



QUILPIE SHIRE COUNCIL

Minutes

Business Development Group Meeting

Wednesday 9th September commencing at 7am

Quilpie Heritage Inn

Brolga Street Quilpie

Meeting Purpose: For local businesses within the Quilpie Shire to meet and discuss items relevant to their business and share these with Council. Identify future opportunities to continue to support and build a strong business sector.

Attendees: Donna Bonsey, Jean Hall, Philippa Ware, Cameron Welk, Gina McConnell, Dan Springall, Bruce Paulsen, Jenny Hewson, Dave Burges, Stuart Mackenzie, Roger Volz, Courtney Bartlett, Simon Walter, Lyn Barnes, Jess Gilby, Yvonne Richardson.

Apologies: Sarah and Jeremy Slaughter, Koss Siwers, John Gollan.

Minute secretary: Karen Grimm

1 Opening of Meeting – 7.20am

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting – not available.

3 Update from the Mayor/Councillors – Stuart Mackenzie

- Stuart spoke regarding Dave Burges resignation. Dave has been CEO with Quilpie for 9 years. Council has been fortunate to have someone of Dave's experience and skills for such a long period of time, he (along with Council) have achieved a lot and he will be missed.
- The process has begun to recruit a CEO.
- The virus is still high on everyone's radar, however meetings with Premier have dropped off. Stuart reiterated for local businesses to contact him if they are having issues accessing staff from other states into Queensland.
- Lyn Barnes identified that visitation has been up and purchasing strong and appear to be spending in town and more in general. Primary reason for visiting is to inject money into outback/small towns.
- Dave had taken on Economic Development projects during his time in Quilpie, however this will be transitioned to Karen Grimm. She will continue to deliver Tourism, but take on Economic Development responsibilities as well.

4 Update on Projects and Initiatives

4.1 "Wellspring" Project

Council have decided to continue with a business case with Robert Prestipino from Vital Places. Council have identified they would like to see evidence of an investor/s through the next process. There has been some interest in the water side of the project – water is a key element of the project. An update will be provided in the next community newsletter.

4.2 2020/2021 Budget overview

The budget has increased to \$32m, up from about \$12m from last year. The 2020/2021 will see an increase in capital budget to \$11.5m, this capital will include the stage of Eromanga Natural History Museum (\$3.2m), Gyrica Gardens Community hub (\$0.94m) – these are predominately funded from external grants. Capital budget will also include renewal of existing assets, wash-down bay, tennis courts and plant replacement. A high amount has also been allocated to flood damage. The Council teams will be busy delivering this with local contractors. Credit also to the

Proterra group who have been important in the process of achieving an increase in the flood damage expenditure.

Link to 2020/21 Budget documents - [2020/2021 Budget](#)

4.3 Shopfront Refurbishment Program

Council has received a positive response from participants and the community about this project. A reminder email was sent out this week – to remind people that expenditure is required by November. The project needs to be acquitted in December. These are government deadlines and cannot be changed. There has been positive economic benefit from this project.

It has been positive that businesses have focused on purchasing/sourcing locally, then regional before going to coastal areas.

Roger Volz indicated recent conversations with Chris Jones (Warrego Signs) about his thanks to the business community and Council for their support of his business.

Question was raised by Cameron Welk about the sealing to fence boundary on Sommerfield Road and also if additional applications would be considered for the program in this round.

Response: Conversation to continue regarding this project and partnerships to share in delivery. If businesses are interested in participating in this round they would need to provide quotations asap and if approved have all works completed by November 2020.

Action: if there is interest in another round of the Shopfront Refurbishment Program please let Council know for consideration into the future.

4.4 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

A copy of the strategy was provided at the meeting, however link also provided to electronic version - [Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#)

This will be an important document and Karen identified the priority actions on page 23 and 24 as the initial focus for Council.

4.5 Digital Connectivity

Council is in talks with companies, including NBN and Telstra regarding the Shires connectivity.

The existing fibre to Quilpie is publicly accessible so can provide different opportunities to the community.

Mobile blackspots have also been identified by council for future improvement priorities;

- West of Eromanga
- Windorah road
- Quilpie to Charleville

General consensus from the group is that it is inconsistent, pending day of week and specific use.

5 Business Development

5.1 General Discussion - COVID-19 – how are businesses going? What are the ongoing pressures? What opportunities have you implemented to manage over these times?

Points from discussion

- Some business have been busy and they consider themselves lucky
- Issues with the time it can take to access parts and products (at times unable to get)
- Food products (Café) unable to source
- General stock delays
- Staffing
 - Many businesses identified issues with staffing
 - Gina McConnell identified they are sourcing own cattle to ensure supply

- Jess Gilby has used an employment agency to try and attract staff, however issues with expectations of potential staff
- Businesses need more casual staff
- Housing
 - Lack of rental accommodation has provided issues with attraction of staff
 - Families wanting to move back are finding it difficult to do so
 - Private rentals hard to identify, limited to no listings with real estate

6 Tourism and Marketing

6.1 General update

Numbers of visitors through the centre in August have been the highest numbers recorded in recent years. Visitors have been keen to know what there is to do and see. There has been a distinct difference between visitors from 2019 and 2020. In 2020 it is clear to identify they want to spend time and are not rushing through the Shire.

The Social media campaigns have been strong with a steady increase in followers, likes and shares to maintain strong interest in the Shire. Instagram is where we have noticed major improvements, followers are from varied with many for tourism groups and businesses. In August alone we have had another 53 followers, we are aiming for 1000 by December and will continue to build this into 2021.

The blogs have also been popular and assisted many people in planning their visit to Quilpie Shire, providing diversity and ideas of how to spend their time.

The recent work in developing tour product for groups (including bus groups) has already seen results with a tour visiting in August. We have also had a famil with a large tour group Trade Travel, they deal with a lot of groups including probus but will develop specialized tours as well! Expect to see growth in this sector in coming years as the market comes back with COVID plans in place.

7 Business Development Group

- 7.1 Where to from here? General discussion about future of group – structure, outcomes, schedule for meetings, what people would like to see on the agendas

Due to time constraints this was not discussed.

8 Other Business

8.1 NAB Update from Jean Hall

NAB is open from 9.30am – 12.30pm. From 1.30pm the current staff are then on outbound calling or live chat. This has presented new opportunities for training and expanding existing skills. There is still some transitioning to continue for people to adjust to new hours.

This has also provided opportunities for regional based positions and flexibility in positions being based in other centres.

It was also noted the Post Office can also provide service for NAB services outside of opening hours.

Council have communicated a positive letter to NAB and encouraged them to consider Quilpie as a future location for staff to be based.

8.2 St Finbarrs Fete

The School has set the date at Friday 13 November, it is hoped it can be held under COVID requirements. The holiday raffle will still go ahead, due to generous sponsors. The prize options will be for holidays in Queensland.

8.3 Shop Local Campaign

Jenny Hewson asked the group if there was interest in Shop Local Campaign. The general consensus was yes. More information will be provided through Karen Grimm for this campaign over coming months.

8.4 Business Christmas Party

Jenny Hewson asked the group about the annual Christmas party, overall consensus was yes to host a party in 2020.

This is provided as a free event, however the balance now only sits at \$500, so contributions will be required to host in 2020. In past years businesses contribute \$80-\$100 each to put towards the party. Council will also discuss their financial support for this event.

Businesses in the room expressed their interest in being asked to contribute to the party, as they feel it is important for the community to be able to come together. However this contribution will be optional, pending each businesses circumstances.

Any plans will be in line with COVID requirements.

9 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting date will be advised, will be held prior to Christmas.

Mornings are popular with those in attendance.

10 Closure of Meeting – 8.45am