

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO QUESTION TIME TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2015
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The following questions were addressed to the above meeting. Some questions were adequately responded to at the meeting, however others required a more detailed response in writing.

This document includes both verbal and written responses.

Lian Chan and **Victoria Strachan** submitted questions prior to the Council Meeting, but as they were not present their questions were taken on notice for a written response.

Written responses were provided on 26 March 2015.

Jennifer Wills addressed Council as follows:

Communities in the Greater Geelong area including Point Lonsdale, Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove and Portarlington are concerned about environmental degradation from plastic shopping bag pollution, and the ongoing detrimental impacts on sea birds and other marine life. Community groups in recent years have taken action to address the problem by mounting educational campaigns and supplying reusable bags to reduce disposable plastic bag usage and wastage; but faster action is needed to protect our fragile environment.

Staying-in Portarlington Inc is asking will Council support these community grass roots initiatives by introducing a Council-wide ban on plastic shopping bags in Greater Geelong?

Jenny McMahon responded she was unclear if Council has the ability to legislate and enforce a Council-wide ban on plastic shopping bags. As you know Council currently undertakes a number of initiatives to help reduce plastic bags and other forms of plastic from entering the environment. It also includes supporting regular cleanups of waterways and beaches and undertaking environment education programs. Council also provides support to the Barwon Heads Sustainability Group, who have an initiative to reduce plastic bags usage in Barwon Heads. I will ask our Environment Unit to contact you for further discussion.

Cr Farrell added that Council contributed \$2,000 to the Barwon Heads Group to buy bags some years ago, reflective of Council's appetite to do so.

Lorraine Andrew asked:

I have had a letter in regards to roads being sealed. I am all for this and would like to know when will this starts as every time we get a letter the price has gone up?

Jenny McMahon responded that unfortunately she could not provide a definitive answer but would follow up with relevant officers and provide a written response.

Jenny McMahon provided a further response via email to Ms Andrew on 26 March.

Helen Freeman asked the following:

Please provide details:

- a) for the 2004-2014 period the rates paid by residents of Portarlington, Indented Head and St Leonards?
- b) for the 2004-2014 period provide the amounts spent on the areas list in a), above?

The Mayor took the question on notice for a written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Strategy & Performance in the following terms:**

In relation to your rating questions at the Council meeting held on 24 March 2015, we provide the following response.

The levying of Council rates is a property taxing system designed to raise funds for expenditure within the municipal district.

Council does not account for rates by suburb or expenditure by suburb.

Rates are levied in accordance with Section 161 of the Local Government Act (LGA). Under Sec 161 (3) of the LGA, Council provides the rate and amount of rates payable in relation to land in each category of differential rating and what proportion of the total rates and charges this represents. This information is published as part of the annual Budget (refer Council's website: www.geelongaustralia.com.au).

The annual budget also details specifics of the capital works program and expenditure through the Municipal District.

We trust this provides an explanation to your enquiry.

Tom O'Connor asked his question in relation to Tourism on the Bellarine:

What incentives do Council have in place right now to encourage tourism on the Bellarine?

Cr Fisher responded that a she would arrange a written response from Roger Grant, Manager Tourism.

Cr Fisher added consultants are being commissioned to develop a tourist plan for the region and a website is to be launched for Greater Geelong and Bellarine Tourism.

Also, the opening of the new "Flying Brick Cider Company" which also features an accredited Visitor Information Centre. A Marine Sculpture Park is also being considered.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
Manager Tourism in the following terms:**

Your question submitted at the City of Greater Geelong Council meeting of Tuesday 24th of March 2015 has been sent to me in my capacity as Tourism Manager for the City of Greater Geelong to reply.

You specifically asked 'What incentives do Council have in place right now to encourage tourism on The Bellarine?'

As you may be aware, Council's Tourism Policy supports a co-operative model whereby Council works in partnership with the Tourism Industry through Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine Inc.

Council supports this model through a dedicated budget that funds the administration, visitor services functions and business events, whilst industry funds the implementation of the attached business plan.

In the current financial year Council's contribution directed towards tourism services exceeded \$1.8 Million and this combined with industry and grant funds (membership, sponsorship, industry buy in and State Government grants) is delivering a tourism budget in excess of \$2.7 Million. A copy of the Industry funded and Council supported One Year Action Plan (2014/15) and Strategic Plan (2014-2017) are attached.

Specific initiatives that feature The Bellarine including the following:

- *Content Marketing - Budget \$24,000*
- *Thematic Marketing - Budget \$21,000*
- *Digital Marketing - Budget \$110,000*
- *Public Relations - Budget \$50,000*
- *Still and Moving Imagery Development - Budget \$55,000*
- *Official Visitor Guide and Maps - Budget \$85,000*
- *Bellarine Taste Trail - Budget \$19,000*
- *Economic Modelling and Tourism Development Strategy – Budget \$58,000*

Further to this 'The Bellarine' is included in all initiatives reflecting the new structure that focuses staffing and financial resources on Greater Geelong (Geelong and The Bellarine).

It is also worth noting that the Council have recently developed a major new 'gateway to The Bellarine' Visitor Information Centre in partnership with 'Flying Brick Cider House' at Wallington.

The new structure 'Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine Inc' is focusing resources and programs at an unprecedented level on growing tourism on The Bellarine and Council is pleased to be playing a critical role in this tourism partnership.

I hope that this information provides you with a better understanding of how Council is supporting tourism on The Bellarine.

Elizabeth Fairlie asked question regarding Heritage Conservation:

Bonsey Cottage, built in 1854, has been assessed in the outer areas heritage study as being of regional significance. It is of historic and aesthetic value. The house has been little altered both within and without.

It is with a sense of urgency that I ask on behalf of Bonsey Cottage that Cr Nelson makes a budget allocation to see his ward of the outer areas heritage study brought to a logical and tangible conclusion to save this and other historically significant buildings?

Cr Nelson responded that he would endeavour to have Bonsey Cottage included in either this budget or a subsequent budget as he too agrees with the need to have it protected.

Cr Ansett added that he would work together with Cr Nelson to make it happen.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Planning and Tourism in the following terms:**

I refer to your submission to Public Question Time at the Council meeting on 10th March 2015 in relation to the Outer Areas Heritage Study and specifically your desire to see a Heritage Overlay introduced to 14 Bonsey Road in Highton.

As we have advised in previous correspondence, Council commissioned the Outer Areas Heritage Study in 1998-2000. Authentic Heritage Services Pty Ltd produced a 16 volume report which takes in the outer rural regions of Geelong. The study identified 1159 individual places and 11 heritage areas/precincts.

Council is implementing the Study in a staged manner and a number of overlays have been introduced by a number of amendments into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme including Belmont, Barwon Heads, Fyansford, Connewarre, Breamlea and a number of significant complex sites. Since the Study was completed a further three heritage studies have been produced for Newtown, Geelong West and Lara. Newtown and Geelong West have been implemented into the Planning Scheme and Council is currently working on an amendment to introduce the updated Lara Study.

The Outer Areas Heritage Study is now over 15 years old would need to be revisited as there are likely to be changed circumstances from the original inventory taken i.e. sites redeveloped, demolished, altered etc. that could have an impact on the values of the places (individual sites and precincts).

To review and update the Study would require Council to engage a suitably qualified person(s) as this skill set is not available in house to the level that would be required to support a planning scheme amendment. At present there is no budget allocation for this project, and as such this project is therefore not on our current work plan. However the Study continues to be used as an important resource document for Council planners.

Robert Kanngieser asked:

- 1) Why has the edging in the shopping centre (St Leonards) never been asphalted and what is happening with the bus shelter?

Jenny McMahon took the question on notice for a written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
Acting General Manager City Services in the following terms:**

Construction of kerb and channel and the adjacent parking lane and cycle lane is proposed for Murradoc Road, St Leonards from Blanche Street to Wattletree Avenue. Funding for this project is a mix of Council, VicRoads and resident contributions. A funding commitment is being sought from VicRoads towards this project. Until such time that we receive this commitment we are unable proceed with the project.

Installation of Bus Shelters is undertaken by the City in consultation with PTV and the bus operators. Installation of shelters is based on patronage. The City receives many requests for shelters each year which are added to a list, prioritised (based on patronage) and installed.

- 2) Where shopping centre is around post office has it been approved for three storey buildings?

Council's strategic planning for the St Leonards Town Centre encourages the consolidation and redevelopment of land around the town centre for additional shops, restaurants, offices and medium density housing. Over time, this development will include new two and three storey buildings.

The Town Centre is covered by a specific Design and Development overlay that requires new development to retain the low scale character of St Leonards and that the height of new development respects the scale of existing development in the Town Centre.

There are sites in the Town Centre where a three storey development, with setbacks of upper floors may be appropriate. Council will make an assessment of individual development proposals and the particular characteristics of the site to determine if the development fits into the character of the street.

Peter Bettess responded the issue is probably the 7.5metre trigger for requiring a planning permit, but would have to follow up for specifics.

3) Roads are pot-holed and in need of repairs: The Esplanade, St Leonards, Murradoc Road, between Murradoc Road to Queenscliffe?

Cr Ellis indicated this was a VicRoads responsibility, but would make further investigations.

The listed roads are under the maintenance responsibility of VicRoads. Your concerns have been forwarded to them for action.

If you have any further queries relating to the provision and maintenance of infrastructure please contact Vicki Shelton, Manager Engineering Services on 5272 4348 and for planning queries contact Tim Hellsten, Manager Planning Strategy & Urban Growth on 5272 5023.

Glen Jose asked an infrastructure related question which was not submitted.

Jennifer Bantow asked questions regarding Heritage Conservation:

Cr Nelson – can a review of Deakin Ward places identified in the Outer Areas Heritage Study please be included in the next budget?

Cr Nelson responded that budget time is a tough time, but will work with Cr Ansett in an effort to have it included in this budget or the next.

For the last six years Council and the Geelong and Regional Branch National Trust have jointly presented Heritage Awards to owners to recognise their contribution to heritage conservation.

Cr Ansett – could Council be represented at the presentation?

Cr Ansett responded that he would be happy to attend.

The local Geelong and Regional Branch of the National Trust often receives calls from the public about concern for the conservation of heritage places. In recent times the Branch has received an increasing number of calls about the issue of multi storey, high density unit development in areas of high heritage value. Existing residents who enjoy living in these areas and who value their homes because of the heritage neighbourhood character are caused great distress and worry because of the detrimental impact on their amenity of these inappropriate intrusions into their neighbourhood.

The Branch requests the City of Greater Geelong planners consider the overall general trend of breakdown of heritage precinct which is happening in a way which could be described as ... death by a thousand cuts.

This has been defined as the way a major negative change happens slowly in many unnoticed increments and is not perceived as objectionable when each individual change occurs.

Will Council support heritage by stemming this trend by refusing these applications?

Peter Bettess responded he would need to investigate where these developments causing public distress were occurring.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
General Manager Planning and Tourism in the following terms:**

I am writing in response to your question submitted at the Council meeting on the 24th of March 2015 in relation to new development in heritage areas.

The City of Greater Geelong has carried out a number of heritage studies and the findings of these studies are used to inform planning policy such as the introduction of heritage overlays. Heritage overlays can be used to protect individual properties or broader heritage precincts.

Within heritage precincts individual buildings have different levels of significance such as 'individually significant'; 'contributory' and 'not significant'. Within heritage precincts there will be opportunities for infill development, this will generally occur on sites that are vacant or deemed 'not significant'. Council will always seek to protect individually significant and contributory buildings in the first instance.

Within a heritage precinct any infill development such as multi-storey high density development will require an assessment against heritage policies in the planning scheme. Some of the key considerations with regard to infill include:

- To ensure that new development and external alterations of existing buildings make a positive contribution to the built form and amenity of the area.*
- Discourage demolition of sites that are not of cultural heritage significance within a heritage area until a planning permit for the replacement development is approved and a bona-fide contract for the new work has been confirmed.*

Each heritage precinct has detailed design guidelines which ensure development respects the character of the precinct. This does not preclude a contemporary interpretation of the traditional building design of the area. Guidelines include:

- Encourage building heights to be single storey and to incorporate the following:*
 - The highest point of the roof should not be greater than the highest adjacent single storey building, whereby height of the roof should not be greater than the main (overall), adjacent ridge line.*
 - The proportion of building roof should not be greater than the proportion of roof to walls of the buildings visually connected to it.*
 - The springing height of the roof should be equivalent to neighbouring buildings, or if these are different, the springing height may be between those of neighbouring buildings.*
- Discourage buildings that are constructed boundary to boundary.*
- Encourage the separation between buildings to be equivalent to neighbouring buildings.*
- Encourage front setbacks that are equivalent to the setback of neighbouring buildings or if these are different, the setback may be at a distance that is between the setbacks of neighbouring buildings.*

Where proposals do not generally comply with heritage policy and could have an adverse impact on a heritage place Council will refuse the planning permit application.

Council supports a variety of new development in heritage areas which at times includes new contemporary developments in appropriate situations. A range of issues are considered as part of the assessment process including state and local heritage policies and general design matters to ensure that any new development is respectful of the heritage place. Council also has a Heritage Adviser who provides comments and recommendations prior to a permit decision being made. New development can result in a change however it is considered not all change will have an adverse planning or heritage outcome.