

Questions Submitted in Writing – Council Meeting – 24 March 2021

James Judd, Colac

- 1. When will the Colac Otway Shire Council take up the urgent need to improve the pedestrian crossing on the east side of Queen street and Murray street in Colac? With no safety stop mid-road and the very short north south street light cycle that makes it hard to half cross Murray Street before lights change. Plus the east side is on a sharp downhill slope to the east. Or do we have to wait until a fatality first?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Installation and operation of a pedestrian island or changing of the signalling is the responsibility of Regional Roads Victoria as both roads are managed by them. Colac Otway Shire is happy to raise the issue and will do so with Regional Roads Victoria at one of the regular meetings we have with that organisation to help progress the change or they can be contacted directly by you.

- 2. How much interest was paid and how much accrued in the 2019-2020 Financial Year on funds raided by the Colac Otway Shire Council from staff reserve funds to make a payment of a call on Council to top up the discontinued “Defined Benefits Superannuation Fund”? Plus what is the interest rate paid on outstanding balances until repaid in full? Also have Council officers looked into if Council went to the market to borrow funds so any balance outstanding would be repaid in full, so would the costs to borrow new funds be as expensive as that now paid on funds borrowed from staff reserves?**

Response from General Manager, Corporate Services.

There was no call on Council to top up the Defined Benefits Superannuation Fund. Therefore, there was no money borrowed and no interest paid.

- 3. Is it still the intention of the Colac Otway Shire Council to extend the centre strip in Murray Street, Colac, from Corangamite Street down to Armstrong Street on the same basis that exists between Corangamite and Queen Street in Colac then turn Murray Street into two one-way streets with no option between crossroads for traffic to move from one side to the other when this section will include at least three major developments and other businesses on both sides of Murray Street? So to do business with businesses on both sides of Murray Street could cause at least a two block detour plus time wasted to move from one side of the street to the other then find a new parking place?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

We don't intend for that to be the result. Designs have been prepared for upgrades to the section of Murray Street from Corangamite Street to Armstrong Street. The intention is to install a centre median and tree planting similar to the Queen to Corangamite section. A vehicle turning break is included in the median between Scott Street and Hart Street. These upgrades are currently unfunded, however should the project proceed, the median and other aspects of the design will be reviewed and updated to accommodate safe turning movements in and out of businesses and parking areas, with additional breaks added if required.

- 4. When will the Colac Otway Shire Council give a definite date to the community of when the toilet upgrade works at Memorial Square in Colac will actually be done and cease delaying by saying once we have produced plans and released them to the public for comment, then we will have some idea of the needs and will then seek funds to build them, then once funds received we will be able to consider construction. As this could be in the never never future when Council has been aware since at least two full time CEO's back that these facilities are not a**

size to meet the demands on them. Plus has often received numerous follow-up complaints and nothing done to improve these facilities since their construction.

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

The project to design the Memorial Square and Hesse Street public toilet facilities is in progress with draft designs to be released for public comment in the coming months. The next phase of the project involves consideration by Councillors of cost implications for the design before committing to specific options. Substantial work has been done to date to understand demand and usage patterns, location options, building upgrade feasibility for Hesse Street and investigation of parking and access options to service the facilities. Both facilities are currently operational and Council continues to maintain them regularly as the replacement and upgrade project progresses.

5. **When will the Colac Otway Shire Council spend time and money to improve the very poor drainage systems provided in this municipality in all urban areas and new subdivisions to provide for a much larger population? It is no joke when entrances into developed areas blocked due to flooding because drains too small to take run-off away. Far too often roads and footpaths are blocked because flooding in high places due to the shocking drainage systems.**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Council has a recurrent annual drainage renewal program and in the 2020/21 financial year Council will spend \$340,000 on renewal and upgrade of drainage infrastructure across the shire, which is carried out in addition to minor maintenance and repairs. Council is aware of the increased frequency of localised flooding and considers these factors in the design of the drainage network. A number of roads have been identified in the current and coming years as priorities for design and renewal or upgrade based on the frequency and severity of flooding and the condition of the drainage assets. The Colac Stormwater Development Plan also gives us guidance on the existing drainage hotspots that require attention in Colac and these works total some \$8M.

In addition to this and in relation to new development there are 2 key factors.

The first is that new development in Colac to realise the Colac 2050 Vision will be guided by the Colac Stormwater Development Plan and this gives guidance on the location and type of major stormwater infrastructure which will be required, such as stormwater retention and treatment.

The second is that the drainage for new developments is designed by experienced and qualified engineers and those designs are reviewed by Council's engineers who have the big picture in their minds.

In this way we can be assured that the provision of drainage in the future will be well aligned with best practice.

Mary Dracup, Forrest

1. **I write to ask Council to please consider very carefully using a deliberative consultation process with a representative community panel to help develop its forthcoming Council Plan. I recently took part in such a process with Infrastructure Victoria in a four-week, online, 200-member panel that deliberated broadly, deeply and respectfully on a wide range of issues relevant to the subject, and resulted in 21 recommendations being presented to the State Government. Diverse membership of the panel was ensured by prospective members completing a survey giving their age, gender, job, cultural background and postcode before being selected to participate. Provided the process is expertly facilitated, I feel confident that this method would provide an excellent opportunity for the Council to tap into the breadth and depth of experience, creativity and common sense of its ratepayers as it grapples with the complex and important issues impacting on the development of our shire over coming decades.**

Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services

As per the Local Government Act 2020, Council is required to undertake deliberative community engagement in the development of its key strategic plans including the Community Vision and Council Plan. This aligns to Council's recently adopted Community Engagement Policy 2021. Deliberative engagement can come in a variety of forms. A report is being presented to this afternoon's Council Meeting for Council to consider how it will most appropriately undertake deliberative engagement for its new Community Vision and Council Plan. Following the consideration of the report, the community will be informed of the process that Council will undertake to further engage with our community to develop these key strategic documents.

Jenny Barrett, Apollo Bay Climate Action Team

- 1. In April 2021 DELWP - with other organisations - are conducting online workshops to help all councillors better understand the likely impacts of climate change on council business and the vulnerability of communities. How many COS councillors are participating in this training?**

Response from the Chief Executive

An email was sent to all Councillors this morning with details and a link to the registration page.

Prabha Kutty, Colac

- 1. As part of the deliberative community engagement program, will community members who wish to submit further issues and ideas for consideration by the panel be given the opportunity to do so either online or in person? If so how and by when do they need to send this information to Council?**

Response from General Manager, Development & Community Services

During February and March, Council undertook a broad participatory community engagement process across the shire, the objective of which was to gather community feedback to inform a potential upcoming deliberative process and our strategic planning more generally.

This phase of engagement involved community drop-in sessions where members of the community could speak to Councillors and staff, key stakeholder interviews with community groups and partner agencies, and a survey which was available both online and in hard copy. We are also planning an online youth summit in partnership with our local schools and State Government. Our broad participatory phase of engagement finishes on 31 March, after which all the information received will be collated by officers, so that it can be provided to Councillors as well as a panel, if Council chooses to proceed with one.

Council encourages anyone who has not participated in our survey to provide their feedback via this method. A link is available from the Have Your Say section of Council's website. If you prefer a hard copy survey, please advise Council and we will arrange to provide you one. If you have already completed a survey and wish to provide further specific feedback, please email ing@colacotway.vic.gov.au before 31 March. Please attention your feedback to the Community Engagement team and mention that it is feedback to be incorporated into our community engagement process for a potential deliberative panel process (which is subject to a Council decision at the March Ordinary Council meeting).

David Walsh, Elliminyt

Referring to my letter to Council Ordinary Meeting 26th August 2020 and your reply with regards to your design of an extra culvert in Deans creek road Colac west to reduce some the ongoing flooding of Deans Creek road.

Your Response from General Manager, Infrastructure & Leisure Services

‘Council officers investigated this matter following a previous flooding event and can confirm that a culvert could be installed to divert the water to the creek on the other side of the road. We will be undertaking a survey and design in the 20/21 financial year to confirm the size and the best location for the culvert and identify costs required for the work. Once the costs are known we will schedule the work to be undertaken as part of our stormwater renewal program, budget permitting.’

1. **Has Council had the design and positioning of this Culvert completed and will this be happening soon as the wet season is soon upon us?**

Response from General Manager, Environment & Infrastructure

Council has undertaken survey work and is currently in the process of engaging a consultant to undertake the design work for the drainage improvements.