

**Questions Submitted in Writing – Ordinary Council Meeting – 27 January 2021**

**James Judd, Colac**

1. **Will the Colac Otway Shire Council follow-up with Rural Roads Victoria the urgent need of traffic lights at the corner of Murray Street and Armstrong Street in Colac, then continue regularly at least once every year until provided?**

**This is now a very busy corner and traffic through this intersection is going up very fast together with more large retail developments in the blocks from Grant Street/Hart Street down to Armstrong Street on Murray Street.**

**Also with much more outside activity encouraged and Armstrong Street north of Murray Street is the major route encouraged for traffic from the west to go to the Botanical Gardens and Lake Colac when both of these have much outside activities in, near or on them.**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

Council officers have discussed this intersection treatment with staff from Regional Roads Victoria. The accident history of the intersection does not put it into the category where a major project such as traffic lights would be likely to be funded. We will continue to work with Regional Roads Victoria to try to identify funding opportunities for the project and it is fair to say that Regional Roads Victoria staff are aware of the safety and other benefits this project would bring.

2. **When will the large drag on Council's finances be able to operate at full capacity again, not at very reduced usage rates for at least three-quarters of the 2020 year? When the proposed extra opening hours for the gymnasium were claimed would return much in extra funds while this extra income source has had very restricted usage in 2020?**

***Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services***

The restrictions imposed on community facilities such as Bluewater Leisure Centre during 2020 as a result of COVID-19 have had a significant impact on usage, and in turn revenue generation. This was off-set somewhat by a reduction in expenditure. Bluewater Leisure Centre is currently operating at full opening hours including operating the 24 hour a day service for members. Key programs such as Swim School and Stadium competitions (eg: basketball) are now recommencing and will result in a significant increase in visitation.

3. **Due to the fact Council's estimated income for 2020-2021 is based on no change in amounts and when future Government payments are made what provision has the Colac Otway Shire Council have if:**
  - a. **Amounts of payments reduced;**
  - b. **Timing of payments delayed;**

**This is urgent as the federal and state Governments borrowed much funds in 2020 that must eventually be repaid with interest when due?**

***Response from General Manager, Corporate Services***

All Federal and State Grant amounts in the 2020/21 budget are considered secure at this stage. Neither levels of government have indicated a reduction in funding for 2020/21.

Council is mindful of the potential future impacts on Federal and State funding and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

4. **Is it the intention of the Colac Otway Shire Council to replace garbage bins:**
- As required to replace any unusable or stolen bins; or,**
  - Replace all at the same time even if many still in a good condition and able to be used?**
- When most recent change all bins changed over at the same time even if bins in good condition.**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

Council is not intending to replace any of the kerbside garbage bins if they are still in good condition. However, lost and stolen bins, along with damaged bins are replaced on a weekly basis when reported to Council.

5. **Will the Colac Otway Shire Council reduce the area it charges rates on properties in the garbage collection area to compensate land holders for having to accommodate Council owned property on rated property unable to be used for landholders own requirements?**

**When many in the garbage collection area that were given no option but to accept Council owned bins and accommodate them on properties rates charged on with rates accepted by Council while we are refused rights to use some land rates charged on for our own legitimate purposes.**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

No, that is not the intention of Council. The housing of bins on a property is considered a landowner responsibility.

**Nasser Kotb, Forrest**

**Considering that the Council is under statutory obligations to engage and involve the community in decision-making, the following questions need answers:**

1. **What are the outcomes of the community "consultation" (ended July 2020) with regard to the future of the Forrest Caravan Park lease?**

***Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services***

Community preferences prevailing from the community consultation on the Forrest Caravan Park lease have been collated and are currently being used to formulate an Expression of Interest (EOI) document. The EOI will be presented to Council before release as per the previous resolution of Council.

2. **What has Council decided (if any) about the Forrest Caravan Park lease?**

***Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services***

As per the answer to the previous question, Council's plan is unchanged and will be conducting an Expression of Interest process for the Forrest Caravan Park Lease.

3. **What is the time framework and steps for community involvement in drafting the four year Council plan (2021-2025)?**

***Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services***

In 2021, Colac Otway Shire will develop a long-term vision with their community and a plan to get there.

This is a key strategic process for the Council and the newly elected Councillors. A targeted community engagement program will co-create a Colac Otway Community Vision and inform the ensuing 2021-25 Council Plan (that includes health & wellbeing), 2021-25 Council Budget and longer term, 10-year asset and financial plans.

Commencing early February 2021, a shire-wide community engagement program will be implemented. Further information on how the community will be engaged to shape the Council Plan will be communicated in coming weeks.

**Jordana Langridge, Cororooke**

- 1. What is the role of Council within the deployment program of 4G/5G cell towers in COS and is there a list of all 5G antennas erected since 2020? Can Council please explain the legalities of securing small cell antennas and surveillance camera's to publicly owned utility light poles in Murray Street?**

***Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services***

The role of Council is to provide planning permits where required for the use of land that have cell tower application proposals. Council also works with telco providers and other levels of government around elimination of 'black spots' within Colac Otway. Council will only approve the use of equipment on its infrastructure that has the relevant state or federal approvals to be used within Australia.

The light poles along the centre strip of Murray Street Colac are owned by Powercor. As such any negotiation of their use for small cell antennas and surveillance cameras will be with Powercor. For Council owned light poles on footpaths and in Memorial Square, an expression of interest to Council can be submitted for their use as is procedure for use of any Council owned property.

The Colac Otway Shire has attempted to get information from Telstra about the 3G/4G and 5G towers within the municipality to assist with the Service and Operations Black Spot communication project. Telstra have not shared the information with Council despite its requests but has provided the following link <https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage>

**Tim Cobb, Skenes Creek**

**I would like to thank the Shire for putting in place a diversion for the coastal path alongside the GOR in Apollo Bay. While DELWP was clearly incapable of acting promptly to ensure safety following its closure of the path its good to see that at least the Shire acts responsibly.**

- 1. Has the Shire discussed with DELWP and/or GORCPA when they will reinstate the beachfront path along the foreshore and have they undertaken to do the work?**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

Colac Otway Shire has discussed this with DELWP. Their intention is to commence works this Summer. Councillors will receive a further update at a February Council Briefing.

- 2. Has the Shire been able to get commitment to a date by which the path will reopen?**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

At this stage DELWP have not provided a date in which the path will reopen.

- 3. Will the path be reinstated before Summer 2021 or will the 'temporary' roadworks that divert the path alongside the GOR remain in place all year?**

***Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure***

The path will remain in place until the works are complete. A further update can be provided after the February Council Briefing.