



**Wagait Shire Council**  
**Half Yearly Community Consultation Meeting**  
**10am Saturday 4 July 2020**

**Present:** President Neil White, Vice President Cr Dyer, Cr Graham Drake, Cr Michael Vaughan, Cr Clee; Wagait Beach Community Members (20); Wagait Shire Council CEO and Office Manager

**Apologies:** Chris Chaplin

President Neil White welcomed everyone to the meeting then handed over to Vice President Cr Dyer.

Cr Dyer explained the Half Yearly Community Consultation Meetings are part of Council's communication and engagement strategy. This meeting was delayed due to COVID-19 measures in place March-June 2020 and the timing of this meeting was an opportunity to share and discuss the draft 2020-21 Shire Business Plan.

Cr Dyer handed over to the CEO to introduce the Plan.

CEO introduced the Shire Business Plan saying Council staff have been working hard to deliver community services and maintain assets as caretaker for facilities owned by the community. This will continue to be a challenge for a small team, with a limited financial rates base and a huge liability in the amount of infrastructure it is responsible for. It is also anticipated that the coming year will be fiscally 'tight' and securing grants would be very competitive due to lack of NT Government funds available for infrastructure upgrades. CEO anticipates it will be a year of consolidation and repair for Council. CEO commented that the Plan and Budget reflects this and hopes that everyone has an opportunity to read and comment today or provide feedback by email before the 10 July 2020.

Cr Dyer led Council presentation in an overview of the draft 2020-21 Shire Business Plan, using the Shire Service Delivery Plan headings to discuss highlights and priority projects responding to specific issues.

**1. Community Infrastructure**

- 1.1. **Maintenance and Upgrade of Parks, Reserves and Open Space** – upgrades are planned to ensure playground and exercise equipment is safe. The water extraction license is still pending and BMX track will need to be redesigned around the bore. Signage was also noted as a key priority to stop people driving on the oval and deter unwanted behaviour generally.
- 1.2. **Maintenance of Public Buildings** – asset register complete and maintenance schedule is being developed to assist in accurate reporting, insurance and valuation.
- 1.3. **Road Upgrades and Construction** – priority maintenance includes improvements to Cox Drive floodway and green waste track, funds are secured for these projects. Planning and preparation for other major road projects will be undertaken in 2020-21, including: formal road audit, protection barriers on dangerous culverts; extension of a bike path on WTR and resheet of all estate roads.

- Community raised concerns regarding the resheet roads, with discussion and suggestions ranging from only do the worst/busiest roads to do all roads. Council confirmed the cost for resheet was prohibitive currently (aprox \$2.5M), even with reserves of aprox \$1M additional funds or a loan would be needed; but agreed that something needs to be done asap on certain areas. Erickson Crescent was raised as a priority. Council noted that the legal implications of road safety made this a priority for Council to address.
- 1.4. **Roads Maintenance** – continued general maintenance and management of estate roads and verges including weeds and blocked drains.
    - Community raised concerns about drains and culverts regarding weeds and safety barriers, as well as bollards at the end of Wagait Tower Rd.
  - 1.5. **Traffic Management** – road signage to improve road safety is a priority for 2020-21.
  - 1.6. **Fleet Plant and Equipment Maintenance** – continued general maintenance on plant and equipment; operational leases for staff vehicles to reduce costs and regulate cash flow
2. **Environmental Heath**
    - 2.1. **Waste Management** - Cr Dyer outlined the history of waste management in the Shire and following the closure of the community dump, a contract was awarded for domestic kerbside waste service. This was complemented by a quarterly hard waste collection which ceased in November 2019. The new waste management contract with Veolia, includes the provision of hard waste bulk bins, that are located in a compound on the Council grounds behind the Community Centre and is free to residents. Recently, the compound closed for a week due to dumping of prohibited waste and reopened in early June with a new terms and conditions, including support staff on hand and new bays to provide opportunity for upcycling of items. Additional opening hours may be considered for seniors or shift-workers if there is a demand.
      - Community enquired about long term planning and consideration of a new waste transfer station however Council has determined at this stage it would cost prohibitive. Viability could be reassessed in discussions with Larrakia Development Corporation.
      - Community suggested the road/track into Green Waste area needs improving. Generally considered a good concept but some concern re location near to Park play area. Issue of recycling (chipping the green waste) rather than burning was raised.
      - Community suggested the possibility for Hard Waste to be contracted to local entrepreneur and become a profit-making enterprise.
      - Community also enquired about glass and plastic recycling.
    - 2.2. **Weed Control and Fire Hazard Reduction** – continued maintenance and improved planning for weeds control through liaison with Crown Lands office, NT Weeds Branch and the Bushfire Brigade.
    - 2.3. **Animal Welfare and Management** – implementation of local by-laws is a priority for 2020-21. CEO stated copies of the proposed plan are available which shows Council will take a common-sense approach to the implementation with emphasis placed on community awareness and education to encourage responsible dog ownership, rather than enforcement. The implementation strategy is based on low cost and not for profit principles. The estimated implementation cost to Council is \$5000 annually.
      - Community agreed that properties either needed to be fully fenced or an area provided to contain animals. Suggestions were made re control of wandering dogs. Dog Management plan to be introduced in the near future. CEO provided details.

### 3. Civic Services

- 3.1. **Library Services** – future needs to be determined and relocation to a purpose-built structure will be considered.
- 3.2. **Arts, Culture and Heritage** – continue working with local arts, culture and heritage groups as well as NT government agencies to create a calendar of events and a plan for maintaining sites of significance.
- 3.3. **Sports and Recreation** – priorities for 2020-21 include developing a strategy for long term infrastructure and support to attract additional funds for increased programming and activities.

- Community acknowledged the broader nature of the current activities but concerned more needs to be done for children. Survey of children and their needs was suggested.

- 3.4. **Civic Events** – events this year have been challenged due to Covid-19 measures however Council is celebrating 25 years of local government in 2020 and a way to share this with community is being considered.
- 3.5. **Visitor Accommodation and Tourism** – a local area plan is needed to continue strategic planning development to increase opportunities for sustainable economic growth in this sector.

### 4. Community Engagement

- 4.1. **Administration of Local Laws** – ongoing reviews and development of new policies as required, supported by the Audit Committee.
- 4.2. **Customer Service Management** – maintaining high standards of communications and service delivery.
- 4.3. **Public and Corporate Relations** – website development and community surveys are priorities in this work area for 2020-21. Cr Dyer noted that Council has been publishing a regular monthly e-newsletter as well as providing daily updates on facebook for activities.

- Community raised concerns for residents and ratepayers still not receiving information via these service methods and 'falling through the gaps' and that it still needs to be improved. Suggestions for web-site development and information included in the Annual Rates Notices were put forward. A previous suggestion of a sms style of communication for emergency and other important messages might reach a broader footprint. Council agrees to investigate the setup ad cost of this service.

- 4.4. **Governance** – development of an induction pack for new Councillors, pending the 2021 elections and an annual training plan to increase capacity of Councillors
- 4.5. **Advocacy and Representation** – ongoing.

- Community queried how Council works with others regarding development including LDA, Marina project, Transfer Station site, and Core Lithium Mine. Cr Dyer explained the requirement for councils to undertake an electoral review during each term. He referred to the consultation exercise that was undertaken by True North for the strategic planning exercise and the view at that time that the current system and arrangements were appropriate. Cr Dyer stated that while the community values its small council and does not want to see further change, the only way to maintain viability and therefore sustainability would be to increase the rates base. Council will be looking at ways in 2020-21 to establish strong relationships with Larrakia Development Corp and Northern Land Council to ensure community interests for critical regional infrastructure is represented.

- Community expressed concern about the poor quality of our current waterpoint facility for smaller vehicles, jinkers etc and asked Council to seek information regarding the upgrades to the water treatment and any future upgrades for the facility.

5. **Commercial Services**

5.1. **Commercial Contracts** – maintain current contract and secure new contracts to increase revenue.

6. **Community Services**

6.1. **Welfare and Social Services** – investigating potential for the clinic services to be expanded and to have regular doctors and specialists provide a service to the community.

6.2. **Emergency Services** – in 2020 the Emergency Committee was re-established and played a big part in community safety during implementation of Covid-19 measures. The Committee is still seeking a Chair and interested parties should speak to the CEO.

7. **Council Administration** was not discussed at the community consultation.

Cr Dyer thanked everyone for attending and offering their questions and suggestions, which would all be considered by Council.

Community Members thanked Cr Clee for his 23 years' service and applauded their appreciation.

The Next Half Yearly Community Consultation will take place in November 2020, TBC.

*The meeting concluded at 11:40am and Council invited everyone to share refreshments. Councillors and staff remained until 12:30 to meet personally with residents.*

Comments and suggestions from residents attending the meeting were integrated into the presentation of Works plan however are also listed here to clearly identify community priorities raised at the meeting.

- Roads
- Road Safety
- Recycling
- Green Waste
- Hard Waste
- Dog Management
- Sport and Rec
- Communications
- Advocacy and Development
- Water Security