for each day during which the offence continues.

PLANTING ON ROAD VERGES

It is also illegal to plant vegetation on a road verge without Council approval. If a landowner is growing a plant (which includes a cultivated crop) on a public thoroughfare (in this case a Shire road verge/reserve), he/she must remove it when requested by the local government to do so. Failure to comply may result in a \$5,000 fine and a daily penalty of \$500 for each day during which the offence continues.

FUTURE SHIRE ACTION

Infringements will not be issued for past illegal activities, but the Shire will infringe landowners who burn or clear native roadside vegetation without a permit, remove fencing along a road reserve and/or crop the road verge from now on.

Fines range from a \$200 to \$500 infringement notice from the Shire to a \$250,000 penalty if prosecuted under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 by the Department of Environmental Regulation.

To apply for a permit to burn or clear roadside vegetation, please contact the Manager Works & Services, Kelvin Bean, on 9952 0100.

Shire of Coorow



Public Notice to All Community Members

The Shire has been in receipt of a number of unsigned and anonymous complaints, particularly about other community members or actions Council may or may not have taken (such as a recent letter from “Marchagee Local Area Farmers”). Council have taken the position that these will not be responded to until such time as they are confirmed, in writing, to be a legitimate complaint.

All signed complaints received from an identifiable person/s will be investigated for a solution, but may not necessarily end in an infringement or prosecution. These decisions will need to be made based on the alleged breach/s, the reason for the breach/s, the quality of the evidence, the probability of success of prosecution and the costs involved.

Much of the action that can be taken by the Shire needs to be based on evidence that may need to be presented at court proceedings, hence the need for witnesses who are not always staff or elected members.

Some complaints are not something that the Shire has authority over (such as complaints of clearing of paddock forestation belts established under lifetime covenants) and therefore cannot be investigated by the Shire. Where there is a breach/s of legislation, local laws or policies that the Shire has jurisdiction over, these will be investigated.

The Shire has a policy on “Receival of Complaints”, and a complaint form can be found on the website under Contacts, or from the administration offices at Coorow and Leeman.

If you have any queries or concerns about the procedures for registering a complaint, please contact your local elected member or any of the senior staff at the Shire (Coorow 9952 0100 and Leeman 9553 1388). Once a decision has been made to lodge a complaint, it must be via one of the Shire Administration Offices, not to an elected member.