

Dear Elector

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURAL REFORM

As I hope you are aware, on 5th February 2009 the Minister for Local Government, Hon John Castrilli MLA, announced a range of Local Government Reform Strategies.

Local governments within WA have been specifically requested to:

1. Take steps to voluntarily amalgamate and form larger Shire Councils
2. Reduce the total number of Councillors to between six and nine
3. Form appropriate regional groupings of councils to assist with the efficient delivery of services

In assessing possible amalgamation and boundary changes with our neighbouring Shire Councils, a range of criteria must be addressed. These include:

- Community of Interest
- Shire Council Viability
- Effective Delivery of Shire Council Services
- Financial Assessment
- Economic Factors
- Demographic Trends
- Transport and Communication
- History of the Area
- Physical and Topographic Features

The timeframe given for Local Governments to respond to the Minister is very short, with our final Reform Submission due by 31st August 2009.

At our Council meeting on 25th March, we adopted the following initial position:

1. That without pre-empting the outcomes of discussions with adjoining Local Governments, Council's preferred options for structural reform are:
 - (a) The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup remain as a sustainable local government as is;
 - (b) The formation of a formalised resource sharing model with adjoining consenting local governments provided there are financial efficiencies to be gained, the delivery of service is improved and representation and community of interest are maintained;

- (c) Negotiate with adjoining local governments on boundary readjustments'/amalgamations should it be envisaged that their boundaries be materially altered by other structural adjustment.
2. That Council advise the preferred number of Councillors for the Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup is nine as accepted on a recent review of Council representation.
3. That the CEO and President meet with adjoining local governments to discuss options of boundary changes, amalgamations and resource sharing.

Since that time, CEO John Attwood and myself have met with our neighbouring Shire Councils to ascertain their views on the Minister's structural reform agenda, with the result being a universal desire to remain the same but pursue more resource sharing.

A vital part of this Structural Reform process is providing community members with an opportunity to contribute their views. All community comments will be included in the Shire's final Structural Reform Submission.

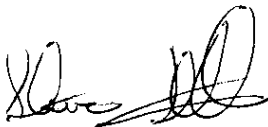
I am requesting your input in the following ways:

1. By completing this survey and returning it by post or in person to the Shire Offices
2. By viewing a more detailed Information Paper and completing the survey on the Shire's website www.donnybrook-balingup.wa.gov.au
3. By attending the following community workshops:
 - Balingup Community Workshop – Monday 20th July 5:00 – 6:30pm
 - Donnybrook Community Workshop – Monday 20th July 7:00 – 8:30pm
 - Noggerup Community Workshop – Tuesday 21st July 6:00 – 7:30pm

Surveys can be returned by post to the Shire or alternatively dropped off at Balingup Post Office, Balingup Library, Kirup Post Office, Lowden General Store and the Shire Offices.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to contribute your views in any of the ways outlined above. As in other States of Australia, it would seem inevitable that at some time in the future a WA State Government will pursue amalgamation of our 139 Local Governments. This is your opportunity to have your say about the future governance, representation and service delivery in your Shire. I look forward to seeing you at one of the community workshops and/or receiving your completed survey.

Best regards



Steve Dilley
SHIRE PRESIDENT

8 July 2009