

MAYOR'S MINUTE

18 February 2023



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MAYOR, SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL PROJECTS

Council currently has a number of innovative and aspirational projects planned for the future of our region including the redevelopment of our CBD precinct with a new expanded Library and Digital hub, Government Hub, Redeveloped Civic Precinct, the new Hamilton Gallery, Melville Oval, Dunkeld Visitor Hub, playspace in the Hamilton Botanic Gardens and more.

These projects play a vital role in the future liveability of our region and are all endeavours that we can and are excited to deliver upon for future generations.

The journey travelled before projects become a reality can be long, but this does not mean that they are no longer happening or that there is no progress. It can be frustrating on the extended journey and the length of time it takes. As with any aspiration in life, there are challenges and hurdles we as a Council and community must go through to reach our intended goals.

Project ideas will generally grow from a strategic objective outlined in the Council Plan, community or from consideration as to what our future and immediate needs are. From there, the idea is developed by Council officers and goes through a series of briefings and then meetings of Council where it is debated and considered. Once endorsed, it moves to sourcing funding for concept plans to ensure the achievability of ideas. Community consultation will generally happen now, if it hasn't occurred already, and then the all-important detailed design work which sets us up to advocate and secure project funding.

As I'm sure many of you are aware, in our current rate-capped environment, we rely heavily on State and Federal funding bodies and sometimes independent donors or co-contributors, to ensure these projects move from idea to reality. Once funding is hopefully secured, our projects are able to move to construction tender, awarding of contracts and then the construction phase. Construction phase often has its own delays as well of course, with poor weather, subcontractors, availability of materials etc all impacting our projects, the same way they do many others!

While many may think the process is excessive – it is the process which we as a Council are bound by to ensure public money is spent appropriately and responsibly. But, just because something is difficult to achieve, doesn't mean it's not worth it. This adage has never been truer and as Council we are entrusted to deliver on community aspirations for future generations, creating opportunities and growing our region.

Councillors and Staff are committed to seeing these projects through for betterment of the Southern Grampians. Rest assured; we are pushing to advance these projects to see them finalised for our future. And while we know it is a lengthy process (and we don't disagree with you) once these are delivered for our community, the time spent will ultimately be worth the challenges faced during delivery.

YOUTH SERVICES AND EVENTS

Speaking of supporting future generations, Council and partners will host the next Southern Summer Days Pool Party happening from 4:00pm – 7:00pm at the Hamilton Outdoor Swimming Pool next **Friday 24 February 2023**. This is a free, youth focused, (alcohol and drug free) event that provides our young people a great opportunity to come together and have a bit of fun. The Hamilton Lions Club will be manning the free sausage sizzle, a DJ will be blasting tunes, and youth groups will be on hand for those wanting to have a chat.

As a Council, we have been working towards developing our resources in the youth space and have recently appointed a dedicated staff member - Youth Coordinator, Emily Anderson – who is now available to chat to young people looking for outlets of interest and involvement. Council is also currently working on our youth strategy, which will outline and underpin actions and objectives to be developed directly from extensive consultation undertaken last year with our young people. It's an exciting time and space for us, one of which we look forward to exploring over the next 12 months.

Until next fortnight.