

SHIRE OF CARNAMAH

Ordinary Meeting of Council

15 November 2017

Notice of Meeting

Dear Councillor,

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Carnamah Shire Council is to be held

On: Wednesday 15 November 2017

At: Carnamah Council Chambers

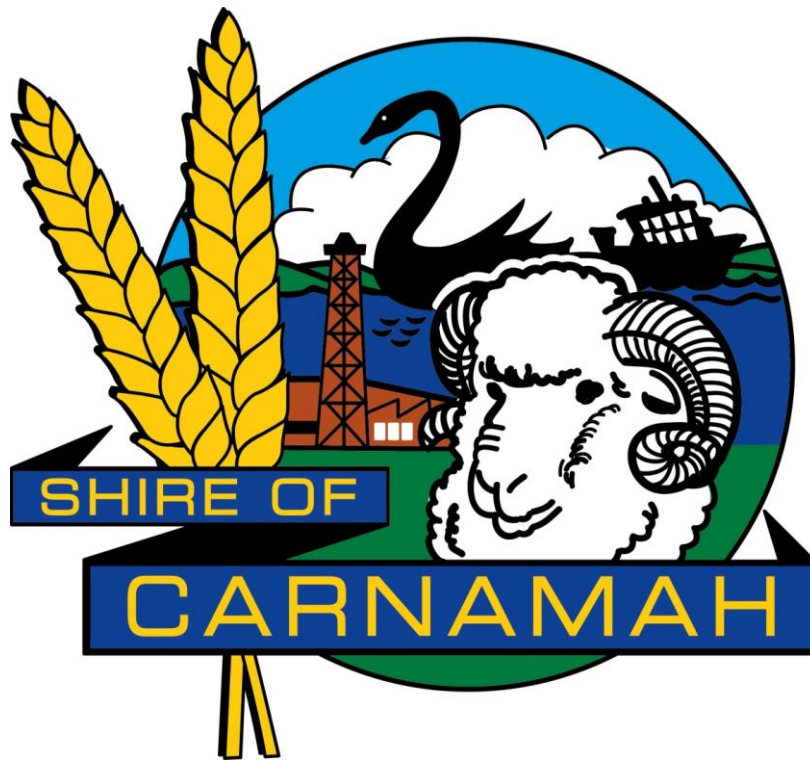
33-37 Macpherson Street, Carnamah

Commencing at:3:00pm

.....

N P Hartley

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



AGENDA

Ordinary Meeting of Council

15 November 2017

SHIRE OF CARNAMAH

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL – 15 November 2017

AGENDA

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council – 25 October 2017
(As circulated)

SHIRE OF CARNAMAH

DISCLAIMER

No responsibility is implied or accepted by the Shire of Carnamah for any act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or committee meetings.

The Shire of Carnamah disclaims any liability for any loss whatsoever and howsoever caused arising out of reliance by any person or legal entity on any such act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Council or committee meetings.

Any person or legal entity who acts or fails to act in reliance upon any statement, act or omission made in a Council or committee meeting does so at that person's or legal entity's own risk.

In particular and without detracting in any way from the broad disclaimer above, in any discussion regarding any planning application or application for a licence, any statement or intimation of approval made by any member or officer of the Shire of Carnamah during the course of any meeting is not intended to be and is not taken as notice of approval from the Shire of Carnamah.

The Shire of Carnamah advises that anyone who has any application lodged with the Shire of Carnamah shall obtain and should only rely on **WRITTEN CONFIRMATION** of the outcome of the application, and any conditions attaching to the decision made by the Shire of Carnamah in respect of the application.

Signed: _____

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SHIRE OF CARNAMAH

AGENDA

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

**To be held in the Council Chambers, 33-37 Macpherson Street, Carnamah
On Wednesday 15 November 2017
Commencing at 3.00 pm**

- 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING**

- 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**
 - Present**

 - Apologies**

 - Leave Of Absence (Previously Approved)**

- 3. RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**
 - Nil**

- 4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- 5. APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- 6. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

- 7. PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

- 8. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDING PERSON WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

9. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

9.1 MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD 25 OCTOBER 2017

As Circulated

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 9.1

That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 25 October 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record.

10 MANAGEMENT REPORTS

10.1 FINANCE REPORTS

10.1.1 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0075
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	7 November 2017
Author:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	10.1.1 - Cheque & EFT Listing

SUMMARY

Council to confirm the payment of creditors for the period 14 October 2017 to 7 November 2017, in accordance with the Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 section 13(1).

ATTACHMENT

Copy of list of accounts paid (EFT & cheque payments), which will enable Council to confirm the payment of its creditors in accordance with Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996, Section 13(1).

BACKGROUND

Financial Regulations require a schedule of payments made through the Council bank accounts to be presented to Council for their inspection. The list includes details for each account paid incorporating the payee's name, amount of payment, date of payment and sufficient information to identify the transaction.

COMMENT

Invoices supporting all payments are available for inspection. All invoices and vouchers presented to Council have been certified as to the receipt of goods and the provision of services and as to prices, computations and costings, and that the amounts shown were due for payment.

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 1995, Section 6.4 *Financial Report*
Local Government (Financial Management) Regulations 1996 -
Section 12 Payments from municipal fund or trust fund;
Section 13 Lists of accounts; and
Section 15 Rounding off figures

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item: 10.1.1

That payment listed as attachment 10.1.1. List of Accounts Due and Paid for the period 14 October 2017 to 7 November 2017; and paid by the Chief Executive Officer under delegated authority of Council, or by the Deputy CEO (in the Chief Executive Officer’s absence) as delegated by the Chief Executive Officer including:

Manual Municipal cheques:	022509 – 022513
Municipal cheques:	28080 – 28081
Municipal EFT’s:	10640 – 10699
Trust Cheques:	300406 – 300411
Payroll direct debits:	#08 - #09
Municipal Direct Debits:	31/10/2017

Totalling \$854,646.56 be approved and passed for payment.

10.1.2 FINANCIAL REPORTS TO 31 OCTOBER 2017

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0075
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	7 November 2017
Author:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	10.1.2 Monthly Statement of Financial Activity,

SUMMARY

A Statement of Financial Activity and other supplementary financial information is produced monthly as part of the Council meeting agenda.

BACKGROUND

The attached financial report for the period 1 July 2017 to 31 October 2017 (marked 10.1.2) has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Financial Management Regulations.

COMMENT

Included with this report is the following:

- Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1 July 2017 to 31 October 2017;
- Summary Rates Trial Balance Report as at 31 October 2017;
- Cash and Investment Listing;
- Debtors Listing;
- Other Supplementary Information;

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government (Financial Management) Regulation 34 - *Financial activity statement report* — s. 6.4

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item: 10.1.2

That Council receive the Statement of Financial Activity for the period 1 July 2017 to 31 October 2017; and other supplementary financial information as presented.

10.2 ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

10.2.1 ADOPTION OF 2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0057
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	6 November 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	2016-2017 Annual Report

SUMMARY

The Local Government Act requires every local government to produce and adopt an Annual Report, and to schedule an Annual Electors General Meeting of Electors. Historically this meeting has occurred following the December Council Meeting and that practice is recommended to continue.

BACKGROUND

The Annual Report has been prepared and is circulated with this agenda. Council is required to conduct its Annual Electors General Meeting of Electors within 56 days of the adoption of the Annual Report and this is accommodated within the resolution already passed by Council to set the Annual Electors General Meeting to occur at 5.00pm on Friday 8 December 2017 (after the Ordinary Meeting of Council scheduled for the same day).

COMMENT

It is expected that there will be sufficient time to finish the December Council meeting in time to commence the Annual Electors General Meeting at 5.00pm (and for this meeting to be concluded in time for Councillors and staff to attend the Shire Christmas function scheduled for 6.30pm that evening).

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act 1995 – s 5.27 – *Electors General Meetings*

- (1) A general meeting of the electors of a district is to be held once every financial year.
- (2) A general meeting is to be held on a day selected by the local government but not more than 56 days after the local government accepts the annual report for the previous financial year.
- (3) The matters to be discussed at general electors' meetings are to be those prescribed.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 10.2.1

That Council -

1. Adopts the Shire of Carnamah Annual Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2017; and
2. Notes that the Annual General Meeting of Electors will be held in the Council Chambers, Carnamah, at 5.00pm on Friday 8 December 2017.

10.2.2 APPOINTMENT OF DELEGATE/S – WILDFLOWER COUNTRY INC

Applicant:	Wildflower Country Inc
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0202
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	30 October 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	Nil

SUMMARY

The Shire of Carnamah is a member of the Wildflower Country Inc. organisation and it requires a Council endorsed delegate to attend its meetings and represent the Carnamah district. It is well worth the Shire being involved in the group and this report recommends the appointment of a Council delegate (and a proxy) to the Wildflower Country Inc. organisation for two years, until October 2019.

BACKGROUND

Every two years, after the local government elections, Council appoints its delegates and representatives to other organisations for two year terms (unless specified otherwise).

The majority of the representatives were appointed at the October Council meeting, however one group was not included in the Agenda, the Wildflower Country Inc. organisation. The representation on this group was last elected at the 30 March 2016 Council meeting and was Cr Isbister (with two proxy's – Councillors Laundry and Piccles-Popham).

COMMENT

Having delegates on a broad range of groups provides the opportunity for elected members to make a contribution on behalf of the Carnamah community and this particular group plays a key role in promoting economic development and tourism across the region.

As the CEO attends most Wildflower Country Inc. meetings, it is suggested that one Councillor proxy will be sufficient on this occasion.

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Nil

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Reimbursement of travel expenses to Councillor appointees in carrying out their duties as representatives of the Council will be met by the Shire on the submission of the relevant claim form to the Chief Executive Officer.

The annual subscription that the Shire pays to be a member of the Wildflower Country Inc. organisation is \$4,500.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item: 10.2.2

That Council appoint Cr (Member) and Cr(Proxy) as its representatives to the Wildflower Country Inc. organisation, for a two year term to October 2019.

10.2.3 ENEABBA SHORT STAY FACILITY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONCERN

Applicant:	Cr Ian Stirling
Location / Address:	Eneabba Short Stay Facility
File Ref:	ADM0063
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	27 October 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	10.2.3(a) Council Report – July 2016 10.2.3(b) CEO Memo (Western Flora C/Park) November 2016

SUMMARY

The Eneabba Revitalisation Project was designed to attract a larger proportion of the travelling public into Eneabba and to build on its emerging reputation as a stopover for tourists, heavy haulage transport operators and the travelling public at large. This was achieved very successfully and the establishment of the Eneabba short stay facility did meet its objectives of attracting more people to Eneabba.

Following the Council decision (July 2016) however, to set the fees and charges at \$5/head/night, the proprietors of the Western Flora Caravan Park asked that the rate of \$5.00 per night be increased as it was adversely affecting its business. Council subsequently adjusted the fee upwards, to \$10/head/night from July 2017 (to be in line with the Carnamah Caravan Park).

Since the increase, Eneabba business owners have now noticed a reduction in visitors and business patronage and they have subsequently asked that Council reverse its previous decision in favour of the local business and Eneabba community.

This report recommends that the fee be returned to its original setting of \$5/head/night.

BACKGROUND

The Eneabba Revitalisation Project which was launched in October 2011 and a Business Plan for the Eneabba Revitalisation Project, guided the intent and purpose of the project. The principal objectives of the project were to revitalise Eneabba, to provide it with a dynamic and inviting street presence and to establish it as a preferred visitor stopover point. The project had a particular emphasis on the attraction and retention of permanent residents and visitors. From an economic perspective the Plan was designed to attract a larger proportion of the travelling public into Eneabba and to build on its emerging reputation as a stopover for tourists, heavy haulage transport operators and the travelling public at large. Coupled with this was a plan to develop the redundant oval into a caravan and motor home facility which was designed to generate greater economic activity within the town (see attached report from July 2016 for an artist's impression of the short stay area). There was the hope that Eneabba could be developed into a stopover point for travelers, many of whom were not aware that Eneabba provides a good range of facilities and accessibility to shopping, recreation and emergency medical facilities.

With the works undertaken within the town site of Eneabba, the above was achieved very successfully and the establishment of the Eneabba short stay facility did meet its objectives of attracting more people to Eneabba. Eneabba now enjoys a more pleasant central town site environment, with gardens and facilities provided that can be enjoyed by people travelling through the area and seeking a driving break along Brand Highway, plus the “short-stay” camping facility takes advantage of what was a previously under-utilised oval precinct and Recreation Centre toilet/shower facilities.

Following the Council decision (July 2016) however, to set the fees and charges at \$5/head/night, the proprietors of the Western Flora Caravan Park (which is in the Shire of Irwin) advising of their concern that the Eneabba short stay facility was taking business away from them, due mainly to the cheap rate of \$5.00 per night per person for an unpowered site (but with access to hot water ablution facilities). Western Flora Caravan Park suggested that the facility should not be open all year round and that charges should be at least \$25.00 per night. Council subsequently adjusted the fee upwards, to \$10/head/night from July 2017, which was consistent with the Carnamah Caravan Park.

In October 2017 Cr Stirling raised the issue that after the commencement of this short stay facility, there was some moderate increase in patronage at the Eneabba Roadhouse and the Eneabba General Store, however these business owners have now noticed a reduction in patronage since the price was increased. Those businesses have subsequently asked that Council reverse its previous decision in favour of the local business and Eneabba community.

COMMENT

When planning for the short stay facility was undertaken, consideration was given to possible impacts on commercial operators of other camping facilities in the region and concluded that the facility would not be in direct competition with caravan parks offering powered sites and a wider range of facilities such as those at Western Flora, Leeman and Carnamah. It is difficult to conclude with certainty if that impact assessment was 100% accurate, but on the basis that there are several alternative short stay free access sites in the nearby region, it can reasonably be concluded that any adverse impact would be minimal at worst.

The July 2016 report highlights that the proprietors of the Eneabba General Store and Eneabba Roadhouse are of the view that the enhancements have been a positive initiative for the Eneabba business community and it is not surprising that with the lifting of the fees, there is now some “leakage” of users of the site. This is validated by the couple of communications received at the Shire Office from travellers, particularly those with relatively low financial means, and reinforced by Cr Stirling in his discussions with Eneabba business owners.

There is a dilemma with the facility in that some users corresponding with the Shire are saying the current occupancy rate is too expensive (and so they either by-pass Eneabba entirely or use free sites at Lake Indoon as the alternative); the Eneabba businesses reinforce that point, although for different reasons, outlining that the increased fee has reduced visitor numbers (and by extension their business turnover has also lessened); and the proprietor of the Western Flora Caravan Park makes the opposite point that the prices are not high enough as they are encouraging people to stay in Eneabba, and this is therefore impacting adversely on his commercially operated caravan park.

Whilst it is not impossible to imagine that anything given away for free or for a low price might unnaturally affect the normal order of commerce, there is a growing number of low cost/free stopping points for RV's/caravans across Western Australia, so they are slowly becoming a "normalised" part of the tourism business makeup, irrespective of their commercial impacts. The Eneabba short stay facility does not return a financial dividend to the Shire, and in fact it runs at a considerable financial loss, but it does clearly add to the viability of the Eneabba businesses and these businesses can as a result provide a higher quality and potentially lower cost service for the Eneabba community. The "dividend" to the Shire therefore is in the enhanced service levels the Eneabba community will enjoy from those businesses.

The request of the Eneabba businesses versus the potential commercial viability of the Western Flora Caravan Park is a "wicked problem", as no matter what Council decides it will create a win/lose outcome. One way or the other however a decision must be made, and on balance it would seem more reasonable to support the local business request to have the fee revert back to its original setting, thus it is suggested that Council endorse the request of the local Eneabba businesses.

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The Local Government Act outlines the procedure for setting (and changing) fees and charges—

- 6.16 outlines that a local government may impose (by absolute majority decision) a fee or charge for any goods or service it provides, including allowing admission to any property or facility controlled by the local government. Fees and charges can be imposed and/or amended from time to time during a financial year.
- 6.17 provides direction in the level setting of fees and charges, namely that goods a local government is required to take into consideration the following factors —
 - (a) the cost to the local government of providing the service or goods; and
 - (b) the importance of the service or goods to the community; and
 - (c) the price at which the service or goods could be provided by an alternative provider.
- 6.19 requires a local government to give local public notice of modified fees and charges introduced after the annual budget has been adopted, outlining its intention to do so and the date from which it will be imposed.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Eneabba short stay facility has attracted additional visitors into Eneabba which has had an economic spinoff to businesses based in the town. From a regional perspective it has added to the stock of camping options available to visitors and hopefully also helped to curtail the incidence of unauthorised camping.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financials for the Eneabba Short Stay precinct are as follows since it was established –

Financial Years	Receipts	Expenditure	Net Result
2015/16	\$4,513.64	\$22,119.51	-\$17,605.87
2016/17	\$7,668.17	\$45,024.41	-\$37,356.24
2017/18 (to date)	\$2,827.26	\$14,774.97	-\$11,947.71

The above expenditure is not specific to the Eneabba Short Stay Facility alone as they incorporate the overall operational cost of the Eneabba Recreation Centre. 2017/18 is likely going to be the most relevant (albeit only for portion of the financial year) for comparison purposes.

Suffice to say, short stay facility revenues are not expected to cover associated short stay expenditure levels (which are roughly estimated at a little less than \$20,000pa) irrespective of what charge level the Council sets. The facility seems to have price sensitive customers and it is not likely to attract too many more clients if prices are lowered (or even if access is free) and so even if Council does lower fees there might be an increased patronage and turnover enjoyed, but this action will also increase operational costs. Alternatively, higher fees might, but are unlikely, to increase revenue to any meaningful degree, but won't meaningfully lower net costs either. The conclusion is that the Shire will need to subsidise the facility until at least its popularity and patronage starts to approach maximum capacity, then prices can be increased to the net advantage of the Shire.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Absolute Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 10.2.3

That Council –

1. Continue to operate the Eneabba short stay facility in its current form by providing unpowered sites and access to the ablution block on the basis that it is fulfilling its intended role of attracting visitors who patronise businesses in Eneabba;
2. Adjust the current charge to \$5.00/person/night from 1 January 2018 (to enable the necessary statutory advertising and notice period to be undertaken); and
3. Advise the Eneabba businesses of the above through the Mat & Eneabba News, and the Western Flora Caravan Park via a direct communication.

10.2.4 WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0258
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	1 November 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	10.2.4(a) – Review of Wards and Representation (Discussion Paper) 10.2.4(b) – Council Report – October 2005

SUMMARY

Local Governments are required to periodically review their ward boundaries and levels of Councillor representation.

Council's last review (implemented in 2007) resulted in the abolition of the then existing four ward system and a move to a "no-ward" system. It also decided at that time to retain the exiting number of Councillors at seven.

A draft discussion paper has been prepared for consideration by the community (the community may also of course submit alternative models) and in light of the coming festive season, a more extensive time period than six weeks for public consultation is proposed.

BACKGROUND

Council's last review of its electoral boundaries resolved to abolish the then existing four ward system (vis. Carnamah; Eneabba; Indoon; and Yarra) and move to a "no-ward" system. Currently therefore, the Shire of Carnamah has seven Councillors elected from the entire Shire of Carnamah area (with approximately half of the Councillors' terms expiring every two years as required by the Act).

There is a defined process for undertaking a review, which includes the preparation of a discussion paper (including representation options), inviting public submissions, and an eventual Council decision for referral to the Local Advisory Board and then on to the Minister. If there are changes proposed to the "no-ward" system, the Minister may require further consultation in order to secure his endorsement.

COMMENT

A discussion paper has been prepared and is attached for Council's consideration. It was felt that three options would suffice, namely, a "no change" option, a change back to a four ward option, and an option of a two wards system (east/west).

The biggest challenge for local governments when endeavouring to maintain a ward structure is the need to keep the Councillor/elector ratio within the Local Government

Advisory Board's 10% range whilst simultaneously maintaining "common sense" boundaries. Like Carnamah, many local governments have consequently opted for the "no ward" system, which in the main works quite satisfactorily for the smaller geographic area local governments.

CONSULTATION

The process of carrying out a review requires the local government to invite submissions from the public. The formal public submissions period must be at least six weeks, but in light of the fast approaching Christmas/New Year period, it is suggested that the call for public submissions be open until 12 February 2018 (over two months).

The Act requires "local public notice", so advertisements will appear in future editions of "*On the Mat & Eneabba News*" as well as the "*Geraldton Guardian*" newspaper. The same notice will also be posted on the Shire's website (as will the "*Review of Wards and Representation*" Discussion Paper).

Whilst a series of Public Meetings/Forums could also be arranged, it is suggested that this only occur if there is a general interest indicated by the community, in which case they can easily be organised, perhaps also in conjunction with a deferral of the submission closing date. There is ample time prior to the 2019 elections to undertake the process, even with a deferral.

Council must consider all public submissions received and any forthcoming will be referred to Council (likely to be the February 2018 Council Meeting).

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

Local Government Act Schedule 2.1 (Clause (6)(2)) outlines that a local government the district of which is not divided into wards may carry out reviews as to —

- (a) whether or not the district should be divided into wards; and
- (b) if so —
 - (i) what the ward boundaries should be; and
 - (ii) the number of offices of Councillor there should be for each ward, from time to time so that not more than 8 years elapse between successive reviews.

It also highlights that the local public notice advertising period must be at least six weeks and on completing a review, the local government is to make a report in writing to the Local Government Advisory Board.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

One of the core objectives of the Community Strategic Plan is to provide good civic leadership. This includes having an effective engagement process with the community to determine strategic direction.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Policy 2.9 (Community Engagement)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Other than the direct advertising costs (say \$500) the review will only take up operational costs (like staff time, office materials, etc)

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 10.2.4

That Council endorse the Discussion Paper at 10.2.4(a) and commence the process of inviting public submissions on the Review of Wards and Representation of the Shire of Carnamah.

10.2.5 CARNAMAH CARAVAN PARK – SUMMER/AUTUMN DISCOUNT RATES FOR SITE FEES

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM????
Disclosure of Interest:	Not Applicable
Date:	6 November 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	10.2.5 – Schedule of Fees & Charges (2017/2018)

SUMMARY

Some caravan parks that do not offer coastal proximity are now offering discounted rates during coastal area peak periods to attract “permanent caravan park guests” away from those locations, thus increasing their own patronage/revenues during periods of otherwise very low occupancy. An opportunity exists to trial a discounted accommodation rate during the less popular “mid-west inland off season”, in an effort to attract higher attendance numbers and provide a boost to the local Carnamah economy.

Whilst no financial benefit is anticipated for the Caravan Park during this six month trial, there will be economic development growth potential enjoyed within the Carnamah Townsite.

This report suggests a 50% discount on all existing *Site Fee* charges (for a six month “Summer/Autumn trial” from 1 December 2017) be initiated.

BACKGROUND

The Carnamah Caravan Park provides a good standard facility of 36 caravan park bays and three chalets and the fees and charges are set by Council annually. The current fees/charges provides a good mix of options for visitors, with nightly, weekly, and four+ weekly charge rates (with growing discounts applicable for longer stays).

The “Wildflower Season” is a popular tourist period for the Mid West Region and the Carnamah Caravan Park is quite popular during that time, with visitors staying for between one and three nights as a base to view wildflowers in the district and the wider region, however outside of that time, the numbers of travellers visiting Carnamah is very small.

Carnamah in itself however is not a “tourism destination” for most tourists, irrespective of the time of year, and therefore caravan park numbers are good in the winter/spring time, and very sparse in summer/autumn.

Most tourist traffic that travels north/south no longer take the Midlands Highway as their preferred route, choosing instead to use Brand Highway (and hopefully stay in Eneabba’s Short Term Accommodation Facility) or Indian Ocean Drive - both routes being closer to the coast.

Current fees for the Carnamah Caravan Park are attached, however unlike most tourism accommodation places, no account is taken for the different seasons and the changes in

demand during those periods. Although the Shire currently provides for a maximum (approximately) 25% discount for caravans that stay, and pay in advance, for four weeks, this monthly discount applies for the entire calendar year.

There is a trend with some caravan parks that do not offer coastal proximity, to now offer discounted rates during coastal area peak periods, to attract “permanent caravan park guests” away from those locations, thus increasing patronage during periods of otherwise very low occupancy.

COMMENT

An opportunity exists to trial a discounted accommodation rate during the less popular “mid-west inland off season”, in an effort to attract higher attendance numbers and provide a boost to the local Carnamah economy. The yet to be finalised \$5 voucher (currently under discussion with local businesses) might make a very good “double incentive” for some people.

As outlined above, the Carnamah Caravan Park already provides a good mix of site fee options for visitors, with nightly, weekly, and four+ weekly charge rates (with growing discounts applicable for longer stays). The maximum (approximately) 25% discount applies for caravans that stay (and pay in advance) for four weeks. Whilst numerous discount models could be considered, it is suggested that whatever is chosen it be for a one season trial, and therefore a simple percentage discount would be easiest to apply and market, at least in the first year. A 50% discount on all existing site fee charges is therefore suggested, for a six months “summer/autumn trial” from 1 December 2017. For clarity, “site fees” do not capture the Chalets facilities, which would remain their existing fee levels. It is not thought that discounting the Chalets beyond current levels is necessary, and in fact would very likely be disadvantageous to the Caravan Park if they were taken up by some clients as “cheap” accommodation with free air-conditioning.

It is not believed that even a 50% discount initiative will provide a significant financial boost for the Carnamah Caravan Park, but by the same token it is not expected to be financially detrimental either, and even if a “break even” outcome is all that is achieved, the real benefit will be gained through enhanced local economic development enjoyed by local businesses and their employees.

Market testing of the proposal would provide more definitive data to base a decision upon (and could also test what levels and types of discount would provide the optimum mix) but in light of the cost of doing so, that is not suggested. Also, it is felt that the market will move slowly in response to this offer and even if the Carnamah Caravan Park were to enjoy 100% occupancy for the entire six months summer/autumn period, any possible loss suffered by the Shire’s Caravan Park would be offset with positive “word of mouth” advertising and economic development growth within the Carnamah Townsite. As an alternative to spending funds on research to be more definitive now, a review of the proposed summer/autumn discount as part of the setting of the 2018/19 financial year’s Fees and Charges Schedule is suggested (as the Shire will have a good body of data available to it by the time it considers that matter, like costs, revenues, and attendance numbers).

A comparison with the Eneabba Short Stay Accommodation rate is also warranted. The proposed new Eneabba Short Stay Accommodation rate is suggested (as part of a separate November Council Meeting report) to revert back to its \$5/night/person rate and so for the six months of summer/autumn, the fees at Carnamah will potentially be lower (but only for

a van with two persons). It is believed that for the six months in question, that is acceptable (vis. \$5 v's \$4.56) as in all likelihood Eneabba will be the more popular site of the two for that term. Whilst some impact is possible, it is not thought that the new fee level will be meaningfully detrimental to any of the other adjoining caravan parks to the Carnamah town-site (like Three Springs or Coorow).

Marketing the new fee to potential users will be important, and an allocation of \$3,000 is suggested to undertake some selective but low level advertising (like caravanners' publications and digital media).

CONSULTATION

Caravan Park Manager

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The Local Government Act outlines the procedure for setting (and changing) fees and charges–

Section 6.16 outlines that a local government may impose (by absolute majority decision) a fee or charge for allowing admission to any property or facility controlled by the local government. Fees and charges can be imposed and/or amended from time to time during a financial year.

Section 6.17 provides direction in the level setting of fees and charges, namely, that a local government is required to take into consideration the following factors:

- (a) the cost to the local government of providing the service or goods; and
- (b) the importance of the service or goods to the community; and
- (c) the price at which the service or goods could be provided by an alternative provider.

Section 6.19 requires a local government to give local public notice of modified fees and charges introduced after the annual budget has been adopted, outlining its intention to do so and the date from which it will be imposed.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Strategic Community Plan 2027 refers to the requirement for incremental improvements to Carnamah Caravan Park. The Corporate Business Plan (2017-2021) at Objective 3 outlines that the Shire needs *“To retain existing industries and encourage the establishment of new industries to broaden the district’s economic base and develop and maintain an efficient road transport system”* and at Strategy #5 states that the Shire will *“promote and develop a sustainable tourism industry in the Shire of Carnamah”*.

A proposal to attract more visitors through a fee attraction mechanism would seem consistent with that objective and strategy.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It would be difficult without considerable market research and projections of anticipated costings, to ascertain additional revenues that might prevail, and the associated increases to existing cost levels. It is for that reason that a one season trial is proposed. It is also felt that the market will move slowly in response to this offer and even if the Carnamah Caravan Park were to enjoy 100% occupancy for the entire period, any possible loss suffered due to an overly generous discount would be offset with local economic development and positive “word of mouth” advertising. A review of the fee/discount level for the 2018/19 financial year is however suggested as the Shire will have a good body of data available to it (revenues, costs and attendance numbers) by the time it considers that matter.

As a “best guess”, the following financials are estimated –

Additional Revenue (at 18 bays [or a 50% takeup] for the full six months)		\$30,000
Electricity (additional)	\$16,000	
Water (additional)	\$2,000	
Staff Hours (additional)	\$5,000	
Cleaning Products etc (additional)	\$4,000	
New Fee Marketing Costs (Caravan Park Magazines, etc)	\$3,000	\$30,000
NETT OUTCOME		\$Nil

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Absolute Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 10.2.5

That Council –

1. Introduce a new fee for the Carnamah Caravan Park as follows –

“Summer/Autumn Season Rate Discount (1 December to 30 May) – 50% discount on all site fees”

2. Advertise the fee in accordance with the Local Government Act, and it be introduced from 1 December 2017; and
3. Review the fee as part of the Council’s fee setting process for the 2018/19 financial year.

10.2.6 SHIRE OF CARNAMAH – FACEBOOK PAGE

Applicant:	N/A
Location / Address:	N/A
File Ref:	ADM0062
Disclosure of Interest:	Nil
Date:	7 November 2017
Author:	Chief Executive Officer
Attachments:	Nil

SUMMARY

The Shire was recently asked about its intentions as to a Shire of Carnamah *Facebook Page* and it is noted that Carnamah is one of the few local governments in the district without such a web based digital communication tool.

The implementation of such a service will undoubtedly add to the operational costs of the Shire but it will also improve the capacity of the Shire to reach out to its community. More importantly perhaps, than even that, is that through an ability to more easily participate in their community's life, a Shire *Facebook* page may have the potential to enhance the quality of life of our local families as they deal with lower service levels and less family/household options than their Perth cousins enjoy.

This report seeks Council's endorsement in principle of such a service, but that a final decision be deferred until further research is undertaken as to costs versus overall community value.

BACKGROUND

The Shire was recently asked about its intentions as to a Shire of Carnamah *Facebook Page*. The Shire does not currently sponsor such a page.

Facebook is an American for-profit corporation and an online social media and social networking service, based in California. The digital product, *Facebook*, is a communications platform that was initially designed to link university friends together, but has developed into a social networking website and service where users can post comments, share photographs and links to news or other interesting content on the Web, chat live, and even stream live video, etc.

The digital application *Facebook*, could possibly have one of the largest brand recognitions in the world and most local governments in Australia have developed a Facebook page as a link between their organisation and its stakeholders. All of the Shire of Carnamah's neighbouring local governments have a Facebook page.

Whilst Carnamah only has a small population base, there is a reasonable degree of isolation suffered as a result of our distance from Perth. Also, within our community there are people living on rural properties distant from the townships of Carnamah or Eneabba, and within those families, there are some who are more reserved/introverted, but who are comfortable interacting over web based mediums. This mix of personalities is not uncommon to rural Western Australia, but there are numerous studies that highlight the risks associated with rural living (e.g. mental health and community wellbeing) and that one of the solutions to

address these family issues is to encourage communications between everyone in the community.

COMMENT

Having a *Facebook* page can be a “double edged sword” for a local government as they can be incredibly valuable, or an incredible nuisance. A *Facebook* page can be very useful as a tool to communicate with community members quickly, and this is particularly valuable in times of an emergency. *Facebook* has for example, been used to great effect in times of floods and fires to keep the community up to date and engaged, and as a means of answering questions about those emergencies. The *Facebook* page can also be used to drive customers towards the Shire’s existing web page, where large quantities of information can be housed.

Unfortunately however, there will always be some in the community that will want to use the forum as a place to “vent” (or worse, promote their own fanatical causes). These instances can be managed, but they drain the organisation’s resources, and adversely impact on the positivity of Councillors, employees and other “Facebook Friends”.

There are several ways of using and managing the *Facebook* product, from having a very engaging style with constant staff monitoring and Shire responses provided, to one where the information flows one way only, from the Shire to the *Facebook* Page, so it is in effect “read only information” that drives clients to the Shire’s Web Page. The staff resourcing requirements of offering the higher standard of customer service would probably be about two hours a day, with the lower standard option probably only being about two hours a week (although both estimates are without good data to guide them).

An internal procedures manual would also need to be developed to ensure that staff engagement with the Shire’s *Facebook* page was suitably managed, so that all Shire contributions and responses to any questions were managed similarly to all other media communication. It is critical that all communications (irrespective of the medium used to transmit it, like radio, Web, or newspaper) is consistent and accurate.

The appearance of a *Facebook* page itself, should be professionally developed so that the branding of the host organisation is consistently communicated across all digital media.

One of the more significant challenges that rural local governments are addressing is to keep their communities sustainable, both economically and socially. Economic sustainability is mostly based on crude financials, it is either profitable and sustainable or it is not. Good community wellbeing is not always cost free, but can be sustained/enhanced through goodwill activities and a positive local community culture. Good communications between the Shire and its community can form a part of that community wellbeing equation.

In light of the above, there would seem to be a very good argument that an interactive *Facebook* page has the capacity to provide an improved quality of life service to Carnamah’s people, through an ability to more easily participate in their community’s life and deal with the lower service levels and less family/household options than our Perth cousins enjoy (and therefore worth the risk of the hopefully infrequent occasions where a contributor endeavours to use it inappropriately).

CONSULTATION

Nil

STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT

The Local Government Act does not control the use of digital media but it does at Section 3.1 outline the “general function” of a local government, which is to *‘provide for the good government of persons in its district’* and to highlight that *‘a liberal approach is to be taken to the construction of the scope of the general function of a local government’*.

The use of Facebook and other digital media is in widespread use in local government and comfortably fits into the above function test.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The Strategic Community Plan 2027 and the Corporate Business Plan (2017-2021) both include focuses on communications. The Corporate Business Plan Objective 4 (Strategic Leadership) outlines that the Shire needs “to be a professional, customer focussed organisation, which...*effectively engages (with) the community to determine strategic direction* and at Strategy #1 states that the Shire will “*improve communications between Council and the community; and to disseminate information*”.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Establishing a *Facebook* page should be professionally undertaken so that the branding of the Shire is consistent with its web page. No prices have been sought thus far, but it would be expected that a fee in the order of \$500-1,000 might be required to establish a good quality *Facebook* Page.

Managing the site is however, going to create the largest financial challenge as this new service is expected to be quite popular and the community will not likely be satisfied with a “one way” communication model. Responding to posted communications by our community is considered unavoidable, resulting in an added workload on staff to research and answer questions posted and whilst posting one or two entries per day could be accommodated within existing staffing levels, it would not be possible for existing staff levels to accommodate an additional two hours/day of digital media work.

VOTING REQUIREMENT

Simple Majority

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

Item 10.2.6

That Council note the value of a Shire of Carnamah *Facebook* page to the district’s community and ask the Chief Executive Officer to prepare a follow-up report prior to Council’s mid-year budget review consideration (anticipated to be March 2018) outlining how such a service might be managed operationally, and what it might likely cost.

11. ORDERING THE COMMON SEAL

12. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEMBERS

13. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

14. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(For consideration at the following meeting, if given during the meeting)

15. NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE ADMITTED BY COUNCIL

16. CLOSURE OF MEETING