

F14/33

Jetty the most important project

■ Tim Slater



Only 37 per cent of the respondents to a community perception survey carried out by the Shire of Esperance agree the council has developed and communicated a clear vision for the shire, up from 19 per cent in 2011.

And just over half of the 1010 survey participants agreed councillors and staff understood community needs.

But the survey, carried out by Catalyse Research and Strategy, said "community perceptions have improved significantly since 2011".

It found that 56 per cent of respondents agreed councillors understand community needs while 57 per cent agreed staff understand community needs, up from 43 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively, in 2011.

The survey, released this week, also revealed 92 per cent of respondents agree to live in Esperance and 91 per cent were happy with weekly rubbish collections.

Library and information services rated highly, with 82 per cent satisfied, including 53 per cent who were "delighted" with the library's services.

Paths and trails rated highly at 82 per cent and fortnightly recycling services, 84 per cent.

Among the survey findings was a satisfaction rating of 58 per cent in response to whether or not people believed they were getting "value for money" from the rates they pay, with 10 per cent neutral and 32 per cent dissatisfied.

"Although satisfaction with value for money from rates is up significantly from 2011, it remains moderate," the survey said.

The satisfaction rate was 43 per cent in 2011.

The survey revealed the construction of a new jetty was the most important project for Espe-

rance, followed by upgrades to the town centre, indoor sports stadium and greater sports ground.

"Many respondents have said they do not mind whether the jetty is repaired or replaced, they just want a construction plan put in place to ensure there will still be an Esperance jetty in many years to come," the survey said.

"An upgrade of the indoor sports stadium at the greater sports grounds is a high priority for some of the community.

"Many feel they have been waiting too long for an upgrade to this stadium which is seen to be in poor and unhygienic condition."

The survey identified a polarisation of views about the foreshore.

"While some want the foreshore to be a hub of commercial activity, with cafes, restaurants and retail ... others feel the area should be maintained as parkland or open space without any built-up areas that could detract from the foreshore's natural beauty," it said.

"However, some would be happy

with a combination of the two - a bit of commercial activity as well as public open space."

It found that 75 per cent of respondents would like the shire to allow some commercial activity along the foreshore area.

Other priorities include roads, streetscapes, economic development, tourism and employment.

A total of 70 per cent were satisfied with the shire as a governing organisation, 14 per cent were neutral and 16 per cent were dissatisfied. The highest dissatisfaction rating recorded during the survey was 37 per cent for youth services and facilities, followed by 36 per cent for planning building approvals and 34 per cent for road maintenance.

And 45 per cent were satisfied council processes were open and transparent, with 24 per cent neutral and 32 per cent dissatisfied.

Shire of Esperance president Malcolm Heasman said the survey results would be used to help influence future council decisions.

"It is great that more than 1000 people provided feedback and to hear the community enjoys living in Esperance," Cr Heasman said.

"This community input is vital to enable the council to keep in touch with the current wishes of local residents, determine priorities and make the best decisions possible on behalf of the community, in line with our strategic community plan."

Cr Heasman said the council had carefully considered the areas highlighted that needed improvement, including youth services and planning and building approvals.

He said the council would be "mindful to remember them in future decision making".

The survey found one in three respondents would like the shire to provide a third household bin for organic waste.

"Females, younger singles and couples, families with younger children and those who are renting are most interested," it said.

McAullay to give Australia Day address

■ Tim Slater

West Australian football and cricket champion Ken McAullay will give the Australia Day address at Esperance next Sunday. The address will be held during the annual event organised by the Rotary Club of Esperance at Adventureland Park.

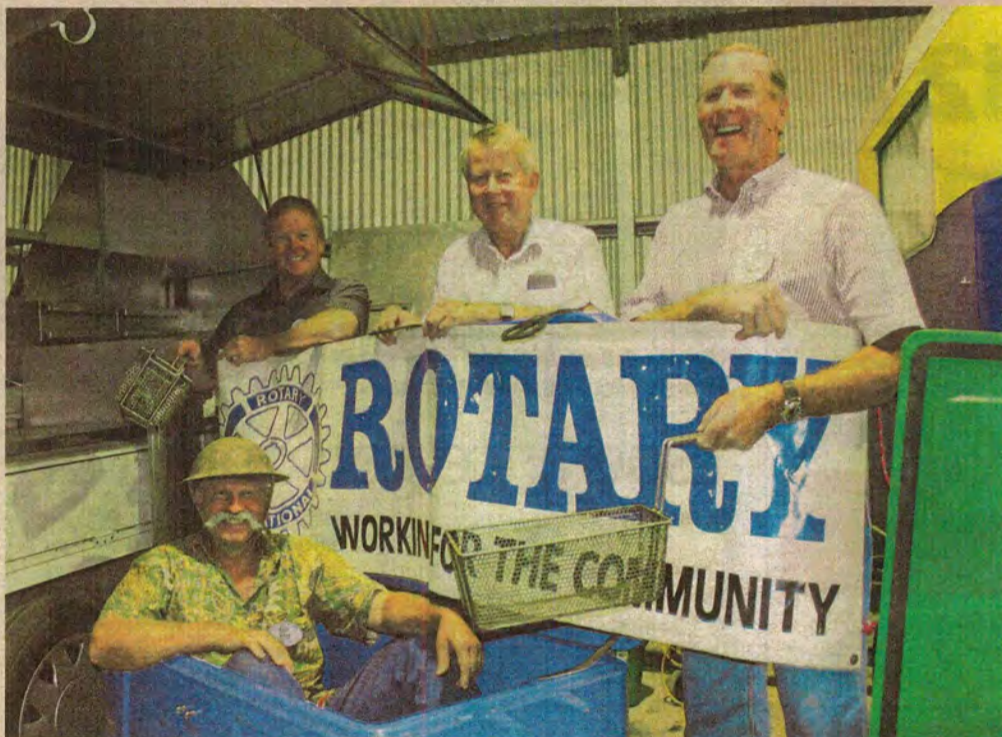
Mr McAullay is an Australia Day ambassador, a member of the WA Football League Hall of Fame and former WA Cricketer.

He was a champion player for East Perth, winning the Tassie Medal and two Simpson Medals and was an All-Australian team member and a premier player.

He also represented WA in cricket, was a member of two winning Sheffield Shield teams and served on the Town of Cambridge as a councillor from 2001 to 2005.

Activities start at 9am with a skating competition and there will be the usual range of food and drinks available, including the Rotary club's famous fish burgers.

Club spokesman Stephen Schmedje said formalities would start at 10.30am, including a welcoming address by Shire of Esperance president



Rotary ready: Ken Jenkyn, Paul Russell, Stephen Schmedje and Chris Roberts prepare for next Sunday's Australia Day celebrations. Photo: TIM SLATER

Malcolm Heasman, who will also present awards and conduct a citizenship ceremony for five people.

Mr Schmedje said it would be an action-packed program. He said the family fun day

was a great opportunity for people to celebrate what it means to be Australian.

There will be market stalls and displays during the day, including vintage cars, as well as a children's race, tug-of-war

and gopher race from 2pm.

Music will be provided by a new jazz band, Soul'd Out, along with performances by the Esperance Brass Band, Sing Australia, Daphne Dunwoodie and Steve West and Diesel.

Roadworks a priority

■ Tim Slater

Improving unsealed and rural roads is a priority for Esperance residents living in rural areas, the shire's perception survey has revealed.

The survey found 89 per cent of respondents from rural areas and other towns in the shire, apart from Esperance, were dissatisfied with levels of road maintenance, compared to a dissatisfaction rate of 32 per cent for the Esperance township.

Survey participants criticised the condition of rural roads, saying they were "badly maintained" and some were "an accident waiting to happen".

"Merivale Road, between Jims Oven Road and Orleans Bay Road, is a total disgrace, let alone dangerous," a respondent wrote.

"I don't know how many times you

'try' to fix it, the road needs to be totally re-sheeted.

"I can't work out how the shire can have a road that is used by tourists left in such a mess."

Another respondent said road maintenance was a core activity.

"Roads in some areas of the shire are out of sight and out of mind of the shire's staff and planners," the respondent wrote.

"They alternate between disgraceful and impassable.

"Basic road maintenance is left undone and is breaking up under the pressure of heavy traffic.

"We are essentially a farming area and must be able to move products off the farm to market."

Another respondent said some roads around the outer area of Esperance were an "accident waiting to happen" and some rural roads had not been re-sheeted for 20 years.

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Classic fundraiser

Australia's biggest breast cancer research fundraiser falls on Mother's Day each year and organisers are trying to outdo last year's record haul.

The Women in Super Mother's Day Classic raised a record \$5 million in 2013, with 63 of the 74 events held around the country being in regional areas.

For the classic communities register events where people walk or run around their city or town to raise money and awareness for breast cancer research. Mother's Day Classic national chair Louise Davidson said she wanted to build on this wonderful support from regional Australia and no location is too remote or too small.

"Participants will tell you there is something special about the atmosphere at the Mother's Day Classic, whether it is a huge capital city event or a smaller community gathering," Ms Davidson said.

"Last year we had locations in remote areas such as Dalby, Weipa and Kangaroo Island, with 65 to 3000 coming to the regional events.

"All you need is a local park or circuit, walking shoes and a group of people to walk or run to raise money for vital research." The Mother's Day Classic has raised \$19.8 million for breast cancer research since its launch in 1998.

For more information visit www.mothersdayclassic.com.au.

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