

Councillor Column

By Cr John Parsons

Our Strategic Community Plan identifies our vision, aspirations and priorities for the future and is almost ready to be put to use. The last six months have been spent consulting with the community and collating data used to shape the Draft Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027 which is now out for public comment. This is such an important guiding document that highlights the bigger picture as we use it to guide future projects.

This is the guiding document not only for Council, but for the whole Esperance community and reflects the vision and goals for Esperance into the future. Council does not have control over everything identified in the plan, but can advocate for and recognise community concerns.

Community consultation was a huge and very important part of developing this Plan and I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed. The discussions generated during consultation identified different challenges and opportunities for Esperance and where the community wants to see Esperance in the future.

Over the next ten years Council has a number of areas to focus on to achieve the vision that, "the Esperance Community is vibrant, welcoming and supportive and values its social connections and natural landscape".

Promoting Esperance and encouraging visitors to our beautiful part of the world was mentioned constantly throughout consultation. This one is particularly important to me and it would be great to see Esperance booming with visitors all year round. Our well known natural assets are a draw card to our region, but there is so much more that Esperance has to offer. A Council aim will be to attract people live, work and invest in our community as well as enhancing the experience for those visiting.

A rise in illegal drug usage was identified by the community and is also a concern of mine. Council can and intends to advocate for increased health services and provide support to external agencies who work with our community.

Sustainable energy and waste management were a reoccurring topic. This is an area Council can focus on and I believe education will play a key role in this. We already have an active community driving Esperance's Waste Revolution.

We would like further feedback to make sure the plan does reflect what our community envisions for Esperance's future. You can view the Plan, or make a submission by heading to the Shire's website.