

**QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO QUESTION TIME
TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2016**

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.

Anthony Lewis addressed the Administrators in relation to the Future of the NDIS:

My family and I utilise the City services for four hours once a week to allow my wife and I some time out from the constant care of my adult autistic daughter. This is our only respite. The Council has provided this service for approximately 20 years. Now to be stopped for the sake of \$510k.

My question is when we are spending \$1.6 million on the football ground and a further \$700,000 on its surrounds – how do we justify cutting out respite and cleaning services for the needy members of our society when we provide millions to a commercial business (football)? I am not anti sport, just anti losing our one and only support re respite?

Kathy Alexander responded that in relation to your statement, I do understand the importance of an effective relationship in that kind of service and understand your concerns. It is important to clarify this is a Federal Government service and Council will work closely with the NDIS to ensure existing Council clients are supported in their transition to alternate providers.

Kathy advised that she would elaborate further during the discussion of the report and that the Administrators will take into consideration what has been said.

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

Thank you for your question and your attendance at the August Council meeting. I am pleased to know that you have been well supported as a family by Council Care Workers over the past two decades within the HACC program and then during the NDIA trial.

Council was pleased to become a provider to the NDIA during the Barwon Trial in order to provide service continuity while the scheme and provider market was established.

The decision of Council not to subsidise services, beyond September with the full scheme, national roll out, is consistent with the 2013 Council resolution and the NDIS policy platform as outlined in the 16 August 2016 report to Council.

Please be assured that Council did not make the decision to withdraw as an NDIA provider for personal care and house cleaning services lightly. We are aware of the disruption to relationships and the uncertainty that this change will have for clients and our employees.

The NDIA have, however, assured Council that there is skill and capacity amongst other providers in the region to cater for the assessed needs of your family and other impacted clients. As such, you will be entitled to continue to receive respite services.

Council will provide transition assistance to you, if you require it, and we are happy to provide a handover with your new provider if this will assist in introducing the new carers to your family.

In relation to your question regarding budget priorities. A range of factors influence budget allocation including ongoing service costs, service alternatives, funding arrangements and changing service needs in response to a growing community. This is not a decision Council has arrived at lightly but one made in light of alternate support options and our commitment to assist clients through this transition phase.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please don't hesitate to contact Karen Pritchard, Manager Aged and Disability Services on 5272 4719.

Colin Wallace asked the Administrator's Chair, Dr Kathy Alexander, to meet with him and his wife in relation to the Ropeworks Panel and its report regarding First Street, Geelong West.

Council acknowledges the question and will provide a written response within 14 days.

A subsequent written response was provided by the Chair Administrator in the following terms:

I refer to your invitation to meet which you extended to me during Question Time on 16 August 2016.

After doing some research in relation to the matter you raised, I am writing to inform you that I will not meet with you despite initially indicating that I would at the most recent Ordinary Meeting of Council.

Following the 16 August Council meeting, I have carefully assessed a number of materials, including your previous questions and responses I have requested from City of Greater Geelong officers in respect to the Ropeworks Development.

My specific findings in relation to this matter have highlighted that:

- *since 2006 there has been in the vicinity of 400 incoming and outgoing pieces of correspondence registered against your name;*
- *specific planning legislation has been applied correctly, in that the Planning Scheme Amendment has been gazetted. The process is not up for challenge nor is the planning permit that has been issued;*
- *I note that the same matter has been presented in a variety of different ways and that your view has been comprehensively considered and responded to by the City of Greater Geelong;*
- *I also note that on a number of occasions, you have been advised that Council reserves the right to refuse to respond to such requests any further and asked that you cease persisting in this matter;*
- *you have been cautioned in writing and I understand verbally with respect to your interactions and comments regarding City of Greater Geelong officers;*
- *this matter was referred to the Victorian Ombudsman for consideration and you were advised that the Ombudsman was satisfied with the way Council has dealt with this matter.*

I believe that the City of Greater Geelong cannot satisfy your requirements and your persistence is now a distraction from our business.

I wish to take this opportunity to inform you of your right to again refer the matter to the Victorian Ombudsman for a review if you are unhappy with this outcome. The Victorian Ombudsman can be contacted by telephoning (03) 9613 6222 or 1800 806 314 or at www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au .

Lachlan Read from Grovedale Primary School asked:

On behalf of Grovedale Primary School, I was wondering on the possibility of someone coming and addressing our school on the runnings and workings of the Council?

Kathy Alexander responded she was more than happy to provide for a General Manager to attend and speak on behalf of Council in relation to the delivery of services provided. Kathy suggested a discussion be held with the school as to what area of responsibility they would like to learn about and advise her so she can make appropriate arrangements for the visit.

Tom O'Connor addressed Council as follows:

- 1) On behalf of the swimming fraternity I would like to acknowledge the extensive and challenging work of Dean Frost and his team, particularly in relation to LeisureLink, Kardinia, and Waterworld.
- 2) Progress of the new democracy foundation concept within Council and the potential for change over time?

Kathy Alexander advised that the process and convening of the Citizen's Jury was initiated by the Minister of Local Government and not Council, and therefore, she was loath to comment. Kathy advised that, in her experience, Citizen's Juries generally make sound decisions which is one of the reasons for investment in community engagement. It will be extremely interesting to hear what this group says. In terms of progress its something we are interested in but Council is not managing the project.

Morghan Crouch asked on behalf of Grovedale Primary School if there has been any decision in regards to the Christmas Tree on the Geelong Waterfront and if no, when do you see a decision being made?

Kathy Alexander responded yes there has been a decision agreeing that the business case 'stacks up', and the Christmas Tree will continue.

Brett Luxford added that part of what we do is analyse the cost benefit associated with the Christmas Tree based on the number of visitors that came into Geelong and spent money and stayed in Geelong. The result was a positive cost benefit and the decision taken by Council is to support the Christmas Tree for the next three years.

Jennifer Bantow addressed Council in relation to Item 7 – Section B Reports – 26 July 2016.

- 1) Is the sale to Barwon Health or Barwon Health Future Fund Foundation?

Dean Frost responded the sale is ultimately to Barwon Health.

Could 'option agreement' and 'terms to be agreed' and 'potential terms of sale' please be explained? What terms would be acceptable? What are the arrangements for paying back the State Government the sale price that was waived when the Gaol was effectively given to the people of Geelong?

Kathy Alexander expressed the fact that Council needs to be comfortable with the terms, as do they.

Dean Frost replied the approximate amount of \$300,000 would be paid back to the State Government as per the terms of the loan, however Council is expecting more from the sale.

- 2) Which organisation, Rotary, Barwon Health, or some other agency would have responsibility for the maintenance of the significant architectural fabric of the Gaol, its boundary walls and corner towers? In the period of lease to Rotary? In the long term?

Kathy Alexander responded if we sell to Barwon Health it will be Barwon Health's responsibility to maintain it.

Ms Bantow also raised concerns in relation to the works being carried out on the Dalgety Wool Stores building and questioned the terms of the permit?

Peter Bettess responded that he would follow up and check the specifics but was not aware of any breach.

Kathy Alexander added that the permit would have been issued by the Planning Minister.

Emily Raeck on behalf of Grovedale Primary School asked how long are you anticipating to be Administrators of our Council and do you see the numbers of people administrating the Council increasing?

Kathy Alexander responded that the term of our appointment is until October 2017, and there are some things which we have been told by the Minister that we have to address in that time. It is unlikely that any more Administrators will be appointed to Geelong, however, the Minister may extend the term with the agreement of Parliament.

Makaila Kennedy on behalf of Grovedale Primary School asked what is the role of all the other people around the table if only three people are Adminstrators?

Kathy Alexander asked each person around the table to introduce themselves and provide a brief outline of their job responsibility.