



murchisonshire

Ancient land under brilliant skies

Agenda for the Ordinary Meeting of the

Murchison Shire Council

To be held in the Council Chambers, Carnarvon Mullewa Road, Murchison,
on Friday **13 December 2024**, commencing at 12 Noon.

Ancient land under brilliant skies

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ATTACHMENTS

1 DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

Shire President declared the meeting open at

2 RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Present

Councillors

Cr R Foulkes-Taylor
Cr A Whitmarsh
Cr E Foulkes-Taylor
Cr G Mead
Cr Q Fowler
Cr M Fowler

Staff

Bill Boehm – CEO
William Herold – Works Manager
Lisa Keen – Senior Executive Manager DCEO
Bec Fogarty – Community Officer

Apologies

Travis Bate (RSM) – Financial Accountant

3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

3.1 Ordinary Council Meeting – 28 November 2024

Background

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council have previously been circulated to all Councillors.

Recommendation

That the minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held on 28 November 2024 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings.

Voting Requirements:

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

5 RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

Nil

6 STANDING ORDERS

Matter for Consideration

It has been customary practice in the interests of a productive meeting in relation to the Conduct of Members during debates for the Council suspend Standing Orders 8.2 (Limitation on Number of speeches) and 8.3 (Duration of Speeches) under Local Law 2001. To facilitate this, the following recommended resolution is required.

Recommendation

That the following Local Law-Standing Orders 2001 be stood down:

- 8.2 Limitation on the number of speeches
- 8.3 Duration of speeches

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

7 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

8 NEXT MEETING

To be determined as per Agenda Item 19.1

9 APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

10 URGENT BUSINESS

11 NOTICE OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

17.1.1 Account Listings Paid since the last list was presented to Council

12 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY PRESIDING PERSON WITHOUT DISCUSSION

13 PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS/SUBMISSIONS

14 ANNOUNCEMENTS CONCERNING MEETINGS ATTENDED

14.1 Shire President

14.2 Councillors

15 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

15.1 Audit Committee

File: 2.2
Author: Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 8 December 2024
Attachments: 15.1.1 Audit Committee Meeting Recommendations

Matter for Consideration

Amongst other things one of the objectives of the Audit Committee is to accept responsibility for the annual external audit and liaise with the local government's auditor so that Council can be satisfied with the performance of the local government in managing its financial affairs.

A copy of the Audit Committee Meeting Agenda and Attachments including the 2023/24 Financial Report has been separately circulated.

Committee Recommendations

To be provided considered following deliberations of the Audit Committee Meeting.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Committee Recommendations		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

16 WORKS

16.1 Works Report

File: 12.42
Author: William Herold – Works Manager
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 9 December 2024
Attachments: Nil

Overview

As we head into the final week of the year, I look back and wonder, where did it go. In my time with the Shire, I can say with absolute certainty it has been the busiest year we have had. Over and above the normal roadwork program, a very ramped up parks and gardens program and the ongoing Settlement development program, SKA route maintenance and upgrade works as well as emergency repair work after the June-July rain event, taking over the maintenance of the 28 km unsealed section of the Carnarvon Mullewa Rd. from the CCG. The CEO continues to successfully shake the money tree, I suspect we will continue to remain very busy for some time to come.

I would like to thank my fellow members of staff for the support I have received over the last year, even when they were under the pump they just got on with the job at hand with good humor and determination. Case in point was the construction crew working through the Easter break to get the stabilising job completed and ready for the sealing crew.

Mention should also be made of the many contractors we have been involved with, electricians, plumbers, concreters, builders, pool construction, refrigeration and of course the road work contractors.

Construction

Preparation work for the Mulga Crescent and Roadhouse precinct sealing work is nearing completion. Unfortunately, we will not have it complete before the Christmas break. Attempting to correct some of the drainage between the airstrip apron, taxiway and Mulga Crescent has also caused some minor delays, mainly on the planning side of the project.

Maintenance

The maintenance crew have continued north up the Beringarra-Pindar Rd. and by the time Council meets should be close to completing Mt. Wittenoom Rd. The maintenance crew will also be working through to about December 20 and starting early in January 2025.

Swimming Pool and Splash Pad

The swimming pool and splash pad development is moving on at a fairly rapid pace at the moment. Will it be ready in time for viewing at the Christmas Tree? I doubt it, we will just have to wait and see how the final week goes.

Water Upgrade

The water upgrade works continue to be a work in progress, we are currently waiting on GHD to submit the detail around the chlorinator. Henry from MGPWA is expected back on site around mid-March for what will probably be the final stretch to completion of the project.

Electrical Works

Hosken Electrical have installed the new Distribution Board at the generator shed, pulled in the cable along Kurara Way, installed the new stoves in the Sports Club kitchen and done various other smaller jobs around the Settlement including getting power to the swimming pool shed. There is still outstanding electrical work to get the swimming pool complete and functional.

In Closing

I would like to take this opportunity to thank CEO Bill, all of my colleagues and Council for the help and support I have received over the year. I wish all, including the wider Murchison community a blessed and happy Christmas. To those travelling, please do so carefully and enjoy this special time of the year with friends and family. Until we get the bit between our teeth again in the new year.

Recommendation

That the Works Report be noted

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

17 FINANCE

17.1 Accounts Paid since the last list was presented to Council

File: 4.37.1
Author: Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 8 December 2024
Attachments: 17.1.1 EFT & Cheque Details for November 2024 (Elected Members Only)

Matter for Consideration

The *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 Regulation 13* requires that if the local government has delegated to the CEO the exercise of its power to make payments from the municipal fund or the trust fund, then the CEO is to prepare a list of accounts paid by the CEO for each month and present this to the next ordinary meeting of the Council after the list has been prepared and have this list recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

A list of payments presented in accordance with *Regulation 13* of the *Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996* made since the last report to Council is attached.

Strategic Implications

None

Policy Implications

None

Budget/Financial Implications

Nil

Consultation

Nil

Recommendation

- 1 That that pursuant to LGA s5.23(2)(b) & (e) of the Local Government Act 1995 that attachment 17.1.1 EFT & Cheque Details for November 2024 be discussed behind closed doors
- 2 That Council receive and note attachment 17.1.1 EFT & Cheque Details for November 2024 and that the accounts since the last report to Council, as provided to Councillors be recorded in the minutes as being presented to Council.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

1 Item to be Discussed behind closed doors

Council Decision
Moved: Cr Seconded: Cr
Carried/Lost For Against

The meeting was moved to behind closed doors at

3 Motion to open the meeting to the public

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

The meeting was moved out of closed doors at

2 Decisions Disclosed from the Closed Section of Meeting associated with Attachment Item 17.1

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

17.2 Financial Activity Statements 30 November 2024

File: 2.6
Author: Travis Bate (RSM) – Financial Accountant
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 8 December 2024
Attachments: 17.2.1 Monthly Management Financial Report November 2024

Matter for Consideration

The Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 Regulation 34 requires that local government report monthly and prescribes what is required to be reported. Council is required to consider and receipt the Monthly Financial Statements.

Comments

These statements are being presented to meet a statutory obligation to have each month's end and report presented within the following two months.

Few points to note.

- 1 Statement of Financial Activity
 - a Closing Surplus - \$6,313,016 compared to Budget of \$6,632,455. The key variances are outlined in Note 2.
- 2 Note 2 provides explanations of Material Variances. Mostly the same as per October Financial Report. New variance this month in relation to Depreciation Expense. The Depreciation variance has no impact on the closing surplus. Will review Depreciation at the mid year budget review.
- 3 Note 4 – Total cash balances \$10,005,810. Note that the Reserves term deposit was rolled over in Nov for a further three months at an interest rate of 3.25% p.a.
- 4 Note 6 Receivables
 - a Rates collected YTD 69% (\$506K)
 - b General Receivables - 60 Days - \$1.776 Main Roads for SKA and \$898K from DFES for Asset Repair Working Capital for AGRN 1062 Flood Damage
- 5 Note 9 Capital Works:
 - a Major expenditure YTD for:
 - i Community Splash Pool \$330K
 - ii Caravan Park Pool Construction \$617K
 - iii Carnarvon Mullewa Rd \$562K
- 6 Note 12 Grants
 - a Note that Operating portion of SKA Grant (\$401K) has been reallocated from the Capital Grant. In the November report, the entire invoice was recorded as Capital.

Budget/Financial Implications:

Reports showing year to date financial performance allow monitoring of actual expenditure, revenue and overall results against budget targets.

Consultation

RSM Australia

Recommendation

That Council note the financial statements as presented for the period ending 30 November 2024 as attached.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

18 DEVELOPMENT

18.1 Wooleen Station Petition

File:	13.2.2
Author:	Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared:	No interest to disclose
Date	8 December 2024
Attachments:	18.1.1 Stop the Shire of Murchison's Dingo Bounty Petition 18.1.2 Wooleen Station Website Comments 18.1.3 Other Petition Support 18.1.4 Legislative Regime Outline 18.1.5 Media Coverage 18.1.6 Murchison Pastoralists Views 18.1.7 CRBA & Murchison Vermin Council Views 18.1.8 Other References 18.1.9 Change.org Outline 18.1.10 Petition Presentation Extract from November 2024 Council Minutes

Matter for Consideration

Consideration of a Petition from the owners of Wooleen Station (David and Frances Pollock) operating through an on-line platform change.org entitled "Stop the Shire of Murchison's Dingo Bounty," and associated comments and submissions received since the launch of the petition.

Background Petition

David and Frances Pollock have advised that they are petitioning Council asking it to cease its 'wild dog' bounty scheme. They have indicated that they intend to present the final petition at the November Council Meeting. This has been now undertaken as per *Attachment 18.1.10* where *"the Petition as presented was received by Council without a formal motion being put on the understanding that it be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for report as appropriate and that it be considered by Council at a subsequent meeting."*

This Agenda Item constitutes such report.

As indicated in *Attachment 18.1.9* which is from Change.org and Wikipedia, Change.org is a website which allows users to create and sign petitions in an attempt to advance various social causes by raising awareness and influencing decision-makers. The site is a US-based for-profit company and claims to have nearly 500 million users as of December 2022. Petitions often focus on causes such as general justice, economic justice, criminal justice, human rights, education, environmental protection, animal rights, health, and sustainable food. There are also a number of criticisms noted regarding allegations of fake signatures and visibility of personal information which should be noted.

Background to the Shire's Wild Dog Bounty Scheme

Measures to implement a Wild Dog Bounty Scheme first commenced on 16 August 2013 with the formation of a Shire Wild Dog Control Working Group. The genesis of the Groups Formation is encapsulated in the following extract from the Report on the Notice of Motion for the Wild Dog Working Group Proposal.

Under the "Agriculture and Related Resources Protection Act 1976" Dingos in Western Australia must be controlled in agricultural and pastoral areas. Dingos are classified as unprotected native fauna under the "Wildlife Conservation Act 1950"

Dingos are an established species within Western Australia that has the ability to have substantial economic, social and environmental impacts.

Wild dog management strategies are most successful when people work together.

Wild dog/Dingo's do not respect tenure boundaries such as stock fences, borders or land uses. Wild dog managers in one area are likely to be affected by the actions or inactions of people in surrounding areas.

It is the responsibility of the landholder to control and remove declared species.

Unfortunately, due to the impact of wild dogs in the shire of Murchison, many landholders are under resourced, and this has impacted on their ability to contribute to the control of this Predator.

The wild Dogs are not only a threat to the economic sustainability of the pastoral industry, they are also a real threat to the General public.

The shire of Murchison recognizes that there is a wild dog emergency within its boundaries, and commits to working alongside current regional wild dog control Strategies.

On 18 October 2013 a report from the Working Group that was established formally recommended that a bounty of \$100 per dog be applied and that operational budget be established. The bounty does not apply to those professionally engaged as doggers and only relates to local stations. Various progress updates incorporating minor modifications to rules have since been provided to the Council as follows.

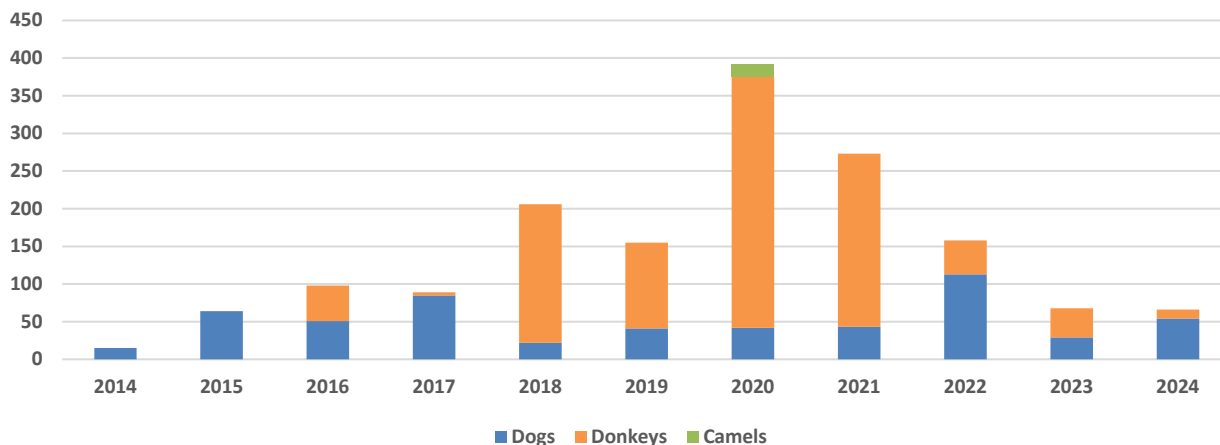
- ~ December 2013, 21 August 2014 and 15 May 2015
- ~ November 2015 when donkeys and camels were first added at \$10 per tail,
- ~ 26 March 2020 when the bounty for donkeys and camels was increased to \$20 per tail and
- ~ 25 May 2023 when the Council agreed to provide an ex-gratia payment to local Doggers operating within the Shire capped at 160 days per annum.

In addition, the Council has

- ~ maintained operations of the Wild Dog Working Group
- ~ continued to financially support the activities of the Carnarvon Rangelands Bio Security Association formed to provide assistance in the management of declared pest control for land managers throughout Shark Bay, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Murchison, and Upper Gascoyne Shires, along with those pastoral properties below the State Barrier Fence in the Shire of Northampton and City of Greater Geraldton.

Summary records of numbers associated with the bounty are shown as follows

Dogs Donkeys & Camels by No's



Camels	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	0	0	0
Donkeys	0	0	47	4	184	114	333	230	45	39	12
Dogs	15	64	51	85	22	41	42	43	113	29	54

Wild Dog No's	CRBA Murchison	Murchison Shire	Total	Murchison Shire %
2021	175	43	218	19.7%
2022	265	113	378	29.9%
2023	259	29	288	10.1%
2024	148	54	202	26.7%

Since the schemes introduction all of the Stations within the Shire, (except for Wooleen, Mt Wittenoom & Meka), have at some stage been involved in the participation and or authorisation processed with the scheme.

Since the schemes inception approximately 73% of all wild dog bounties paid have been paid to individual pastoralists operating on their own Station.

The Wild Dog bounty of \$100 per dog has remained in place some 12 years since its inception and operated as an additional modest but important local support to CRBA Activities for the management of declared pests.

Petition

Petition Details

Note. The Petition as lodged comprised a Petition Outline, list of supporting references, nominated supporting organisations and Petition Signatories

More expansive details of the Stop the Shire of Murchison's Dingo Bounty Petition started by Frances Pollock from Wooleen Station on 30 September 2024 are detailed in *Attachment 18.1.1* comprising

- A Petition Outline (including nominated supporters and extracts of supporting references)*
- B Petition Signatories with names redacted and*
- C Reasons for Signing the Petition*

Wooleen Station Website Comments.

Attachment 18.1.2 provides comments from the Wooleen Station website in support of the petition.

Other Petition Support

Attachment 18.1.3 highlights other comments received in support of the petition

Legislative Regime Outline

Attachment 18.1.4 highlights the rationale behind the legislative regime that applies to the operation of pastoral stations as they relate to the control of wild dogs

Media Coverage

There has been extensive media coverage, notably through the ABC including interviews with David Pollock and Rossco Foulkes Taylor and others which are relevant to the subject. *Attachment 18.1.5* includes written extracts. Various web links to the actual radio and film coverage are also noted.

Murchison Pastoralists Views

Attachment 18.1.6 highlights comments from Murchison Pastoralists supporting the current Murchison Wild Dog Bounty Scheme.

CRBA & Murchison Vermin Council Views

Attachment 18.1.7 highlights comments from the Carnarvon Rangeland Biosecurity Association and Murchison Vermin Council supporting the current Murchison Wild Dog Bounty Scheme.

Other References

Attachment 18.1.8 highlights other reference relevant to the management of dingoes and livestock.

Petition Presentation

Attachment 18.1.10 contains an extract from the November Council Minutes outlining notes associated with the presentation of the petition to Council by David Pollock.

Analysis

An analysis is provided to address the nature and details of the petition and issues that have arisen and is presented as follows.

Petition Outline (including supporting references & and nominated supporters)

The petition outline provided as an introduction to the on-line petition has been broken down into segments with comments directly relating to the content of the petition being provided as follows.

1 For 10 years, there has been an active bounty system for the killing of dingoes in the Murchison Shire. The Shire refers to them as 'wild dogs' but DNA research shows that the animals being killed are dingoes.

As outlined under the section Background of Shire Bounty Scheme above, the Council introduced a bounty scheme for wild dogs and later camel and donkeys. The Council however has not introduced its own separate definition of wild dogs. The definition of wild dogs is one of a number of declared pests under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*.

As indicated in *Attachment 19.1.4* the term wild dog is used to describe pure-bred dingoes, feral/escaped domestic dogs and their hybrids. Both dingoes and wild domestic dogs are the same species, *Canis familiaris*. Wild dogs are a major pest species impacting on grazing industries across mainland Australia. Wild dogs, that is dingoes, feral dogs and their hybrids, are declared pests for the whole of Western Australia under section 22 of the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007*.

When the scheme was adopted in 2013 it was specifically identified that the term wild dog include dingoes. The distinction between wild dog and dingo has little relevance as the bounty scheme was introduced in recognition of the adverse impacts caused but this Apex Predator in accordance with the prevailing legislation.

2 Dingoes perform an important role in the healthy functioning of Australian landscapes. They have almost entirely removed goats and foxes (two animals listed under the EPBC act as 'key threatening processes' to the Australian bush) from the Murchison district during the period (and despite the fact) that the bounty has been in effect. They have also reduced the kangaroo population to natural levels. The presence of dingoes allows regeneration of key pasture species and the conservation of other wildlife.

As indicated in *Attachment 18.1.4* Western Australia's policy for wild dog management is to control all wild dogs, including dingoes, in and near livestock grazing areas in Western Australia. In other areas they are left undisturbed.

Holistically the introduction of a Murchison Shire bounty scheme for wild dogs, camels and donkeys is aimed at assisting in the management, not elimination, of these species as part of a managed pastoral system. The positive aspects of dingoes as an important role in the healthy functioning of Australian landscape are recognised and not necessarily diminished by the bounty scheme.

3 It is time for the leaders of the Murchison community to accept that dingoes have had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the ecology which underpins pastoral production within the Murchison Shire.

As indicated in a raft of responses contained in *Attachment 18.1.4* this assertion cannot be supported. It is clearly contrary to the views and submissions of the State Government, other pastoralists in and outside the district and as indicated under the Media Coverage section below and under points 18, 21, 23, 24, 25 and 26 below including an admission by the Petitioner that sheep cannot coexist with dingoes.

This means that sheep production in Murchison could never return. This situation is also recognised by one pastoralist within the Shire who, at their own cost, constructed a vermin proof fence to allow sheep to continue to graze as this longstanding operation was being adversely affected by wild dogs. The Government funded Murchison Vermin Proof Fence, located in the eastern extremities of the Shire, is also a direct recognition that without this action diversification beyond cattle could never occur.

This can hardly be deemed to mean that dingoes have an overwhelming positive effect.

4 The negative affect of Dingoes on the major industry of the region - beef cattle - has been negligible.

There is a lack of evidence to this assertion and also contrary to the views of other pastoralists as described in the Landline interview as outlined under Media Coverage and point 21 below, where it was indicated by Hamish McTaggart of Bidgemia Station in the Gascoyne that wild dog numbers still needed to be controlled

and managed in cattle production or losses (financial and animal welfare) would become excessive. A fine management balance is required.

5 *Yet the financial, economical, emotional and environmental toll of a degraded landscape affects all Australians.*

The financial, economical, emotional and environmental toll of a degraded landscape does affect all Australians but the cause-and-effect relationship with dingo numbers as the prime driver has not been demonstrated nor supported. The petition advocates a very simplistic approach.

6 *The sanctioned killing of dingoes, our nation's natural apex predator, perpetuates a long history of mismanagement of Australian landscapes, and is akin to the killing of eagles to protect sheep, which is now illegal.*

This claim / sweeping statement of so-called sanctioned killing of dingoes ignores the fact that dingoes or other animals that may have been introduced into Australia have historically caused issues with primary production which then needs to be managed. Governments have the legislative responsibilities to bring in policies and practices to address this situation. Dingoes, like kangaroos, donkeys, camels and other species, whether native or introduced have at some stage historically needed to be culled as part of an overall management tool to protect primary production. Cases for culling other native species such as corella's from time to time occur when they interfere within urban areas so it's not a unique situation.

As indicated in *Attachment 18.1.4* there are a raft of Government Actions and management tools in play according to need and circumstances

7 *Not everyone signing the petition will be a ratepayer in the Shire of Murchison, but we are aware that less than 15 Percent of Murchison's funding comes from its ratepayers, and the rest comes from state and federal funding. Furthermore, almost the entirety of the Murchison shire is Pastoral leasehold land, which is not owned by pastoralists, nor the shire, but by the ratepayers of the state of Western Australia. Therefore, we believe it is within everyones right to demand that Murchison ceases the 'wild dog' bounty scheme, as well as its support for any activities that support the killing of dingoes, immediately.*

Firstly, the source of funding for a particular local government has no bearing on this matter. The only "untied" funds that all local governments receive are Commonwealth Financial Assistance and Local Roads Grants distributed annually. There are no specifics on how these may be spent. Murchison is no different to every other local government. Sources of local government funds have no bearing on any advocacy position.

Secondly, the Petitioner seems to suggest that the rights of pastoralists, who occupy but not own leasehold land, are somehow subservient to the views of ratepayers of the State of Western Australia. This is non sensical. The Crown (State Government) is the responsible entity, not the ratepayers of Western Australia and they have delegated a range of responsibilities and amongst other things made it a requirement that pastoralists care for the land. This includes "managing wild dog's / vermin on the property pursuant to s111(3) of the *Land Administration Act 1997* relating to Stock numbers etc and pests etc. on leased land". In these circumstances the views of pastoralists have more importance not less than others.

Whilst it may be everyone's right to demand that Murchison ceases the 'wild dog' bounty scheme, as well as its support for any activities that support the killing of dingoes, immediately, the weight given to any such a review will in part vary according to the proximity and relevance of the person demanding the change and logic and evidence provided to support the position. Governments make decisions every day for the betterment of the community and whilst public opinion is welcome, opinions in themselves do not constitute the sole reason for the decision. To suggest otherwise would mean a society couldn't function.

In this instance those affected are within the Murchison Shire and the actual only responsible approach for the Council to take is to react according to the relevant legislative environment relating to the subject Councils legislative responsibilities, not individual opinions from those with no working knowledge of the pastoral operation within Murchison.

In any event the requirements that a Council must follow are laid out under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1995* as indicated below under the heading Legislative which amongst other things defines a role of a council to

- ~ governs the local government's affairs
- ~ be responsible for the performance of the local government's functions.
- ~ oversee the allocation of the local government's finances and resources; and

- ~ determine the local government's policies.

Council's role in the space is entirely appropriate as its actions must and do accord with a "local" Murchison focus. They are also consistent with State Government policies and actions. What is advocated by the petition is not.

It is therefore up to the Petitioner to demonstrate the justification for change with sound facts and logic which should be directed to the Government which sets the policy and rationale. The value of the pastoral industry and impacts are significant, and any government would need to be convinced with significant evidence that the impacts for change delivered an overwhelming benefit. The petition provides scant evidence in this aspect. Importantly the very modest Murchison Shire Wild Dog bounty is merely a local tool to assist local pastoralists to meet their own legal obligations.

Supporting References

8 The following supporting references were provided as attached

- ~ Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Nesbitt, B., & Letnic, M. (2021). *The myth of wild dogs in Australia: Are there any out there? Australian Mammalogy*, 44(1), 67-75.
- ~ Cairns, K. M., Crowther, M. S., Parker, H. G., Ostrander, E. A., & Letnic, M. (2023). *Genome-wide variant analyses reveal new patterns of admixture and population structure in Australian dingoes. Molecular Ecology*.

The first two references relate to the so-called genetic distinction between wild dogs and dingoes. As indicated in point 1 above the term wild dog is used to describe pure-bred dingoes, feral/escaped domestic dogs and their hybrids. Both dingoes and wild domestic dogs are the same species, *Canis familiaris*, Wild dogs are a major pest species impacting on grazing industries across mainland Australia. The distinction between wild dog and dingo actually has little relevance as the bounty scheme was introduced in recognition of the adverse impacts caused such a species in accordance with the prevailing legislation.

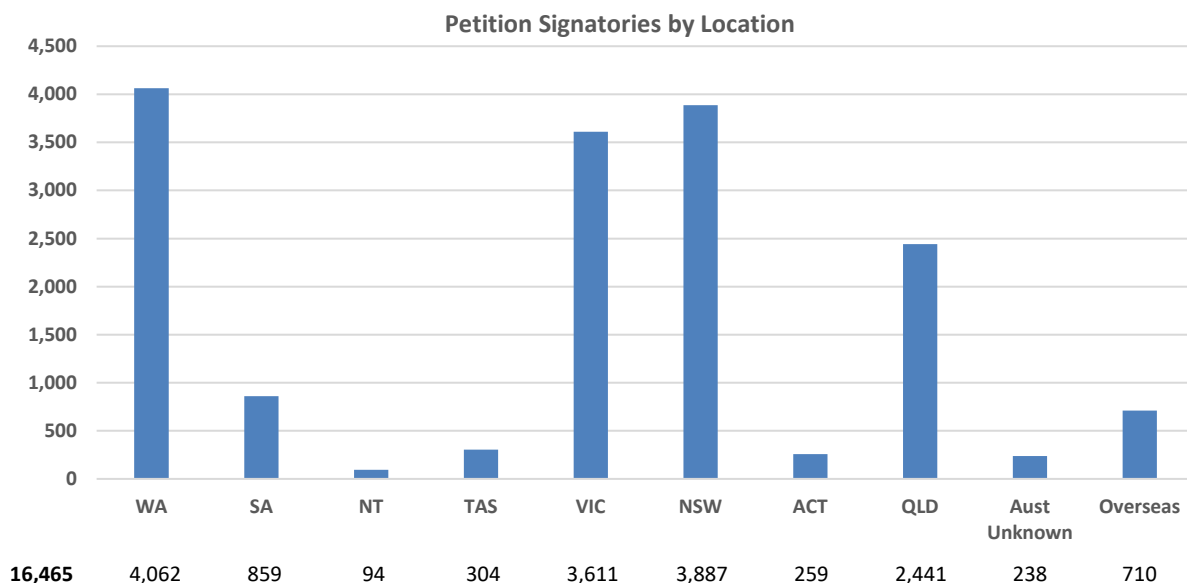
- ~ Pople, T., & Froese, J. (2012). *Distribution, abundance and harvesting of feral goats in the Australian rangelands 1984-2011 Final report to the ACRIS Management Committee*.

This study rates to feral goats.

List of Petition Signatories

A total of 16,465 people have electronically put their names to the petition. A list of signatories is attached but for privacy reasons, apart from the Petitioners who launched the petition, the actual name has been redacted. No allowance has been made for any unknowns such as the potential use of fake signatures which may or may not apply.

A separate analysis of the locations of those signing the petition has been undertaken using the location and postcode information provided. A summary analysis is shown as follows.



With respect to the WA Signatories

- i 5 came from Wooleen Station. There were no others emanating from within the Murchison Shire
- ii There was minimal representation from within the broader pastoral region in and around Murchison with 1 from Mt Magnet but nothing from Cue, Sandstone, Upper Gascoyne, Meekatharra and Wiluna Shires. Other than at Paynes Find (5), there were no respondents from Yalgoo Shire.
- iii The closest centres to Murchison represented were at Geraldton (118), Northampton (4), Kalbarri (13), Denham (13), Carnarvon (12) and Exmouth (13)

Apart from point i above there was no representation from the broader pastoral sector in and around Murchison.

Reasons for Signing Petition

A segment of the reasons for Signing the Petition by way of comments are shown in *Attachment 18.1.3*. A few examples are highlighted as follows.

9 Snapshot Reasons for Signing the Petition

- ~ *Dingoes need to be protected*
- ~ *Controlling dingo numbers is the issue not killing them*
- ~ *I think its time that we value our Australia's rich native flora and fauna diversity. Also Dingo's are an important part of the food chain that as primary predator and control number and diversity of the rest of the animals*
- ~ *I am devastated by the senseless killing of Steve and Eulalia - two beautiful native dingoes who belonged in our landscape. Their deaths are mourned but not in vain as they touched so many visitors on Wooleen Station. We will carry on Steve and Eulalia's legacy - to heal a land that has been savaged by colonial mismanagement and greed. Shame on the perpetrators of this dastardly deed. VALE, STEVE & EULALIA*
- ~ *This is a barbaric law and practice. Dingoes reduce numbers in foxes and goats. They treat lightly on the land.*
- ~ *They are a native animal that must be protected. This country is still run by colonial laws that are out dated.*
- ~ *I trust Dave's judgment and experience on this matter*
- ~ *The Dingo is the moderator of the natural environment. Leave them alone so they can do what nature intended.*
- ~ *Dingoes have a right to live and everything else needs them for a healthy environment.*
- ~ *I think it is time that we value our Australian rich native flora and fauna diversity. Also, Dingos are an important part of the food chain that as primary predator and control the number and diversity of the rest of the animals. Having them around keeps our ecosystems healthier. I would not like to see that the Australian government repeat the same mistake as with the Tasmanian tiger. I think with all the evidence about environment and ecosystem we should know better. Dingo are a great creature and iconic animal in Australia. What would we say to the next generations?*
- ~ *The Dingo Bounty has now reached its use by date. Time the Murchison Shire adopted the dingo in the environment best practice & ceased the bounty scheme.*
- ~ *Dingoes we're here long before us... they belong here. We are the interlopers. Would you put a bounty on Humans... I doubt it !We are losing too many native animals in Australia everyday, don't make this another species that humans have destroyed! It is hardly the legacy most of us want!*
- ~ *I've always understood that killing native wildlife is illegal. If pastoralists have a problem with dingo's, they, or their government should find a way to humanely, either repell the dingo's or to keep them outside of their leasehold. Killing them is the cheap and lazy answer.*
- ~ *The Dingo is an iconic Australian animal that should have protected status not a bounty on its head. If a Pastoralist is required to control the Dingo on their lease they should be required to apply for a permit. This would help to control the unnecessary killing of Dingos*
- ~ *I am human. And this is just in humane to kill off "wild dogs" just because of their name. They are native to Australia and that's how it should remain.*
- ~ *I believe the pros of maintaining dingoes in the landscape far outweighs the cons associated with stock losses*
- ~ *Dingoes are an important part of the natural environment in Australia. They help keep the population of kangaroos under control for one thing. They need to be allowed to survive as part of the ecosystem of Australia.*

As a general comment many of the comments relate to the persons own views and opinions and are often emotive with little relevance to the actual situation in Murchison and how the bounty scheme operates as an integral part of the overall management of the wild dog / livestock balance. The information accompanying the petition is scant in this regard and the references, even if someone took the time and trouble to access them, are of minimal value.

Wooleen Station Website Comments

The leading commentary from the Wooleen Station Website has been broken down into segments with comments directly relating to the petition being provided as follows.

10 On the 24th of September two dingoes were shot on the side of the road in Murchison. They were together, a pair. Dingoes mate for life. The first would have been shot as it considered, with the extraordinary intelligence that dingoes are well know for, what the car had stopped for. The second would have died in a state of anxious confusion, disorientated by the sound of the rifle fire, terrified by the smell and strange behaviour of its lifelong companion, jerking and thrashing in a pool of its own blood. It would have wanted to run. But it stayed, terrified, with its mate. A second shot, and they lay dying together.

It is not possible to know the actual circumstances of the shooting nor what state of anxiety may have existed at the time. The dingoes in question, however, were registered as a dingo breed of dog as such under the provisions of the Dog Act and treated as pets. As such there are a raft of compliance obligations on the part of the owners.

Regardless of the circumstances the apparent shooting of them on the Wooleen Station property is a deplorable state of affairs. The Shire's sympathy has already been extended to David and Francis.

11 So far it's not a particularly noteworthy situation. Dingoes are shot all the time all around Australia. This fact is hidden from the general public, by calling them wild dogs.

As indicated above and in *Attachment 18.1.4* and *Attachment 18.1.8*, this assertion is false. The legal publicly advertised definition of wild dog in Western Australia includes dingoes. The legislation in Victoria expressively applies to dingoes. This fact is not hidden nor the fact that dingoes are shot around Australia.

12 Murchison shire has a bounty on wild dogs. I assume the shooter would have been pleased to get them both, as by presenting their scalps to the shire office they would have been paid \$200.

As the petitioners know, or should know, any person claiming a bounty must complete a claim form, present evidence of the shooting including location and have the claim signed by the pastoralist and certified by the delegated Shire Officer before any payment is made. In this instance no payment has been made. Refer also to Media Coverage in *Attachment 18.1.5*.

13 But these were no ordinary dingoes. These dingoes were Steve, and Eulalia. They were captive-raised at the Australian Dingo Foundation in Victoria, for the express purpose of re-educating the Australian public. A nation of people who have been lied to.

It is noted that in this instance the dingoes were not genetically from Western Australia and being used as part of Wooleen's commercial tourism operation. Recently Wooleen Station registered two new dingoes with the Shire.

14 We have been lied to in so many ways about the dingo. Most especially, that they don't even exist. Instead, that they have been replaced by "wild dogs". Yet readily available DNA evidence shows that nothing could be further from the truth. From a scientific standpoint, it's not even debatable.

As indicated in point 1 above and several other points the term wild dog is used to describe pure-bred dingoes, feral/escaped domestic dogs and their hybrids. Both dingoes and wild domestic dogs are the same species, *Canis familiaris*. Wild dogs are a major pest species impacting on grazing industries across mainland Australia. The distinction between wild dog and dingo actual has little relevance as the bounty scheme was introduced in recognition of the adverse impacts caused such a species in accordance with the prevailing legislation. It also means that the actual precise genetic makeup of any individual wild dog does not in itself become a point of contention.

15 Wooleen is a community. Thousands of people come here every year to learn about how we fix our land from the mistakes of the past. They all learn that the dingo is the key. Steve and Eulalia have blessed many of them with a grateful kiss.

Cultural change needs education, and movement. Steve and Eulalia were education. Now we need movement.

It is noted that in this instance the dingoes were being used as part of the Stations broader tourism operation and that in their death they are being utilised to assist in advocating a particular viewpoint. This is supported by a statement from David Pollock "*Murchison is a small community and I don't think we would have had much luck with just the pressure we could put on them to get then changes we think are necessary.*"(Media Coverage Attachment 18.1 5 - Media 1A)

Other Petition Support Comments

16 Example Other Petition Support Comments

Comments received supporting the petition are shown are shown in *Attachment 18.1.3*.

A brief snapshot of one comment is shown as a follows

"I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the continued practice of offering bounties for dingo culling within the Shire of Murchison,

While I understand that dingoes are often viewed as a threat to livestock, I believe that scientific evidence and ecological understanding clearly demonstrate that this practice is not only misguided but also detrimental to the overall health of the environment.

Aerial studies conducted along the dingo-proof fence in eastern Australia have provided compelling insights into the benefits of maintaining healthy dingo populations. These studies reveal stark differences in the state of vegetation and pasture on either side of the fence. Areas where dingoes are present tend to have richer biodiversity and more balanced ecosystems, as dingoes play a crucial role in controlling populations of mesopredators such as foxes and feral cats. In contrast, regions where dingoes have been heavily culled experience greater degradation, including overgrazing by herbivores, which leads to soil erosion and the loss of native vegetation. These impacts ultimately harm the very pastoral practices that culling is intended to protect.

Rather than addressing the root causes of livestock losses, which often include poor land management practices, dingo bounties perpetuate an outdated and counterproductive approach. The focus should instead shift to coexistence strategies, such as improved fencing, guardian animals, and non-lethal deterrents, which have been proven more effective in protecting livestock without disrupting the delicate balance of ecosystems.

I urge you to reconsider the policy of dingo bounties in the Shire of Murchison and instead promote a more enlightened and ecologically sound approach to wildlife management. By protecting dingoes, we not only safeguard biodiversity but also enhance the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Thank you for considering this important issue. I would be happy to discuss further or provide additional resources to support a shift in policy."

This example is perhaps one of the more considered responses in amongst other things in part promoting a coexistence strategy; a situation which underpins current government policy as outlined under Legislative Regime Outline below and which underpins the bounty scheme itself.

Legislative Regime Outline

Attachment 18.1.4 highlights the rationale behind the legislative regime that applies to the operation of pastoral stations as they relate to the control of wild dogs

17 Wild Dogs in Western Australia

*The term wild dog is used to describe pure-bred Dingoes, feral/escaped domestic dogs and their hybrids. Both dingoes and wild domestic dogs are the same species, *Canis familiaris*.. Wild dogs are a major pest species impacting on grazing industries across mainland Australia.*

Since arrival in Australia domestic dogs have interbred with dingoes and most wild dog populations now include some level of hybridisation. The extent of hybridisation across the country broadly reflects the intensity of human settlement. In Western Australia over half (59%) of wild dogs have tested as 'pure' dingoes.. Within populations of wild dogs there is a low proportion of purely domestic dogs. Wild dogs occur where there are suitable supplies of food and water. They are absent from most of the closely settled

farming areas of the south-west, though may still be found in some forested areas. In grazing areas wild dogs are subject to management programs because of their predation of livestock.

The distinction between wild dog and dingo actual has little relevance as the bounty scheme was introduced in recognition of the adverse impacts caused such a species in accordance with the prevailing legislation

18 Problems caused by wild dogs

Wild dog predation on livestock is taking a heavy economic and emotional toll on livestock producers in affected pastoral and agricultural areas. In addition to significant annual stock losses to wild dogs, their threat is a major deterrent to restocking of livestock enterprises and to associated regional development opportunities, such as transport and shearing services. Stock losses from wild dogs in the rangelands of Western Australia alone are estimated at \$25 million per annum.

Small stock are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of wild dogs. When wild dogs move into sheep paddocks they harass, bite and kill sheep, often without eating any. Cattle are considered to be able to withstand wild dog attacks to a greater extent. However, groups or packs of wild dogs may attack and kill young cattle. Considerable variation in losses of calves have been recorded ranging from negligible to significant in some areas.

19 Legal Status

Wild dogs, that is dingoes, feral dogs and their hybrids are declared pests for the whole of Western Australia under section 22 of the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007. The Western Australian Organism List (WAOL) describes the control and keeping categories and the areas in which this pest is declared for each of the following groups: dingoes, dingo hybrids and feral dogs (Canis familiaris). Dingoes are considered native wildlife under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

20 Wild dog management strategies

The management of wild dogs in WA is guided by the Western Australian Wild Dog Action Plan 2016-2021 (WDAP), which aims to facilitate a more coordinated and well-resourced approach to wild dog control in Western Australia. The WDAP is part of the WA State Government's long-term commitment to wild dog control. This includes management of the State Barrier Fence by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

DPIRD also supports industry and landholders in wild dog control through biosecurity groups. Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs) have the option to collect Declared Pest Rates to fund declared pest control, including wild dogs. These rates are matched by the State Government. DPIRD administers the Declared Pest Account in which these funds are received, held and allocated.

Under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 landholders - landowners and occupiers – are responsible for wild dog control on their own land. However, for vertebrate animal pest control, everyone must ensure they use the most humane method available (see animal welfare, baits and poisons). There are a number of control options available, including ground and aerial baiting with meat poisoned with 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate), canid pest ejectors, trapping using strychnine, fencing and to a lesser extent, trapping and shooting.

Media Coverage

There has been extensive media coverage, notably through the ABC including interviews with David Pollock and Rosco Foulkes Taylor who bring a local Murchison perspective plus others who provide other information relevant to management of wild dogs. *Attachment 18.1.5* highlights some of this including written extracts. Two have been specifically referenced below with perhaps the segment "Is Australia's native dog, the dingo, having an identity crisis?" providing a good overview

Various aspects relation to the position are summarised as follows.

21 Media IA - ABC Website - 03.11.24

Is Australia's native dog, the dingo, having an identity crisis?

- ~ *Petitioner David Pollock advocates for dingoes to control goat and kangaroo populations, while Shire President Rossco Foulkes-Taylor believes dingoes should be managed to protect livestock.*
- ~ *David promoted his views through keeping two hand-raised pet dingoes Eulalia and Steve on his property Wooleen Station. The majority of people living in the Shire do not share David's views and they bait, trap and shoot dingoes to protect their livestock.*
- ~ *David indicates that the culture around Murchison is to shoot dingoes, so it's almost certainly someone that he knows and, in all likelihood, someone he has respect for. "We're trying to get the message to everybody in Australia, because dingoes are called wild dogs all over Australia ... essentially they're being lied to."*
- ~ *David believes that the more scientific evidence comes out to show how important dingoes are in the landscape, with Dingoes being incredibly good at managing their own numbers. Managing dingoes means doing absolutely nothing as this is because dingoes are territorial and pairs remain together while both are alive.*
- ~ *David's views are not shared by others in the article both within Murchison and elsewhere in respect to behaviors of dingoes and impacts on sheep and cattle.*
- ~ *David operates a successful farm stay tourism business which is a key income generator for the property. His pet dingoes were a key educational component. But he concedes that sheep and dingoes cannot coexist*
- ~ *Research scientist Dr Tracey Kreplins explain that wild dogs as a collective term - it means dingoes, free-roaming dogs and their hybrids, they are all one species, 'Canis familiaris'. She says genetic testing shows dingo purity in WA remains high despite years of ongoing culling in some regions by landowners.*
- ~ *Under WA's Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act, wild dogs are declared pests and landowners have a legal obligation to control declared pests on their land. They are required to pay an annual rate to assist with regional pest and weed control to their local regional biosecurity groups. David has refused to pay his rate.*

22 Media IB - ABC Website – 03.10.24

Dingo hunting bounty petition raised after two 'pets' go missing from the Murchison's Wooleen Station

- ~ *Wooleen Station owner David Pollock believes his two pet dingoes were killed by shooters operating under the Shires bounty scheme and that they would not come to them seeking permission and would say that they were shot on another property.*
- ~ *Shire President Rossco Foulkes-Taylor indicated that verification requirements meant that it was highly unlikely that they were shot for a bounty.*
- ~ *David indicates that Murchison has an anti-dingo culture and anyone from within or outside of the district could have shot their pet dingoes.*
- ~ *David took a petition to social media to stop the bounty incentive indicating that it was inappropriate for a government authority to incentivise hunting dingoes. David indicated "Murchison is a small community and I don't think we would have had much luck with just the pressure we could put on them to get then changes we think are necessary."*

Murchison Pastoralists Views

Comments received supporting the retention of the Shire's Wild Dog Bounty Scheme are shown in *Attachment 18.1.6*. A snapshot of these is included in the following.

23 Murchison Pastoralist Support

Letters and emails of support for retention of the current bounty scheme from a range of pastoralists within have been received. Stations represented include Byro, Ballythunna, Twin Peaks, Mt Narryer, Kalli, Milly Milly, Beringarra, Yuin, Curbur, Murgoo, Bullardoo, Billabalong, New Forrest, Meeberrie, Mt Wittenoom and Meka.

Brief snapshot of one comment is shown as a follows

"Due to the terms of the program the owner of the station give's permission to the shooter prior to them commencing any movement on the station, some guide lines are put in place. Eg no shooting within 5km of the homestead and around water points etc. The owner knows who's shooting on their property, its not a random person driving around with a loaded gun

As a pastoral enterprise that is running cattle, it is another good tool in our management of wild dogs on our station. We would be disappointed to see the Shire of Murchison end this program. As our Shire has grown on our Pastoral Industries, it has been the backbone of our community. It is great that the Shire of Murchison acknowledges this and supports our industry.

In our Annual Pastoral Return, that is mandatory requirement of the Government of Western Australia through the Pastoral Lands Board of Western Australia, we are asked to state - What actions have we taken within the past 12 months to manage wild dog numbers, and lists a comprehensive range of options as your management tools: Ground baiting, Opportunistic Shooting, Trapping, Aerial Baiting, Employed a dogging contractor and the Shire of Murchison's bounty program is another option/tool in our management of wild dogs."

CRBA & Murchison Vermin Council Views

Comments received supporting the retention of the Shire's Wild Dog Bounty Scheme are shown in *Attachment 18.1.7*. A snapshot includes the following.

24 Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association

Extracts highlighted as follows.

- a There is a nationally agreed framework (National Wild Dog Action Plan) that promotes and supports a strategic and risk-based approach to wild dog management; emphasising humane, safe and effective management techniques and appropriate scales for mitigating the impacts of wild dogs.*
- b The definition of wild-living dogs includes dingoes, feral dogs, and their hybrids.*
- c The dingo is included in the definition of the wild as they cause negative impacts on agriculture, biodiversity and social assets.*
- d We acknowledge the environmental and cultural significance of the dingo, its conservation status, and legal protection in several jurisdictions.*
- e These considerations are considered through negotiation with relevant stakeholders during the local wild dog management planning process.*
- f Estimates of the impacts on the Australian economy range between \$64 million to \$111 million annually.*
- g In most jurisdictions, there are legislative mechanisms to protect dingoes in specific areas, while also*
- h ensuring that livestock and wildlife are protected from their impacts.*
- i It's not about eradication, it's about control to reduce the negative impacts.*
- j Wild dog attacks on livestock cause serious emotional and psychological damage to landholders and their families. The reference made to research is not WA-based and only provides the message Wooleen are selling. There is plenty of recent papers that counter the impact of control of dingoes on numbers, their genetics, species etc*

25 Murchison Regional Vermin Council

Extracts highlighted as follows.

"The contributions that your Shire makes to the pastoral industry, by way of bounties and CRBA dogger subsidies, demonstrates the sort of strong community leadership needed to ensure the prosperity of pastoral enterprises.

As you are aware a key obligation of all pastoral lessees is the control of declared pests as determined in accordance with the Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007. Wild dogs are declared pests under this Act and your Shire's wild dog control initiatives are very significant in that they assist individual pastoralists in meeting their legislated obligations and more broadly, the sustainable production of livestock free from wild dog attack.

We realise that speaking to the general public on the topic of wild dogs / dingoes (whatever you want to call them) is difficult. People outside or those without any knowledge of the pastoral industry generally have a very misguided perception of wild dogs/ dingoes.

Thank you for speaking so well for those of us who believe in wild dog control and are actively trying to keep wild dogs under control for the future of our pastoral livestock operations."

Other References

Attachment 18.1.8 highlights other reference relevant to the management of dingoes and livestock.

26 Victorian Government Example

A review of Dingo population estimates in Victoria was commissioned. In January 2024, the DEECA's Arthur Rylah Institute (ARI) calculated estimates for the Victorian dingo population using existing data from camera traps. This work concluded the following dingo population estimates:

- ~ for eastern Victoria, the total dingo population was within the range 2,640 to 8,800, and*
- ~ for north west Victoria, the total dingo population was within the range between 40 and 230.*

The Victorian Government acknowledges that livestock predation is a significant challenge for Victorian farmers, and the Government has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of Victoria's dingo population to guide management practices that most appropriately balance the protection of livestock and the conservation of dingoes.

As a result, the Order in Council unprotecting the dingo in certain circumstances was amended. From 25 September 2024, the dingo unprotection Order will be remade in eastern Victoria and will have effect until 1 January 2028. The new dingo unprotection Order will allow the lethal control of dingoes for the protection of livestock on private land and within a 3km buffer zone along the boundaries of public land in eastern Victoria. The dingo unprotection Order will no longer apply outside of eastern Victoria. The new Order excludes north west Victoria due to the risk of extinction of its local dingo population.

As shown Victoria's has a nuanced approach to managing the coexistence of dingoes and livestock. In this instance the total protection order on dingoes has been lifted but only in one area of the state and only for a set period. In other areas the protection remained as dingoes numbers were low.

Petition Presentation

Attachment 18.1.10 contains an extract from the November Council Minutes outlining notes associated with the presentation of the petition to Council by David Pollock.

27 Petition Presentation Comments

Save for one item in the main there is nothing of any substance raised by David in his verbal presentation that has not been already addressed in the petition documentation and media coverage or otherwise not already addressed in this report.

David did cite an instance in 2016 when a dingo was shot on his property and a bounty claimed without his sign off. This was some 8 years ago and well before my time as CEO, but to the best of my knowledge this assertion, which has only come to light when the petition was lodged, has not been previously raised. I can however confirm that following a review of the records I cannot find any information that would support such an assertion.

Perhaps the most telling feature is the emotion exhibited by David such as highlighting one occasion "*when a dingo had been hung up on a tree on his property*" and "*in the circumstances, that he felt under attack for his views*" and that "*he expected the petition would not change Council policy but at least it would be a way for the public to see that the Murchison Council was proud to support the killing of dingoes.*" Whilst the Shire President correctly refuted the last claim it seems strange that someone would think that any Shire would be proud to seen any animals killed per se other that for sound reasons.

Comments

Summary comments are provided as follows.

28 General Petition Comments

Every day someone, somewhere will launch a petition more often than not in an attempt to influence or effect change. Change.org has, with the support of social media, made this a very effective art form. Regardless of the cause, petitions have an important place in society, if for nothing else to promote a potential rethink.

However, by their very nature they take a very simplistic approach and are not a substitute for considered and reasoned logic which applies to decision makers. One rationale logical considered view arguably carries more weight than umpteen comments with little substance, even if on some occasions weight of numbers may eventually carry the day

In this instance 16,464 signatories seems on the surface to be impressive but as outlined in this report the substance behind the rationale for change is severely lacking in part as is the information provided to encourage signing is similarly lacking based almost entirely on emotion. Many of comments that have surfaced in support of the petition demonstrate this. There is also not a distinction between those who may be signing to stop the bounty as a recognition that it is outdated or for those that think it should not be an addition to a pastoralist's current obligations. These and other nuances are lost.

29 Shires Responsibility in relation to the Petition

As indicated under the legislative responsibilities of a Council it is the "local" considerations that any local government is required to follow and, in this instance, other than from Wooleen Station there is simply no support for a change. Indeed, some have requested an increase in the bounty given that the amount has not changed since the scheme was introduced in 2013. 16,464 signatories largely from elsewhere have minimal weight and if followed would be outside the remit of a Councils local legislative focused responsibilities.

30 Summary

Based in the evidence presented as outlined there is ample justification for retention of the current Murchison Bounty Scheme which is overwhelming supported by pastoralists within the Shire and also as articulated in the Shires 2016 Community Strategic Plan.

Importantly the Shires actions were developed to provide additional support to State Government Polices, and actions the control of declared pests as determined in accordance with the *Biosecurity and Agricultural Management Act 2007*. Wild dogs are declared pests under this Act and the Shire's wild dog control initiatives are very significant in that they assist individual pastoralists in meeting their legislated obligations and more broadly, the sustainable production of livestock free from wild dog attack. Whether a bounty is in place or not wild dogs will still be trapped and shot.

Notwithstanding rhetoric generated by the petition the bounty scheme is a very modest addition as part of a balanced approach to livestock / wild dog management.

The petition may have a very large number of supporters which the petitioners are tapping into but have no support from other persons within the district other than from Wooleen Station nor from the Murchison based pastoral industry. The supporting documentation accompanying the petition is extremely limited and the claims made for change have largely been based on beliefs and emotion and not substantiated with any widespread recognised evidence nor critique of what is a finely balanced livestock management issue.

Several of the claims relating to livestock management are also not supported by reputable peers and certainly not by evidence sourced from reputable bodies such as the Western Australian, Victorian State Governments, Carnarvon Rangelands Biosecurity Association and Murchison Vermin Council.

In any event the target for such a petition being the Murchison Shire is miss aimed, as its the State Government that sets the policy. All the Council has done is to provide a very modest support mechanism. The petitioners have by design opened up a platform to articulate their views; so, in one sense one of their objectives, "publicity" has already been achieved.

However, in doing so they have also opened up their own operation under their pastoral lease obligations and motivations in relation to dingo management as part of their tourism operation open to scrutiny. As a result, this has also provided a platform for others and those from within the Shire that are impacted by wild dogs, to openly question their operation, and their inherent responsibilities that all pastoralists have, just as they have questioned others who have divergent views.

Given Council's responsibility is to Shire residents and the costs associated with managing wild dogs for pastoralists and the Shire itself, it considered entirely appropriate that the current state of affairs and issues that have arisen as a result as presented through this report be raised with the Pastoral Board who have responsibility for managing pastoral leases.

The recommendations below address these aspects.

Statutory Environment

Local Government Act 1995.

2.7 Role of council

(1) The council

- (a) governs the local government's affairs; and
- (b) is responsible for the performance of the local government's functions.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the council is to -

- (a) oversee the allocation of the local government's finances and resources; and
- (b) determine the local government's policies.

Land Administration Act 1997

Part 7 Pastoral leases - Division 4 Conditions of a pastoral lease

111 Pests and prohibited stock on leased land

(3) A pastoral lessee must control declared pests on the land under the lease in compliance with the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management Act 2007 and to the satisfaction of the Board.

(4) A pastoral lessee must not

- (a) keep prohibited stock on land under a pastoral lease; or
- (b) sell prohibited stock,
except in accordance with a permit to do so issued under Division 5.

Penalty for this subsection: a fine of \$20 000.

(6) If authorised stock being kept on a pastoral lease by a pastoral lessee becomes prohibited stock, subsection (4) does not apply to that person until 6 months after the day on which the

Sustainability Implications

Environmental There are known significant environmental considerations associated with wild dogs within the Murchison Shire

Economic There are known significant economic considerations associated with wild dogs within the Murchison Shire.

Social There are known social considerations as the views of the petitioner have been for some time been at odds with the broader Shire community but have largely coexisted on a live and let live basis. The petition and views openly and publicly expressed has potentially changed this balance and increased these tensions.

Strategic Implications

Murchison Shire Council Community Strategic Plan as detailed below.

Vision Statement *Working together to preserve the unique character of the Shire, supporting diverse and sustainable lifestyle and economic opportunities.*

Objectives and Strategies *Description*

Economic Objective 1 *To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.*

Objectives and Strategies	Description
Strategies	
Small Scale Support for Vermin Control	<i>The Pastoral industry is a key industry within the Shire. Vermin issues, in particular wild dogs, have the ability to impact on the ongoing viability of the Pastoral industry within the Shire. The Shire supports a range of measures in relation to vermin control.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Environmental Objective 2	<i>To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by: Providing information on services (funding opportunities, Grant processes etc.). Supporting community groups.</i>
Civic Leadership Objective 4	<i>To provide Good Governance to the Murchison Shire through: Regional collaboration where possible; Compliance with statutory requirements;</i>
Regional Collaboration	<i>Work collaboratively with neighbouring shires, state and federal government and private enterprise to ensure the efficient and effective use of the Shire's scarce resources.</i>

Consultation

Will Herold (Works Manager) Lisa Keen Executive Manager DCEO), Bec Fogarty (Community Officer) and Lyn Fogg (Governance Specialist WALGA)

Recommendation

Recommendation

That the Council resolve as follows

- 1 That the “Stop the Shire of Murchison's Dingo Bounty Petition” as presented by petitioners David and Frances of Wooleen Station be formally received.
- 2 That the Chief Executive Officers Wooleen Station Petition Report be noted
- 3 That Council having considered the Petition received from petitioners David and Frances of Wooleen Station rejects the demand to remove the Shire's Wild Dog Bounty and affirms that the bounty scheme which shall remain in place.
- 4 That Council write to David and Francis Pollock advising them of Councils decision relating to the Petion as presented.
- 5 That Council provides a copy of the Chief Executive Officers' Wooleen Station Petition Report to the Pastoral Land Board (Board) requesting that it consider and review the wild dog management issues raised by Wooleen Stations “Stop the Shire of Murchison's Dingo Bounty" petition and requests that the Board provide the Council with the results of their review.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

18.2 Community Development Progress Report

File:
Author: Bec Fogarty – Community Officer
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 25 November 2024
Attachments: Nil

Matter for Consideration

Community Development Progress Report November Council Meeting

Background

This report seeks to inform the Shire of the works undertaken in relation to references to the relevant objectives and strategies contained within the Community Strategic Plan, in accordance with the following Vision Statement.

Vision Statement	<i>Working together to preserve the unique character of the Shire, supporting diverse and sustainable lifestyle and economic opportunities.</i>
Objectives & Strategies	<i>Description</i>

Murchison Camp Oven Muster

Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Economic Development	<i>Retain existing industries and encourage the establishment of new industries to broaden the region's economic base through the provision of residential and industrial land / buildings in Murchison</i>
Environmental Objective 2	<i>To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by:</i> <i>Supporting and assisting in coordinating projects and events as required.</i> <i>Providing information on services (funding opportunities, Grant processes etc.).</i> <i>Supporting community groups.</i>
Civic Leadership Objective 4	<i>To provide Good Governance to the Murchison Shire through:</i> <i>Regional collaboration where possible;</i> <i>Openness and transparency and enhanced consultation and public participation;</i>
Communication Strategies and more involvement with Pia Wadjari	<i>Increase communication between the Council and all sectors of the Community (both ways).</i>

Website development continues to support the 2025 event. We look forward to kicking off working group meetings in the new year.

Tourism

Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>

In the new year, we should consider the development and adoption of a Shire of Murchison Tourism Marketing Strategy. As the place within the region, we have no clear identity or overarching themes or branding that bring together the community initiatives, landmarks and Shire facilities that would enable successful promotion of Murchison to towards our strategic objectives of more and longer visitation of visitors to the area.

The objective of the strategy should be to establish an identity for the Murchison Shire that is authentically Murchison and reinforces the place within the region by:

1. Creating a solid foundation for consistency across marketing platforms and materials for seamless recognition of “Murchison” the place.
2. Create consistency in promotion of tourism assets and community initiatives
 - ~ Community Initiatives – Museum, Botanic Walk, Community Garden, Oasis Roadhouse, Bird watching, Astro Tourism, Grader/Transport displays, Polocrosse
 - ~ Landmarks – Errabiddy Bluff, Ballinyoo Bridge, Bilung Pool, Wooleen Lake
 - ~ Shire Facilities – Caravan Park, Swimming Pool, Splash Pad, Playground, Sports Club/Community Centre, Cemetery, Tennis Courts, Lawn Bowls

Having a strategy in place will create a clear identity for Murchison and enable

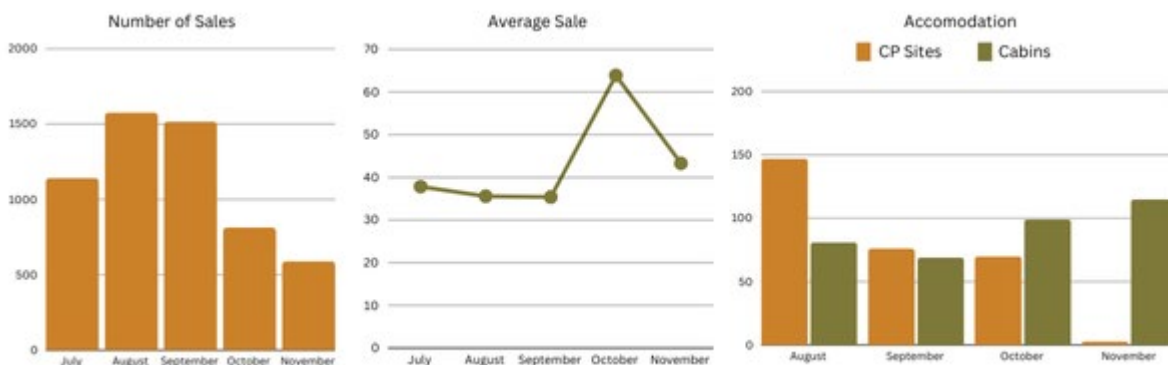
- ~ Consistent approach to the promotion of community initiatives, landmarks, and Shire facilities.
- ~ Efficient use of financial resources
- ~ Increase tourism through storytelling
- ~ Create a reporting mechanism to gather data that supports future development

With major elements of the settlement masterplan currently underway or planned to be underway within the next 12 – 24 months, it is timely that this strategy be developed. Having the strategy in place will reduce barriers in the design of signage, and promotional materials and bring economic benefit by promoting existing and new facilities and experiences in a cohesive way.

External influences that align with this approach include the current review being conducted by the Murchison Executive Group in regards to collective tourism efforts that analyse our existing partnerships with Murchison GeoRegion, Australia’s Golden Outback and Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways.

Roadhouse Update

Roadhouse Support Staff Milly and Ben will be leaving us in the new year and then we will welcome Anne and Ambroise to kick off 2025. Terry and Wendy have been doing a great job providing friendly and welcoming service to residents and visitors. Since the new till has been installed and updated software procured for accommodation bookings we are now able to provide a greater level of information regarding the operation of the Roadhouse. This level of data will also be able to illustrate our seasonal visitor patterns and the impacts of promotional activities and events.



Local Loyalty Scheme

The Local Loyalty Scheme has been released online through the monologue. We look forward to seeing and processing applications as they arrive.

You can expect future progress reports to include # Applications and # of times used.

Containers for Change Recycling

Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Interpretive Centre	<i>Development of an Interpretive Centre was identified within the Tourism Development Strategies of the 2013 Strategic Community Plan.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Environmental Objective 2	<i>To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by: Supporting and assisting in coordinating projects and events as required. Supporting community groups.</i>
Support for Community Groups	<i>Provision of Human Resources to assist community groups.</i>

The latest return of containers has seen the total number of recycled vessels reach 1,357 produced or donated to the shire that is \$135.70 going back to community initiatives. That's approximately 4 IBC's worth of containers that have been diverted away from the Murchison Shire landfill. This does not take into account all the container bags that have been delivered by residents that have a Containers for Change member number other than the Shires. Thank you to all Shire residents for supporting the recycling program and changing the bin you put your rubbish in.

Additional infrastructure has arrived in the settlement including more 120L wheelie bins, IBC;s and promotional wraps to create a more obvious bag drop location next to the freight shed.

Community Garden

Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Economic Development	<i>Retain existing industries and encourage the establishment of new industries to broaden the region's economic base through the provision of residential and industrial land / buildings in Murchison</i>
Environmental Objective 2	<i>To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by: Supporting community groups. Supporting and maintaining social infrastructure (i.e. Parks, Gardens, Cemetery) and support those groups who use them.</i>
Support for Community Groups	<i>Provision of Human Resources to assist community groups.</i>

This time of year is slow in the community garden with extreme heat and wind conditions limiting produce, in saying that chillis and capsicums are thriving. We have been battling with red spider mite and have seen success with the introduction of beneficial bugs including ladybugs, lacewings and californicus mites in conjunction with spraying a diatomaceous earth mix on affected plants and greenhouse structure timbers.

The garden and chook house will be monitored over the Christmas closure period and on duty staff made aware of any immediate repairs that can not wait for full operations to resume.

2025 Significant Event Opportunity – Box Rally

Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by: Supporting and assisting in coordinating projects and events as required. Supporting community groups.</i>
Support for Community Groups	<i>Provision of Human Resources to assist community groups.</i>
Civic Leadership Objective 4	<i>To provide Good Governance to the Murchison Shire through: Regional collaboration where possible;</i>
Regional Collaboration	<i>Work collaboratively with neighboring shires, state and federal government and private enterprise to ensure the efficient and effective use of the Shire's scarce resources.</i>

Box Rallies have confirmed their attendance and booked rooms at the Roadhouse for staff. We are currently pursuing catering quotes with the support of the Box Rallies team.

Communications

Civic Leadership Objective 4	<i>To provide Good Governance to the Murchison Shire through: Regional collaboration where possible; Detailed and professional administration; High levels of accountability; Compliance with statutory requirements; High-quality forward planning, particularly for assets and finances; Openness and transparency and enhanced consultation and public participation; Provision of quality customer services, good financial management and pursuit of excellence in professional administration and communication.</i>
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Strategies

Communication Strategies and more involvement with Pia Wadjari	<i>Increase communication between the Council and all sectors of the Community (both ways).</i>
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Email Communications

- ~ No community messages
- ~ 6 Road Condition Report
- ~ 1 Murchison Monologue

Social Media Communications

The Shire continues to share developments within the settlement and Shire through Facebook. This month has been used to present tourism within the shire in a positive light. Sharing the latest drop of photo and video from The Murchison Camp oven Muster held in August.

Mail Communications

None

Website

Regularly updated to reflect operations.

The next Monologue will be released in January with a community-focused wrap-up of Christmas with the next full edition post council meeting in February.

Statutory Environment

Local Government Act 1995.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental There are no known significant environmental considerations.
Economic There are no known significant economic considerations.
Social There are no known significant social considerations.

Strategic Implications

Murchison Shire Council Community Strategic Plan as detailed above for each item.

Recommendation

That Council note the Community Development Progress Report

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

18.3 Roadhouse Playground and Key Worker Accommodation Update

File:

Author: Bec Fogarty – Community Officer
Bill Boehm - Chief Executive Officer

Interest Declared: No interest to disclose

Date 9 December 2024

Attachments: Nil

Matter for Consideration

Update Progress Report on development of a new playground, redevelopments in and around the Roadhouse plus future key worker accommodation as part of Infrastructure Development Fund requirements

Background

At the October Council Meeting Council was provided with various update advice in relation to the following.

Infrastructure Development Fund Works

Agreement with the State Government for \$1,088,339 in funding assistance for water and electricity infrastructure upgrade works within the Settlement to support the construction of 5 additional key worker dwellings has finally been signed.

Roadhouse & Playground Redevelopments

An initial meeting with the CEO was held in Fremantle with UDLA which has kicked off both Roadhouse & Playground Redevelopments projects well with the initial briefing leading to a raft of information being provided to them including access to survey, photos and operational requirements.

Final results will include playground, roadhouse, and the rear roadhouse accommodation precinct. Grant applications for roadhouse and playground elements will follow. For operational and grant acquittal reasons, redevelopment of the Roadhouse must be undertaken in the October 2025 to March 2026 period, with the Community Centre (currently being upgraded) used as a temporary roadhouse. Everything is to be programmed around this constraint.

Update

Since this time a raft of actions have been undertaken with a view to delivering these projects within these constraints as indicated in the following.

Power & Water - Infrastructure Development Fund Works

As outlined in the Works Report.

Roadhouse and Roadhouse Precinct

After the initial briefing various onsite meetings and inspections were held at the Roadhouse and the rear Precinct. A follow up meeting in Fremantle was also undertaken with the CEO and Community Officer.

A Teams Meeting of the near final concepts highlighting progress will be held with Councillors and UDLA prior to the Council Meeting.

Other Key Worker Accommodation

As indicated above we are still required to deliver tall key worker accommodation units as part of State Governments Infrastructure Development Funding by 30 June 2027. Given potential economies associated with a bulk purchase it is envisaged that the timing will be brought forward. The area at the intersection of Kurara Way and Mulga Crescent opposite old Works Supervisor shed has been identified

Playground

Community members were invited to meet with UDLA to consult on the overall theme for the area and the types of equipment that would be most appropriate. It was decided that a pastoral/wildflower theme would be most appropriate with supporting activities that make space for astronomy activities such as stargazing and information panels that could also cater to adults. UDLA is currently consulting with equipment makers and designers to provide 2 playground options to the group. One with an off-the-shelf standard approach the other with a custom wow piece that would become an icon for the Murchison. The next meeting has not been scheduled.

Timing

As previously indicated these works will if at all possible be completed within the next 18 months. Timing and its final sign off is critical for this to be achieved especially as applications for funding assistance for the roadhouse redevelopment needs to be lodged in around February 2025 with playground shortly thereafter.

Budget/Financial Implications:

The current notional 4-year budget of \$2,025,000 has been allocated for these developments and that currently fits within the Shires overall funding model, which at this stage does not include any potential grant funding. The February 2025 Budget Review will provide a more up to date picture.

Statutory Environment

Local Government Act 1995.

Sustainability Implications

Environmental There are no known significant environmental considerations.
Economic There are no known significant economic considerations.
Social There are no known significant social considerations.

Strategic Implications

Murchison Shire Council Community Strategic Plan as detailed below.

Vision Statement	<i>Working together to preserve the unique character of the Shire, supporting diverse and sustainable lifestyle and economic opportunities.</i>
Objectives and Strategies	<i>Description</i>
Economic Objective 1	<i>To develop the region's economic potential to encourage families and businesses to stay in the area.</i>
Strategies	
Water Supply Upgrade for Settlement	<i>The water supply to the Murchison Settlement is currently non-potable. Provision of a safe water supply</i>
Green Power Upgrade for Settlement	<i>Update of the Settlement electricity supply network to renewable sources</i>
Interpretive Centre	<i>Development of an Interpretative Centre was identified within the Tourism Development Strategies of the 2013 Strategic Community Plan.</i>
Tourism Development	<i>To promote and support a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Murchison.</i>
Economic Development	<i>Retain existing industries and encourage the establishment of new industries to broaden the region's economic base through the provision of residential and industrial land / buildings in Murchison</i>
Environmental Objective 2	<i>To improve the sustainability of land use and improve the condition of the environment.</i>
Social Objective 3	<i>To develop, co-ordinate, provide and support services and facilities which enhance the quality of community life in the Shire by:</i> <i>Supporting and assisting in coordinating projects and events as required.</i> <i>Providing information on services (funding opportunities, Grant processes etc.).</i> <i>Supporting community groups.</i>

Objectives and Strategies	<i>Description</i> <i>Supporting and maintaining social infrastructure (i.e. Parks, Gardens, Cemetery) and support those groups who use them.</i>
Strategies	
Support for Community Groups	<i>Provision of Human Resources to assist community groups.</i>
Refurbishment of Community Centre	<i>The Community Centre is a key building within the Murchison Settlement. The Centre was built in the 1980's and has maintained since this time, however is due to refurbishment.</i>
Civic Leadership Objective 4	<i>To provide Good Governance to the Murchison Shire through: Regional collaboration where possible; Compliance with statutory requirements; High-quality forward planning, particularly for assets and finances; Openness and transparency and enhanced consultation and public participation;</i>
Asset Management	<i>Meet the required level of service in the most cost-effective manner for present and future residents.</i>

Consultation

Roadhouse & Roadhouse Precinct

Scott Lang, Julian Jeeves-Bronte and Stejara Timis (UDLA), Bill Boehm (Chief Executive Officer), and Bec Fogarty (Community Officer) for overall design.

Involvement for various individual elements from Lisa Keen (Executive Manager DCEO), Will Herold (Works Manager), Terry and Wendy Bryan (Roadhouse Managers), Adam Fogarty and Gary Pardoe (Gardner's), Phil Swain (Building and Environmental Health Officer) and Henry Foulkes-Taylor (MGPWA).

Playground

Scott Lang, Julian Jeeves-Bronte and Stejara Timis (UDLA), Bill Boehm (Chief Executive Officer), Bec Fogarty (Community Officer), Lisa Keen (Executive Manager DCEO) and Cr Emma Foulkes-Taylor and Julia Foulkes-Taylor (Playground Working Group Members)

Recommendation

That Council note the Roadhouse Playground and Key Worker Accommodation Update Report

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

19 ADMINISTRATION

19.1 2025 Meeting Dates

File:	4.16
Author:	Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared:	No interest to disclose
Date	9 December 2024
Attachments:	19.1.1 Proposed 2025 Council Meeting Day Calendar

Matter for Consideration:

Council to consider the meeting dates for Ordinary Council Meetings for 2025.

Background

The precedent is that Ordinary Council meetings are held on the fourth Thursday in each month commencing at 12 noon, with the exceptions of January, when a recess is traditionally observed and December which is to be held on the same day as the Shire Community Christmas Tree thereby allowing for the Christmas break.

Comments

A few quirks in the traditional fourth Thursday in each month arise as follows

- ~ In April the fourth Thursday in the month falls the day before Anzac Day but also after the Easter break which means that the agendas will need to be finalised prior to or during Easter.
- ~ In May the fourth Thursday in the month falls some 21 days into the month.

In addition comments in relation to the following Agenda Item relating to the adoption of the 2023-24 Annual Report may or may not also have an influence.

It is not proposed to move any meeting days away from the traditional, but Council may wish to consider whether moves to alternative dates are justified.

Statutory Environment

Regulation 12(1) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 requires that:

- (2) *The CEO must publish on the local government's official website the meeting details for the following meetings before the beginning of the year in which the meetings are to be held -*
 - (a) *the ordinary council meetings; and*
 - (b) *the committee meetings that are required under the Act to be open to members of the public or that are proposed to be open to members of the public.*

Strategic Implications

Nil

Policy Implications

Nil

Financial Implications

Nil

Consultation

Nil

Recommendation

That Council gives local public notice of its Ordinary Meetings of Council for 2024 as follows:

Murchison Shire 2025 Ordinary Council Meetings

The following ordinary Council meetings are open to the public commencing at 12 Noon on the dates as shown below. All meetings are held in Council Chambers, Murchison Settlement, WA.

January 2024 (No meeting)	Thursday 24 July 2025
Thursday 27 February 2025	Thursday 28 August 2025
Thursday 27 March 2025	Thursday 25 September 2025
Thursday 24 April 2025	Thursday 23 October 2025
Thursday 22 May 2025	Thursday 27 November 2025
Thursday 26 June 2025	Friday 12 December 2025

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

19.2 2023/24 Annual Report

File: 1.2
Author: Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 9 December 2024
Attachments: 19.2.1 2023/24 Annual Report

Background

Local Government is to prepare an Annual Report for each financial year containing information including but not limited to a report from the mayor or president, a report from the CEO, an overview of the plan for the future, the financial report for the financial year, information as may be prescribed in relation to payments to employees, the auditor's report for the financial year, information regarding Disability access and inclusion and details in the register of complaints. The Annual Report is to be the first item considered at the Annual General Meeting of Electors.

Update

The finalisation of the Audited Financials by Councils Auditors and the Auditors Report has been completed within the required timeframes. At the 13 December 2024 Council Meeting, Council adopted the recommendations from the Audit Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2024 which amongst other things include a recommendation to adopt the 2023/24 Financial Report.

Under the *Local Government Act 1995*, The Annual Report must be accepted by the Council by 31 December unless the Auditors Report is not available in time for this to be included in the Annual Report and hence adopted within this deadline. The Draft Annual Report (less financials) has already been sent out to councillors for comment. Apart from a reorganisation of the Overview Section and inclusion of various graphs that could not be completed at the time the final Annual Report has not altered. The Annual Report 2023/24 is required to be presented at the Annual Meeting of Electors to be held within 56 days of the adoption of the report.

Statutory Environment

5.53 Annual reports

- (1) *The local government is to prepare an annual report for each financial year.*
- (2) *The annual report is to contain —*
 - (a) *a report from the mayor or president; and*
 - (b) *a report from the CEO; and*
 - (e) *an overview of the plan for the future of the district made in accordance with section 5.56, including major initiatives that are proposed to commence or to continue in the next financial year; and*
 - (f) *the financial report for the financial year; and*
 - (g) *such information as may be prescribed in relation to the payments made to employees; and*
 - (h) *the auditor's report for the financial year; and*
 - (ha) *a matter on which a report must be made under section 29(2) of the Disability Services Act 1993; and*
 - (hb) *details of entries made under section 5.121 during the financial year in the register of complaints, including-*
 - (i) *the number of complaints recorded in the register of complaints; and*
 - (ii) *how the recorded complaints were dealt with; and*
 - (iii) *any other details that the regulations may require; and*
 - (i) *such other information as may be prescribed*

5.54. Acceptance of annual reports

- (1) *Subject to subsection (2), the annual report for a financial year is to be accepted* by the local government no later than 31 December after that financial year.*
** Absolute majority required.*
- (2) *If the auditor's report is not available in time for the annual report for a financial year to be accepted by 31 December after that financial year, the annual report is to be accepted by the local government no later than 2 months after the auditor's report becomes available.*

5.55 Notice of annual reports

The CEO is to give local public notice of the availability of the annual report as soon as practicable after the report has been accepted by the local government.

5.27 Electors' general meetings

- (1) *A general meeting of the electors of a district is to be held once every financial year.*
- (2) *A general meeting is to be held on a day selected by the local government but not more than 56 days after the local government accepts the annual report for the previous financial year.*
- (3) *The matters to be discussed at general electors' meetings are to be those prescribed.*

5.29 Convening electors' meetings

- (1) *The CEO is to convene an electors' meeting by giving —*
 - (a) *at least 14 days' local public notice; and*
 - (b) *each council member at least 14 days' notice, of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting.*

Strategic Implications

This is a statutory function.

Policy & Financial Implications

Nil

Consultation

Travis Bate Financial Accountant (RSM), Jason Russler (WALGA Governance Team).

Comments

Whilst the 2023/24 Annual Report must be finalised now the normal February Meeting will be beyond the 56-day time frame.

Following discussion with WALGA it appears that it is not an unusual occurrence for some local governments to be caught out with respect to some legislative time frames over the Christmas - New Year period where they do not meet in January. The Office of Local Government are aware of this as an issue but thus far not made any legislative changes. Two options have been suggested

- 1 Call the annual general electors meeting in accordance with s. 5.27 within 56 days of Council adopting the annual report. If no one turns up, no one turns up; or
- 2 Hold the annual electors meeting beyond 56 days and accept this constitutes non-compliance. There's no consequence from the State. It's more of an anomaly than an issue in which case we would be holding the meeting at the next practical opportunity.

In these circumstances it is considered appropriate to proceed with Option 2 and to have the Annual Electors Meeting on the day of the February Council Meeting. Also of note is that Council will also be conducting their Annual Community Meeting on 13 December 2024 as part of the 2024 Christmas Tree Xmas Tree functions and that unlike the Annual Electors Meeting, this meeting is always well attended

Recommendation

That Council

- 1 adopts the Annual Report for 2023/24 as attached.
- 2 determines that the 2023/24 Electors Annual General Meeting be held within the Murchison Settlement at the Murchison Shire Council Chambers commencing at 2pm on 27 February 2024

Voting Requirements

Absolute Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

20 CEO ACTIVITY REPORT

File:
Author: Bill Boehm – Chief Executive Officer
Interest Declared: No interest to disclose
Date: 9 December 2024
Attachments: Nil

General

The table below provides an update of activities undertaken since the last report. Despite the period preceding the December Period being short as indicated some important work has been undertaken

As this is the last Council Meeting for the year, I would like to formally thank all Councillors and staff for working so constructively and cooperatively in what continues to see significant and positive change. Continued support for Kaye and I continues to be invaluable and is very much appreciated.

All staff are to be congratulated for their efforts, and I thank all including Robyne Hosking, Ivor Dumbris, Olive Martina, Warren Tomlinson and Angela Pardoe (and other casual Roadhouse staff) who have left our employ and who have made a positive contribution. A special thank you to Vicki Dumbris who retired last week after 9 years positive service. New staff Bec Fogarty, Sydney Fogarty, Adam Fogarty, and Terry and Wendy Bryan, Liam Gall and the returning Lou Bavoillot and Gary Pardoe have adapted and contributing positively.

Of particular note is the performance of our Works Crew under Works Manager William Herold's leadership, ably assisted by Lisa Keen who doubles up on Finance matters, providing strong guidance to Sydney Fogarty and Vicki Dumbris and support to Travis Bate and staff at RSM.

Despite-staff absences we have made steady progression in a large array of areas, some of which are outlined The Works Managers Report and past Monologues

Last year I indicated that I was confident that with the continued strong support from all councillors, successful recruitments that 2024 will round out an overall rich and achievable community vision that can be delivered operationally. I am delighted to say that this has panned out with a raft community development projects actions actioned as we continue along the progressive path as shown by the following pic.,



As indicated, whilst there is a lot on now and still much to do in 2024/25, there is equally a raft of planning actions around 2025 and 2026 projects that are being worked on now so that these projects can be delivered. For a very small Shire staff wise this remains a challenge but is also very exciting for us all.

Whilst Council developed a terrific Settlement Masterplan and Road Precinct Plan 2-3 years ago, we always knew that this would likely be delivered over some length of time. 2024-26 seems to be when that time has arrived. The ride should be enjoyable.

Date	Activity
26.11.2024	Grants Commission Submission. Attend Grants Commission Meeting
27.11.2024	Annual Report Work.
28.11.2024	Teams Meeting Murchison Region Visitor Economy Activities Assessment Project Steering Group . Council Workshop & Meeting. Audit Exit Meeting via Teams and follow up actions. Catch up on site with Henry-Foulkes Taylor at Pool and Roadhouse to look as plumbing and septic related issues. Council Minutes
29.11.2024	TOIL. Take Minute Books for binding
30.11.2024	Emails Administration
1.12.2024	Finalise Council Minutes
2.12.2024	Attend Regional Roads Group Meeting via Teams. Annual Report Work. Emails Phone calls and Administration. Bush Fire Work TOIL
3.12.2024	Emails Administration. TOIL
4.12.2024	TOIL
5.12.2024	Meeting with Mark Holdsworth (RDA) , Karin Grima and Bec Fogarty regarding Murchison Region Visitor Economy Activities Assessment Project. Attend Pia Wadjarri School Council Meeting via Teams. Email and Monologue Work. Agenda Work Preparation.
6.12.2024	Agenda Work. Teams meeting with UDLA & Community Officer regarding Roadhouse and Roadhouse Precinct Redevelopment
7.12.2024 to 8.12.2024	Agenda Work and Administration
9.12.2024	Meeting with Works Manager. Finalise Agenda and Administration Work

Recommendation

That Council note the CEO's Activity Report.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Council Decision		
Moved: Cr	Seconded: Cr	
Carried/Lost	For	Against

21 OTHER ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Nil

22 MEETING CLOSURE

The Shire President closed the meeting at.