



## MEDIA RELEASE SHIRE OF COLLIE

16/2017

To the elector,

This release is in response to a publication written, authorised and distributed by Mr David Churches dated September 2017. I would like to state the facts so that ratepayers have the straight up truth about the claims made.

### **Huge Secret expenditure**

There is no "huge secret expenditure" made by Council as claimed by Mr Churches. Each individual payment which the Shire makes is required to be publicly disclosed under the WA Local Government Act (1995). This is reported to Council on a monthly basis and anyone can access this information on the Shire's website ([www.collie.wa.gov.au](http://www.collie.wa.gov.au)).

The claim that the Shire of Collie has spent nearly \$1m in legal fees by stopping R32 and Collie Steel **is wrong**. The Shire allocates a budget for legal expenses every year and the Shire has spent only a fraction of the amount claimed in the publication. One of the Shire's most important roles is to oversee responsible land use in accordance with state planning laws and the Council's own town planning scheme and there is a process which needs to be followed when it comes to developing land for industrial use.

### **Industrial Land**

I appreciate and welcome Mr Peter Smargiassi's opinions particularly with regard to the Council's Draft Strategic Community Plan. That is exactly what we want – feedback on the plan. I can inform the people of Collie that the Shire staff and Landcorp worked hard to find Collie Steel suitable land to operate from and unfortunately the options put forward were deemed unsuitable. Council is currently reviewing its Local Planning Strategy which includes a review of strategic industrial land. The draft plan will be out for comment shortly and the Council will listen to what the community has to say.

### **Rubbish**

The Council's rubbish site is heavily monitored and regularly assessed by the Department of Environment and the Department of Water and is subject to an annual licencing process. Council have recently completed a review of the site to determine the amount of life left and to identify any operational improvements that could be undertaken. A tip/recycle shop has been identified in this report and the draft report will be presented to the next Council meeting for consideration.

The main reason that people are not permitted to scavenge relates to safety. We simply cannot have members of the public climbing over rubbish sometimes in the dark taking what they want and risking injury. We regularly have people trespassing at the site after hours and the buildings are often the target of break-ins. We also need people's best efforts to separate their rubbish which will minimise the amount of waste going to landfill and this extends to our organic bin service. We need the good people of Collie to do the right thing at our tip site otherwise there is a real risk the site could be shut down by Government agencies and if this happens then people can expect their rubbish costs to increase dramatically as we would have to truck rubbish to other landfill sites outside of the shire.

### FURTHER COMMENT

Wayne Sanford, Shire President Shire of Collie – 0438 343 113  
David Blurton, Chief Executive Officer – 9734 9000



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### **Cars**

Would you be happy living next door to a junk yard? This is the reality facing many Collie residents as their neighbours collect vehicle after vehicle at the emotional and financial expense of their neighbours. Yes, Council has taken action recently and adopted a policy in this regard and the policy allows for the vehicle enthusiast who has an interest in restoring cars. It is a well-balanced, sensible policy that will meet the needs to the majority of ratepayers. The policy does not introduce any new requirements as these are already included in a number of acts ; moreover it brings these requirements together into one place and clarifies them on a practical level.

### **Too many chiefs**

The correct number of Shire staff is 31 inside, 40 outside. This number has been set to achieve the outcomes which have been identified in the Council's Corporate Business Plan and is well structured to meet the needs of the local community. This information aside, each individual local government's workforce is different depending on how they run their services. For example, some local governments use contractors for parks and gardens and roadworks so their outside workforce is much smaller than inside. In Collie, we like to employ local people to undertake these jobs.

### **Secret Meetings**

The public is welcome to attend each and every Council meeting. There are no meetings held in secret.

Under WA Local Government Act, Councils can discuss matters of a legal, contractual or staff matter behind closed doors. This is not illegal and is sometimes necessary to discuss confidential matters.

It is not normal to have to refute claims during a local government election campaign, however it is unfortunately necessary to provide people with the truth and set the record straight. I can assure you all that your Council is working hard and has the interests of residents at the forefront of every decision it makes. Elections are a democratic process and I strongly encourage everyone to have their say and vote for the candidates who think that will serve them best.

**END**

### **FURTHER COMMENT**

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