

Councillor Column

By Cr Lara McIntyre

It is part of a Councillor's role to attend community events and meetings. Every time I attend these events, I am reminded that the strength of our community comes from the actions of passionate people.

Two standout examples have been the Neighbourhood Watch meeting and the Ocean Safety Forum. Both of these were instigated by local people who wanted to make practical changes.

Surfer, Mitch Capelli, is working with other ocean users to find ways to keep people safe in the ocean. He has instigated the Ocean Safety and Support group and initiatives that range from teaching first aid to surfers, often the first responders in an emergency, to improved warning systems on non-patrolled beaches.

Chris Pope has been working with local police to re-invigorate Neighbourhood Watch. At a recent information session Chris reminded us how important it was to rekindle that good old-fashioned value of looking out for each other. The data shows it works and crime is reduced in areas with Neighbourhood Watch. Not to mention all the added benefits that come from knowing and caring for the people in your street. It is such a simple way to live in a safer place and I encourage you to be involved.

Two recent Shire events, the community tree planting at Lake Monjingup and the Waste Revolution were both well attended. Staff and Councillors alike were inspired by the input of enthusiastic and positive people who actively participated to make a difference in Esperance.

Sixty volunteers braved the weather and managed to plant over 3000 seedlings at Lake Monjingup. We also had eighty students from Castletown primary school plant nearly 1000 trees at Castletown Quays. This is part of the Shire's planting program that engages many different groups to help restore native flora in our region.

The Community Waste Revolution was a great way to share ideas and learn about what anyone can do to reduce the amount of waste to landfill. People at the workshop gave fantastic examples of what they are doing to keep their waste to a minimum. Simple actions everyone can, and should, take to make a difference.

These are only a few examples. Every week hundreds of people volunteer their time in our town. Keyboard warriors may feel they're making change through expressing opinions and collecting likes, but it is *actions* of good people who get out of their house and get involved that make Esperance a much better place to live.