

Questions Submitted in Writing –Council Meeting – 16 December 2020

James Judd, Colac

- 1. Under the new LGA 2020 are the new Councillors elected at the 2020 elections authorised to vote on minutes of meetings held prior to their election when they were not party to decisions made when a number of matters under LGA 1989 were changed in LGA 2020, as very little was said about the change to voting requirement at council elections that took effect this year?**

Response from Acting Manager Governance

Yes, Councillors are allowed to vote on such matters under s14 of *The Local Government Act 2020* which states Council is a body corporate and therefore has perpetual succession which allows for the continued existence, no matter how many changes in membership occur within the corporation, until it is dissolved.

- 2. Will the Colac Otway Shire Council provide, in the press at regular intervals, an update on progress to introduce the Colac 2050 Growth Plan on time at least once every year plus an additional problems that could put the plan at risk of being introduced on time?**

Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services

Council provides updates to the community over the course of time, to provide information on progress with actions relating to the Colac 2050 Growth Plan. The most recent was a media release providing information on the State Government gazettal of the planning scheme amendment that includes this plan in the Colac Otway Planning Scheme.

- 3. As the proposed charge to be introduced by the Victoria State Government on all users of electric vehicles is not a tax as excise is, has the Colac Otway Shire Council considered how it could claim a rebate on this charge if made on any vehicle operated by the Council as the reason given for raising this charge is to replace revenue lost as reduced excise on fuel that is supposed to go towards the road system construction and maintenance?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

When Council understands the details of the changes to the fuel excise and other charges it will be in a much better position to answer this question.

- 4. When will the Colac Otway Shire Council review it's bans placed on soft plastics that are put in the garbage bins to take into account the fact that most require soft plastic to be in one piece of a reasonable size if to be recycled not just small pieces that we are often left with when removing plastic wrap from papers delivered when now all papers delivered to a residence are wrapped in plastic that most require a small pieces is removed before the item can be unwrapped?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

The ban on single use plastics was introduced by the State Government back in November 2019. Recycling of any soft plastics in the Colac Otway Shire is currently via Woolworths & Coles supermarkets in Colac. They recycle the soft plastics through Redcycle. The yellow co-mingled recycling bin is for recycling hard plastics like milk and soft drink bottles. Please note that soft plastics in the yellow recycling bin are classed as contamination. For more information on what can go in the yellow recycling bin please check Council website for information.

5. **Has the Colac Otway Shire Council yet reviewed the feasibility of Council having any electric vehicles now the Victoria State Government has hinted it proposes to introduce an ongoing charge based on distance travelled by all electronic vehicles?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Council currently has a plug in hybrid vehicle and has operated many hybrid power vehicles over the years. We will continue to evaluate opportunities as they arise.

Rod Kemp, Forrest

1. **Council in their 2019/20 budget allowed \$250,000 to upgrade the current non compliant wastewater management system including new treatment system, holding tanks and effluent disposal system at the Forrest caravan park. What is the current status quo?**

Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services

Council has completed the concept design of the wastewater system upgrade for the caravan park, and will shortly be seeking a Works Approval from the Environment Protection Authority. Officers are also preparing to put the project out to public tender. Works are unlikely to commence before mid to late 2021, in consultation with the current lessee.

Leigh Barrett, Colac

1. **Is the accepting of \$10,000 from Animal Justice Party upper house member Andy Meddick by the Colac Otway Shire to provide a misting spray system for the bats on days of “excessive heat” a reversal of the policy to move the bats away from the Botanical Gardens.**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Council was awarded funding from the State Government to improve the irrigation system in the Colac Botanic Gardens. The funding was announced by Andy Meddick and Council does appreciate the support.

Council has an adopted position for relocation activities in line with the current permit which occurs between the months of April and August. The remaining grey headed flying foxes outside of these months are to stay safe and supported, as far as possible, in extreme weather conditions to prevent deaths of these protected animals.

The funding of \$10,000 will allow Colac Botanic Gardens to make irrigation improvements at the ground level. The irrigation improvements will support the colony of grey headed flying foxes in the gardens by providing them with a cooler environment during hot days.

2. **Has council spoken to the body undertaking the relocation of the bats and if so what was their response, eg does it assist the process of permanent relocation or does it make it more difficult.**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Council is the body undertaking the relocation of the grey headed flying foxes. Council has gained a 3-year relocation permit which we are one year into. Council has worked with DELWP and consulted with experts directly and via forums to gain permits and create a safe plan for relocation of the grey headed flying fox. The activities undertaken assist in making the relocation of the grey headed flying fox colonies permanently away from the Colac Botanic Gardens.

3. **Assuming that a bat excretes 5 grams a day, 7000 bats over 100 days excrete a total of 3.5 tonne - does adding water cause pathogens to multiply.**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Numbers are monitored daily and from August 2020 to the present time there have been as little as 30 and no more than 700 grey headed flying foxes at any one time residing in the Botanic Gardens. Council is not aware of any information that adding water to grey headed flying fox excrement causes pathogens to multiply. Using Mr Barrett's suggested figures the daily amount of material would be 35 kilograms.

4. **Has the shire sought the advice of Colac Area Health or Barwon Health about the bats presence in the Botanical Gardens as a public health issue. If yes what was their response and if no would you seek their advice and make it public.**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Colac Area Health have been consulted with the advice that only a bite or scratch from a *diseased* grey headed flying fox may cause a health risk. A vaccine is available.