



PRESS RELEASE

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TO: Media Contacts

2017 in Review

The last 12 months have seen significant changes throughout the world and Collie is no exception. A new Shire President, Sarah Stanley has been elected and Collie has its first Cabinet Minister - the Hon. Mick Murray MLA. For some it was a year to be remembered while for others 2018 cannot come fast enough.

The Shire of Collie reflects on its top 10 highlights of 2017:

1. **Collie Motorplex track extension**

The Collie Motorplex existing 1.6-kilometre track was extended to 2.3 kilometres during a recent major upgrade, helping to cement its place as a centre for motorsports in regional Western Australia.

The upgrade was supported with additional funding from the State government to ensure the track was able to achieve national accreditation.

2. **Coalfields Museum re-opened**

The historic Coalfields Museum has been revamped and re-opened to the public with a dedicated band of volunteers cataloguing and preserving the collection.

The Museum is in the process of transitioning to an independent incorporated body with the assistance of the Shire to ensure it will be sustainable and well run into the future.

3. **Karak (Red Tail) Trail extension**

The popular Karak (Red Tail) Trail has been extended to cover the final kilometre to Allanson Primary School, allowing students, parents and teachers to walk or cycle safely to and from school as well as providing more recreation opportunities.

The call of the Trail's namesake, the red-tailed black cockatoo, can be heard along the trail, which connects the Collie and Allanson communities through picturesque State forest on a dual-use bitumised pathway

4. **New signage for visitors and walkers**

New signs have been erected on the main highway and around the Collie central business district to encourage locals and visitors to explore the area.

Large signs on the main thoroughfare through town encourage travellers to turn off and explore the area, while wayfinding signage displays walking distances to facilities and attractions, encouraging locals and visitors to explore the town on foot.

5. **Collie Town Mountain Bike Trail – Stage 1**

Collie's tracks and trails are set to be the envy of the region with 4.5km of high quality mountain bike developed beside the Collie High School with access along the river from Soldier's Park.

This showcases the mountain bike trails available now in the state and national parks around Collie with many more new mountain bike trails planned.

6. **Central Park now a hub**

The Central Park recreation centre in the redeveloped central business district has become a hive of activity with a water and adventure playground, lush picnic

area and barbecues, as well as regular community events at the Bendigo Bank Music Shell.

Central to the park's activation is the Wagon 537 refurbished train carriage kiosks that serves quality food and drinks to locals and visitors, improving the amenity for the area and providing employment for locals.

7. **Accessibility improved even further**

Collie is recognised nationally for its excellence in accessibility and inclusion in community design. A new Changing Places facility has been constructed beside the Collie Mineworkers Memorial Pool to provide full-sized changing tables and hoists in Collie to meet the needs of people with severe and profound disabilities. Visitors and tourists can also be assured that facilities are available when they visit.

8. **Awards and recognition**

The Shire was awarded the Planning Institute of Australia Award for Excellence in the From Plan to Place category for the SuperTowns projects in the Collie central business district.

Collie was a finalist in the General Appearance Category for various projects that improved the central business district, including the landscaping of Forrest St, the Pedestrian Footbridge surrounds, the Collie Art Gallery and public art and wayfinding signage.

The Shire of Collie took out the Regional Award for the third year in a row at the Local Government Children's Environment and Health Policy Award as well as category awards for Early Literacy and Planning Healthy Communities for Children. The Shire was recognised for its programs and developments targeted towards children, including the Central Park redevelopment, upgrades at Soldiers Park and the Little Libraries program.

9. **Modest rate increase**

The Shire underwent an extensive review of expenses prior to the 2018-19 budget setting process that allowed it to maintain its level of service generally, while setting aside funds for key priorities. This meant the Shire was able to keep the rate increase at a modest two per cent, which was much lower than all surrounding Shires, despite a static rate base.

The Shire of Collie was also recognised as a Tier 3 Regional Centre by the WA Grants Commission, which will ease some funding pressures in the next financial year.

10. **Planning for the future**

The Shire of Collie's Community Strategic Plan that sets out the vision, aspirations for the future and the Shire's key strategies to achieve them over the next four years was developed in consultation with the community. A key focus is on strengthening the community's sustainability

Heading into 2018, the Shire will build on these successes to continue to deliver services and projects for our community. The top priorities for 2018 include:

1. **Economic development a key priority**

The Shire has formed a new committee to work on economic diversification to provide new opportunities for the workforce displaced by changes in the coal mining and coal-fired power generation sectors.

This committee will work with the State government and other key stakeholders to identify and progress a variety of opportunities.

2. **Expanding on Collie's tracks and trails**

Stage 2 of the Collie Mountain Bike Trail project will connect the newly completed trail to Soldiers Park with dedicated mountain bike sections, bringing life, activity, tourists and customers to the central business district.

The new trail is just part of an overall plan to develop tourism products, infrastructure and capacity of operators as well as improving the branding and marketing of Collie.

3. **A healthy Collie River**

The Shire will continue to advocate and provide for the health of the Collie

River.

Following success in controlling Nardoo in the Collie River, the Shire's attention will turn to removing Watsonia from the riverbanks. This weed has taken over large areas of the banks. Spraying has commenced in priority areas. The Watsonia will be physically removed and the riverbanks replanted with native species.

4. **Eastern entrance upgrade**

Visitors to Collie from the east will be greeted with a new entry statement and tree planting to mirror the Western entrance near the Collie Visitor Centre.

A new toilet block and RV dump point is being installed at the Throssell Street truck stop near the Eastern entrance. The installation of the dump point will allow Collie to be designated as an RV Friendly Town, which will attract more tourists.

5. **Cemetery upgrade**

The Shire is committed to embracing and promoting the Shire as an aged-friendly community and retiree destination.

An upgrade to the Collie cemetery is planned for 2018, including planting additional shade trees along the central boulevard, placing more benches and installing a columbarium to store cremated ashes in a respectful and durable way. The footpaths are being upgraded to provide all-weather access to the columbarium.

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