

FROM THE COAST

Local Government Week

Acting Shire President Cr Natalie Bowman

Last week I had the pleasure of attending the annual WALGA local government week convention along with 5 other councillors from the Shire of Esperance. What an exciting and informative week it was! Over 3 days we were inspired by guest speakers covering a range of topics and had the chance to share ideas and learn from fellow councillors from other local governments.

One of the highlights for me was the opening speech from Ernesto Sirroli who is one of the world's leading authorities on local economic development. He had a personal connection with Esperance having been here in the early 80's where he pioneered a unique economic development approach. He spoke about how we can encourage and assist local entrepreneurs and what it takes to make a successful new business venture.

Another favourite session that made me think was presented by Stephen Yarwood, an Urban futurist, who gave some insight into what technologies will be coming in the near future using AI and how it will impact our lives and our communities. He spoke about driverless vehicles and the share economy that will see us no longer owning cars, but travelling in a car that arrives to collect us in response to our phone calendar. He also encouraged us to think about the impact this will have on town planning when parking spaces are no longer required and how other futuristic developments will affect our future. Certainly food for thought!

We also took the opportunity to take a day trip to Bunbury to look at the Banksia Rd Composting facility. This service is jointly run by a group of councils in the area and has become a very successful partnership venture. It provides a weekly organics collection service for residents, significantly reducing what goes into landfill. The waste is treated with aeration and heat to kill bacteria and seeds, producing an organically certified compost which is resold to ratepayers and businesses in the region. This plant is ranked in the top 3 in the state and I look forward to further conversations with them to see how we can do something similar in Esperance.

Now that we are back we will share and discuss the ideas we have learned about and see what wonderful things we can bring back to make Esperance even more amazing.