



MEDIA RELEASE

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ESPERANCE ELECTION DEEMED ACCURATE

Unsuccessful candidate, Brian Pearce discontinued his action against the WA Electoral Commission in the Court of Disputed Returns held at the Esperance Magistrate's Court today after lodging a complaint about the election result. Mr Pearce was permitted to view the voting slips on 6th January.

Mr Pearce had said his concern and subsequent court action was prompted by a perception that the election outcome had been influenced by a third party.

After conducting a supervised ballot inspection, Mr Pearce was satisfied with the outcome of the election count and agreed to discontinue the court action.

The Western Australian Electoral Commission's representative told the court the unnecessary action had cost the Commission \$3607 in legal costs and \$418 incurred after the ballot count. The viewing was undertaken with representatives from the Shire, the WAEC, a JP appointed by the court, Mr Pearce and four of his representatives.

The Magistrate told Mr Pearce he had "put a lot of people to a lot of trouble" and was not awarding costs to the WAEC with regards to Mr Pearce's "personal circumstances". He also warned Mr Pearce that if he were to take any further action that was unsuccessful, he could incur associated costs.

CEO Matthew Scott said "It is pleasing that Mr Pearce has now acknowledged the election result and that the election outcome was accurate. Although the action was not against the Shire, some insinuations and allegations of impropriety were, and they are simply not true. I believe that is evident in the outcome from the court today."

Shire President Victoria Brown said "I think an apology to the Shire would be appropriate as unsubstantiated claims were made, when it would appear to have been more of a personal dispute between Mr Pearce and his scrutineer. Not only did this action waste the time of people employed by the ratepayers, and that of the WAEC and the courts, it generated unfair suspicion of the Shire and the election process within the community. I hope the outcome highlights that hearsay needs to be verified before taking shots at organisations that are committed to serving our community."

Ends

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