

COLAC OTWAY SHIRE

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA 28 OCTOBER 2015

Youth Council Youth Homelessness

- Did you know that 42% of the homelessness population in Australia is under 25 years old?
- Did you know that 26,000 young Australian between 12-25 years old are experiencing homelessness EVERY night?
- Were you aware that 70% left home to escape family violence, child abuse or family breakdown?

These statistics caught the attention of our 2015 Youth Councillors and was the reason they unanimously voted to make youth homelessness their key focus for the 2015 term of office. The first and most common way young people experience homelessness is “couch surfing” - spending the night at friends’ houses and sleeping on the couch because they can’t go home.

While you may not see the obvious signs of homelessness – people sleeping on the streets - on any given night in Colac Otway Shire there are around 20 young people who are couch surfing – and these are only the ones we know about. Youth Council are highlighting that just because you don’t see people sleeping rough, it doesn’t mean homelessness doesn’t exist within Colac Otway Shire.

We all need to be aware of it and do what we can to resolve it. Young people experiencing homelessness need access to supportive and well-resourced services which provide them with the help they need to get back on their feet but we also need to address issues like family violence and mental health which are major contributing factors.

Youth Councillors have invited the Colac Otway community to join and support their event “Youth Without a Roof” at the Memorial Square on 21 & 22 November 2015 which will incorporate guest speakers and information, along with a twilight food and craft market and lots of activities including a free carousel, jumping castle and bumper balls. In conjunction with FReeZA there will be free entertainment from local bands and a performance by headline act “At Sunset” which is highly anticipated.

Routine Drainage Works

During September, routine drainage works, including rotary drain cleaning, were completed in the following townships and areas: • Apollo Bay • Wye River • Kennett River • Separation Creek • Skenes Creek • Marengo • Carlisle • Forest • Barwon Downs • Gerangamete • Barongarook

Colac VIC Visitation September Overview

The Great Ocean Road Visitor Information Centre had a total of 9,329 visitors in September, a 2% decrease on the previous year. Phone calls to the centre were up by 11% as were email enquiries which were up by over 100% compared to the previous year.

Main enquiries were for Accommodation (38%), Great Ocean Road (11%), Apollo Bay (10%), and Great Ocean Walk & Transport Information (5%). International visitors were travelling from China, Germany & the UK whereas Interstate visitors were travelling from NSW, QLD and South Australia.

Great Ocean Road Regional Branding Project

GORRT has held a series of workshops with both the Otways and Apollo Bay Destination Action Plan groups to finalise the development of a positioning and communication framework for the destinations. When the branding work is finalised, each destination will have guidelines for development and implementation of destination specific marketing and promotional information. The branding work will also ascertain product and industry development needs to position the region for the future.

Love Our Region Campaign

Council's spring Visiting Friends and Relatives Campaign called "Love Our Region" was launched on 9 September 2015. The spring campaign features offers from 24 local businesses. The campaign encourages local residents to discover and explore "the Otways". In essence, the aim of the campaign is to make residents proud of their local area and ambassadors for the region.

Campaign membership has grown by 30% during 2015 with 872 Colac Otway residents (18 years or older) registering for the campaign to date. The campaign Facebook page and email newsletter engagement levels have also increased by 52% and 8% respectively in 2015.

Review of Amy Gran Fondo Event

At the Ordinary Council Meeting in September Council passed a Notice of Motion to conduct a review of the Amy's Gran Fondo event including consultation with the community.

This review has now commenced, with an on-line survey available on Council's website until Friday 6 November, 2015. This consultation has been promoted through Council's Facebook page, advertised in the Council column in the Colac Herald on Friday 9 October and sent through to all community new sheets for inclusion.

Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP)

The public exhibition period for the draft Domestic Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) closed on 28 September 2015, resulting in the receipt of five submissions.

The low number of submissions has occurred despite widespread media promotion and a mail out to the owners of all unsewered properties in the Shire at the outset of the exhibition process. Local information sessions were well attended, and there appears to be a relatively high degree of support for the document, which aims to make the planning provisions for dwellings in the Shire's water catchments more flexible. It is anticipated that the final report will be presented to Council before the end of the year for adoption following sign-off by the steering committee.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Seniors Week 2015

Seniors Week this year has seen many people across the Shire participating in a range of activities that were organised by the Community Services Department. A total of 212 people attended the free morning teas at Colac, Birregurra, Beeac, Apollo Bay, Forrest and Gellibrand. The morning teas are very popular and the positive feedback from the participants was greatly appreciated. The bus trips were also popular. The main adventures, which included lunch, were to the Shrine of Remembrance, the Queenscliff – Sorrento Ferry and Como House. A total of 135 people participated in these activities.

The Arts and Crafts event at Barongarook was sold out with 40 people attending. Around 80 people attended the morning tea and Country Concert performed by Honey B & the Stingers. The number is down from other years and this could be due to Jade Hurly performing in Camperdown on the same day and time.

The Positive Ageing Ambassadors organised the Celebrating Positive Ageing photographic competition and exhibition at COPACC and the hugely successful 'Rock Across the Ages' variety performance which had over 160 performers from various groups across the Shire.

Residents from Mercy Place Age Care and Barongarook Gardens and their families actively participated from their seats. Colac Area Health organised the all-day Expo 'Open Minds Open Doors' for all ages. For some years, the OPASS unit has been encouraging other organisations to be part of the planning and/or promotion of Senior's Week. This year U3A Colac, South West Do Care, Bluewater, COPACC, Kanyana Seniors, Birregurra Seniors, Beeac Activities Group, Positive Ageing Ambassadors, Apollo Bay Senior Citizen Advisory Group and Otway Health & Community Services worked with us in a coordinated way for the positive outcomes.

FIRST QUARTER FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015-2016

At the time the budget for 2015-2016 was prepared, an operating surplus of \$4.83 million was estimated. This did not include carry over projects which have the effect of reducing the value of the operating surplus.

The end of the first quarter provides an opportunity to investigate trends within the financial and operational environment and provide revised budget forecasts to suit. The revised forecasts now indicate a forecast surplus of \$1.38 million. The major significant variance relates to the Financial Assistance Grant (FAG) payments.

Council anticipates that it will receive \$2.99 million less in FAG payments during 2015-2016 than was originally budgeted. This is due to the fact that the Federal Government elected to pre-pay 50% of Council's 2015-2016 FAG allocation on 30 June 2015, necessitating Council to receipt this payment in the 2014-2015 accounts. It is important to note that Council will receive the 2015-16 allocation in its entirety; however 50% of the allocation will show in the 2014-2015 accounts with the effect that there will be a higher than anticipated revenue and surplus in 2014-2015. The remaining 50% will show in the 2015-2016 accounts, resulting in a lower than anticipated revenue and surplus for this year.

A small number of projects that were budgeted in prior years but not completed before the end of the financial year have also been 'carried over' into the 2015-2016 year. This will further reduce Council's budgeted surplus by increasing expenditure for the 2015-2016 year. The carried forward projects are funded from a cash backed reserve Council created for this purpose at the end of 2014-2015. This effectively meant that Council ended the 2014-2015 year with higher cash reserves than it anticipated, due to underspending on projects during 2014-2015. The cash backed reserve is used to provide for completion of the carried forward projects and is consistent with previous years.

Recommendation(s) That Council receives and notes the forecast results and budget allocations contained in the first quarter financial performance report for 2015-2016.

Council achieved an operating surplus of \$11.455 million for 2014-2015. This was a significant improvement on the budgeted surplus of \$3.016 million, and the actual surplus of \$2.741 million achieved for the previous year.

There were a number of individual variances contributing to this result. Some of the relevant items included:

- **Grants – operating showed a significant variance above budget of over \$3.67 million.** The majority of this (\$2.99 million) related to the fact that the Federal Government brought forward 50% of the 2015-2016 Financial Assistance Grants allocation as a prepayment received by Council on June 30 2015. This necessitated the inclusion of these funds in the 2014-2015 accounts. It should be noted that as a result of this prepayment, revenue for 2014-2015 is higher than anticipated, but revenue for 2015- 2016 will be lower than anticipated.
- **Grants – capital also shows a variance above budget of \$2.98 million.** This related to capital grants received for the upgrade of the Bluewater Fitness Centre which were not originally budgeted for.
- Council budgeted to write off assets to the value of \$1.5 million during 2014-2015. In actuality Council did not write off any assets during the year.
- Council received \$0.52 million of donated assets from developers which was not anticipated at the time of formulating the initial budget.

- Council also received an additional \$0.373 million in cash contributions, \$0.25 million of this being from property owners in the Pascoe Street carpark construction project.
- Council received an additional \$0.54 million in rates and charges income arising from supplemental assessments and a realignment of pension subsidies from the State Government.

These amounts were partially offset by variances in the following areas:

- Employee costs \$0.67million as a result of a combination of the following factors:
 - \$0.23 million variance in superannuation payments, arising from the budget being based on a 9% Superannuation Guarantee Charge rather than the correct 9.5% rate;
 - \$0.17 million variation in Long Service Leave expenditure (this includes the provision accrual amount);
 - \$0.17 million variation in Annual Leave expenditure (this includes the provision accrual amount); and
 - \$0.07 million variance in Sick Leave expense.
- It is important to note that there was no overall change in the number of employee positions (ie no increase in staff) and employee costs and wages met budget (subject to the above).
- Materials and service project costs being increased (\$0.51 million) as a result of carried over amounts (these were budgeted in the previous year). The same is true for some related grant and contribution income being received this year when it was budgeted in the previous year.
- A \$0.20 million increase in the provision for landfill restoration arising from a full engineering review of the required works to restore all of Council's former and current landfill sites.

Overall Council's result is strong in terms of its achieved operating surplus. Even when allowing for grants received in advance and one off income items such as contributions and reduced asset write offs, Council remains in an operating surplus.

Council also delivered a significant capital works program for 2014-2015, with \$18.87 million of capital expenditure being delivered. Highlights of this include:

- Roads \$5.79 million
- Footpaths \$1.02 million
- Bridges \$0.76 million.

Council's asset upgrade and renewal was at 179% of depreciation – a strong result.

Council's net debt increased by \$0.45 million during 2014-2015, with \$1.0 million in new debt being entered into and \$0.55 million of existing debt repaid. Council's overall debt at 30 June 2015 was \$5.37 million. Council's debt servicing and redemption costs remain steady at approximately 3% of rate revenue.

REVISED COLAC OTWAY FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Background

In accordance with legal and policy requirements, Colac Otway Shire Council has established a Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) as a subcommittee of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC).

Across Victoria, these committees are responsible for developing Municipal Fire Management Plans (MFMP), ensuring implementation of actions and monitoring effectiveness.

In the case of Colac Otway Shire the MFMP is titled the 'Colac Otway Fire Management Plan' (the Plan), and describes how Council, fire agencies, relevant authorities and organisations collaborate and contribute to minimising the social, economic and environmental impact of significant fires within the Shire across private and public land.

It is also deemed to meet the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 requirements. The Plan describes strategic directions and works for all agencies involved. The responsibility for preparing the Plan rests with the MFMPC which is comprised of representatives from fire and land management agencies.

It is Council's role to facilitate the preparation of the plan and to adopt the plan once it has been endorsed by the relevant committees.

The existing Colac Otway Fire Management Plan 2011 - 2014 was adopted by Council for a three year period until September 2015. Earlier this year, the Emergency Management Commissioner wrote to fire committees to direct them to await the release of the State Fire Mitigation Plan (SFMP) prior to undertaking a comprehensive review of the MFMP.

In the interim, Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) has requested fire committees extend the life of existing MFMPs by undertaking a minor review to remove any errors and ensure the plans remain current.

This review has been completed.

In parallel, a new Fire Management Plan under an innovative planning model is being developed through a collaboration of Surf Coast, Colac Otway and Corangamite Shires. The new model has been endorsed by key emergency services agencies and groups, and has been adopted by the MFMPC of each of the three councils. It is anticipated that the new plan will be drafted early in 2016 and once approved will supersede the revised plan currently being considered by Council.

It is important to note that adoption of the plan will not result in any additional actions for Council. Implementation of the current plan is well progressed with approximately 85% of actions either completed or ongoing. These actions remain in the updated plan.

Actions which are incomplete and remain relevant at March 2017 will be carried forward into the new plan.

A similar process is occurring in the Surf Coast and Corangamite Shire Councils. While the development of the Plan is facilitated by Council, the plan is the responsibility of the MFMPC as a sub-committee of the MEMPC. These committees are made up of relevant emergency management agencies, authorities and groups, including land managers and key asset managers.

Community Engagement

The community engagement strategy follows the recommendations of the Colac Otway Shire Council Community Engagement Policy of January 2010, which details five levels of engagement – inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower.

The method selected would be best described as ‘involve’, as Council takes advice from a range of agencies for the review of the Plan. In this case the engagement has been limited to the the multiagency Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee and the Barwon South West Fire Management Planning Committee.

Broad community engagement occurred in 2012 as part of the development of the existing plan. Community engagement will be a significant feature of the new planning model, which will apply community led planning principles to the development of township resilience plans for high risk communities. Once the Plan is signed by all parties, a copy will be placed on the Council website and made publicly available. Implementation Following adoption by Council, the Plan will be forwarded to the other partner agencies (e.g. CFA, DELWP, Parks Vic) for signing.

The Plan will then continue to be implemented in line with the current approach, where actions to be completed are scoped at the existing fire management committees and then implemented.

Conclusion The life of the current Colac Otway Fire Management Plan 2011 - 2014 has expired and therefore a decision by Council to adopt the updated Plan will ensure Council meets its legal responsibilities.

In accordance with the process prescribed by EMV, the Plan has been reviewed and endorsed by the multi-agency MFMPC, the MEMPC and the BSWRFMPC and is presented to Council for adoption.

Recommendation(s) That Council adopts the revised Colac Otway Fire Management Plan.