



## COUNCIL NEWS

■ Shane Van Styn

Mayor, City of Greater Geraldton

Last week Council passed the 2016/17 budget and I am pleased to say we have listened to the community and evidently there have been some great outcomes.

Rate rises have been kept at a minimum in the 2016/17 budget, with the majority of residential ratepayers receiving a rate increase below inflation (1.3 per cent).

Geraldton ratepayers who paid minimum rates last financial year will receive a rate freeze.

This is a hugely positive outcome for our community and it's a change for the better. Residents made it very clear that large rate rises were untenable so we have worked with them to

find the best solutions to keep rate rises at a minimum whilst working towards becoming financially sustainable.

As a result of efficiency gains, the City will take this year's deficit from \$7.3million down to \$2.2million.

Our efficiency gains are helping us on our path to financial sustainability in the next six to seven years. Without these efficiencies financial sustainability would have been more than 10 years off.

Three years ago council had increased rates heavily with a future projected rate increase of 7.6 per cent for the next 10 years, and that was still not putting us in a financially sustainable position.

The community said 7.6 per cent rate rises

weren't acceptable and we have listened. Efficiencies, productivity gains within the organisation and a 20 per cent reduction in staff numbers have all combined to help us achieve more than \$10million in savings.

We have been able to keep rate increases low, whilst re-introducing important key services that the community have asked for such as bulk kerb side collection and free tipping.

Consultation was undertaken and the 2016/17 rates have been set to best reflect the changes in community services.

We have engaged in extensive community consultation and community engagement programs to understand what infrastructure and services are most important to our community.



# Talk About Greater Geraldton



## Mullewa benefits in budget

A record spend in Mullewa has been passed in this year financial year's budget with road renewals a high priority.

After roads were hit hard by flood damage during storms last year, the City of Greater Geraldton Council have assured safer rural roads this financial year.

Works will soon begin on the long overdue replacement of Weir Road Culvert which will include the profiling, correcting and renewing of the wearing surface.

## Record spend on infrastructure

The City of Greater Geraldton's total budget of \$137million will include a record \$78million infrastructure spend aimed at boosting our local economy and delivering a number of long overdue key projects.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Shane Van Styn said this was the best outcome for the community.

"We know there has been a flow on effect from the downturn in the resources sector and our local economy has taken a hit but this investment from the City will help to rebuild that," he said.

## Bulk kerb side collection reintroduced

In a huge win for local residents, bulk kerb side collection has been reintroduced in the 2016/17 budget.

Along with kerb side collection, domestic tipping fees for residents at Meru will be officially abolished and mulch will be available to residents at no cost.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Shane Van Styn said kerb side collection in particular was one thing he knew residents were very passionate about.

"Getting kerb side collection re-established was something our community have been vocal about after it was cancelled in last financial year's budget," he said.

Residents will be able to request one skip bin a year which will be dropped off on their property and have it collected a week later, as a replacement to the traditional verge pickup system that saw residents place rubbish on their verges for collection.

Green waste dropped off at the facility that is shredded into mulch which will now be free for residents to use at home in their gardens.



## Over \$20m budgeted for erosion works

Subject to State Government funding, a proposed total of over \$23million has been allocated to various erosion works along the Geraldton coast.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Shane Van Styn said the City had been working closely with the State Government to help develop long term solutions.

"We've been working constructively with Terry Redman, the Minister for Regional Development and Lands, for more than two years and we're hopeful that discussions and negotiations will bear fruit for us in our plan to combat erosion," he said.

If funding is secured, the Beresford Foreshore is set to undergo a transformative development to help ensure the longevity of the area as well as to protect essential community infrastructure as well as works at St Georges and Whitehill Road in Drummond Cove.



## CBD revitalisation

A big emphasis has been put on the revitalisation of the CBD in the 2016/17 budget with the finalisation of the City of Greater Geraldton's Growth Plan.

Bringing together the community, businesses, council, stakeholders and the State Government, the plan will outline the vision for Greater Geraldton's CBD well into the future and will highlight key areas for economic investment and attraction.



## Win for sporting clubs & facilities

An increase of over 20 per cent for sporting facilities has been passed in the new budget and the City of Greater Geraldton has implemented a new systematic approach to funding after in depth consultation with various grounds management committees in the community.

As part of the City's sporting review, the City teamed up with the Mid West Sports Federation to review all sporting facilities and their range and level of services.