

Councillor Column

By Deputy Shire President Natalie Bowman

I am often asked why on earth I wanted to join the council. For me it is pretty simple, I love Esperance and all it has to offer. I could not think of anywhere I'd rather be, both now and into the future. I love to step back and look at the bigger picture, and what we need to be doing in order to get there. That is what council is all about and this was the appeal for me.

So you might have guessed then the Strategic Community Plan is pretty exciting to me. Right up my alley! You may have been one of the many whom I have cajoled and conned into coming along to one of our community workshops recently to have some input. For that – thank you! The plan is only as good as the information we get, and councillors can only steer the ship in the direction as indicated by this plan.

I have been on council for nearly 6 years, have been through a couple of Strategic Community Plan reviews and I'm surprised by how much has changed in that time. For example 5 years ago the direction from the community when it came to the Shire and tourism, was that it was not our core business. It is interesting to note the opinions have changed and we are very much being given the direction to drive tourism in our area. It was great to get over to Albany earlier this year and take a look at how their City handles tourism and to see they are very much the drivers. I also remember we asked our community 5 years ago if they would like a third bin introduced to remove organics from landfill and received a resounding no –given the focus on waste just recently, I wonder if the answer would be the same today?

Our plan is broken up into five themes this time around, growing from the four themes we had last time. Our Community Connection, Our Natural Environment, Growth and Prosperity, Built Environment and Community Leadership. We're currently collating the survey and workshop results and these will be used to plan the way forward.

If you're interested in reading the input that we have received or checking out what has been proposed as our biggest challenges and aspirations, jump on our website, sit down with a cuppa and have a read.