

**QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO QUESTION TIME
TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2017**

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.

Clive West advised of the unclean condition of public seating on the south side of Little Ryrie Street behind Officeworks caused by birds resting in the trees. The same problem is experienced along the City's Waterfront.

Kathy Alexander advised that Council will investigate and take appropriate action.

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

Thank you for submitting your question regarding the seating on the south side of the Little Ryrie Street behind the Officeworks carpark.

Our maintenance team have inspected the area and agree that the seating around and under large trees can become unclean from bird droppings and deter the community from using the seating provided.

The maintenance staff attend to this area twice a week to clean up bird droppings and litter, however they have agreed to increase their program to monitor the area daily ensuring that the seating is clean for use each day.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Alison Williams asked questions regarding the Terms of Reference for the Geelong Saleyards Advisory Committee:

- 1) Could the CoGG confirm that if the peak user group (ie Geelong Saleyards Users Group) nominates a representative to membership of the Committee who is a fit and proper person and has the confidence of users, that the person will be appointed?

Kathy Alexander responded that the membership process is outlined and any person who considers they fit the criteria should be encouraged to consider submitting.

- 2) One of the stated objectives of the Committee is to "advise Council on options to address issues and assist with the identification of preferred solutions for Council decisions on operational issues and in relation to strategic decisions it may make in relation to ongoing service". Can you please explain what that means, as it is not comprehensible to me?

Kathy Alexander advised there is nothing in the Terms of Reference which prevents spontaneous advice coming from the Advisory Committee on both strategic and operational issues.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Regarding the Terms of Reference for the Advisory Committee for the Geelong Saleyards – could the City of Greater Geelong confirm that if the peak user group (i.e. Saleyards users group) nominates a representative to membership of the committee who is a fit and proper person and has the confidence of users, that the person will be appointed?

The membership process is outlined in the Terms of Reference and any person who considers they fit the criteria should be encouraged to consider submitting.

One of the stated objectives of the Committee is to “advise Council on options to address issue and assist with the identification of preferred solutions for Council decisions on operation issues and in relation to strategic decisions it may make in relation to ongoing service” can you please explain what that means, as it is not comprehensible to me?

At the January meeting Dr Kathy Alexander Chair Administrator advised that there is nothing in the Terms of Reference which prevents spontaneous advice coming from the Advisory Committee on both strategic and operational issues.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Daniel Ryan asked why do officers say the Terms of Reference are consistent with the Australian Code of Practice for the selling of livestock, when that is patently incorrect?

Kathy Alexander responded that Council have been provided with copies of other Saleyards Terms of Reference and believes that the proposed Terms of Reference is consistent with other similar Terms of Reference. She pointed out that the City of Greater Geelong’s proposed Terms of Reference are specific to the period between now and the end of June 2017, at which time a decision will be made about the future of the Saleyards.

Why is it proposed that the Committee will advise Council officers, rather than Council/Administrators?

Kathy Alexander notes that the Committee should advise Council/Administrators and indicated her intention to amend the sentence accordingly.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Regarding Geelong Saleyards – why do officers say the terms of reference are consistent with the Australian Code of Practice for the selling of Livestock when that is patently incorrect?

The Australian Code of practice for the Selling of Livestock recommends that:

Saleyards are to be managed and operated in a way that is acceptable to the general public, and in a manner that safeguards human safety, food safety and animal welfare.

It also recommends that the Council be responsible for the coordination and function of a Saleyards Advisory Committee.

Council has been provided with copies of other Saleyards Terms of Reference and used these to develop the Geelong Saleyards Advisory Group Terms of Reference. Council believes that the Terms of Reference is consistent with other similar Terms of Reference. At the January meeting Dr Kathy Alexander, Chair Administrator, advised that the City of Greater Geelong's proposed Terms of Reference are specific to the period between now and the end of June 2017, at which time a decision will be made about the future of the Saleyards.

Why is it proposed that the committee will advise the Council officers, rather than Councillors / Administrators?

As discussed and resolved at the Meeting, the Terms of Reference were amended to reflect that the committee would advise Council.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Ian Kelly asked:

- 1) Do Administrators and Council realise the importance of the beef industry in Geelong given the following facts released in the Meat and Livestock Australia Industry projections for 2017?

Australians consume on a per capita basis 25.9 kg per annum. The weighted average retail price in September 2016 was \$19.34/kg. I'm only a small producer on 100 acres and based on these facts I provide beef for 154 people for a year with beef in Geelong.

Likewise if we look at the 8,717 cattle sold through the Geelong Saleyards in 2015/16 they equate to feeding 78,082 people in Geelong with beef for a year. This has a retail value of \$39,112,000 and this does not include the value of sheep.

Did you realise that this is a really important piece of public infrastructure that you have proposed closing which processes a retail value of \$39million a year and will you please fast track the re-opening process as soon as possible?

Kathy Alexander responded by saying it is important to develop an Agri-business strategy and obtain independent market analysis to make an effective decision about the place of Saleyards in the broader development of Agri-business.

- 2) The draft Terms of Reference proposed that the Committee's only role is to a) provide information on the perspectives of stakeholders, b) advise ways to inform and consult with stakeholders outside the Committee, c) advise on communication associated with the closure of the saleyards and d) respond to specific questions referred to it. Why are Council's draft terms of reference so markedly limited and different from Terms of Reference of equivalent bodies across Victoria and nationally?

Kathy Alexander advised the Terms of Reference must be read as a whole. The objectives make clear that advice and response can relate to operational or strategic issues.

She advised there is nothing in the Terms of Reference which prevents spontaneous advice coming from the Advisory Committee on both strategic and operational issues.

The Saleyards Advisory Committee Terms of Reference will be in place for the period between now and 1 June 2017.

- 3) Given that there have been at least two damning occupational health and safety reports, including risks included in earlier reports that have never been addressed, operating losses over a number of years significantly greater than comparable Saleyards elsewhere, and stakeholders who are deeply unhappy with the service. Are Administrators confident that Council possesses the skills and expertise to conduct a rural business such as Saleyards without the influential advice of a properly constituted expert advisory committee?

Kathy Alexander advised that a properly constituted Advisory Committee of experts will advise on all operational and strategic issues in the future. Council is comfortable with the current staff working in collaboration with the Advisory Committee.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Do Administrators and Council realise the importance of the beef industry in Geelong given the ...facts released in the Meat and Livestock Australia industry projections for 2017? ... Did you realise that this is a really important piece of public infrastructure that you have proposed closing which processes a retail value of \$39million a year and will you please fast track the re-opening process as soon as possible?

At the January meeting Dr Kathy Alexander Chair Administrator responded to your question by saying it is important to develop an Agri-business strategy and obtain independent market analysis to make an effective decision about the place of Saleyards in the broader development of Agri-business for the Geelong region.

Why are Council's draft terms of reference so markedly limited and different from Terms of Reference of equivalent bodies across Victoria and nationally?

The Terms of Reference must be read as a whole. The objectives make clear that advice and response can relate to operational or strategic issues. There is nothing in the Terms of Reference which prevents spontaneous advice coming from the Advisory Committee on both strategic and operational issues. The Geelong Saleyards Advisory Committee Terms of Reference will be in place for the period between now and the end of June 2017.

Are administrators confident that Council possesses the skills and expertise to conduct a rural business such as Saleyards without the influential advice of a properly constituted expert advisory committee?

A properly constituted Advisory Committee of experts will advise on all operational and strategic issues in the future. Council is comfortable with the current capability of staff working in collaboration with the Advisory Committee.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Fiona Conroy asked given that the Saleyards are a major importance to livestock producers in the Golden Plains and Surfcoast Shires and provide a regional livestock saleyard service, why are representative of neighbouring Councils not included in the proposed membership of the Saleyards Advisory Committee?

Kathy Alexander responded the Expressions of Interest will be advertised publicly and neighbouring Councils will be advised. The proposed membership does not exclude people outside the City of Greater Geelong expressing their interest.

Will Council be publicising the resumption of sheep sales and could the Council please erect some signs at the Saleyards notifying people of the date sheep sales are resuming?

Kathy Alexander responded "yes".

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Why are representatives of neighbouring Councils not included in the proposed membership of the Saleyards Advisory Committee?

The Committee will comprise of members with technical and community expertise, to respond effectively to the complexity and diversity of issues impacting on the Saleyards.

The Expressions of Interest will be advertised publicly and neighbouring Councils will be advised. The proposed membership does not exclude people outside the City of Greater Geelong expressing their interest.

Will council be publicising the resumption of sheep sales and could the council please erect some signs at the Saleyards notifying people of the date sheep sales are resuming?

As you are aware signs were erected to the entrance to the Saleyards the week commencing 30th January advertising that sheep sales would resume on the 6th of February. Information was also published on the City's website, in City News and via our social media outlets.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Eric Sharkey asked why won't CoGG work with stakeholders to develop strategic and business plans for ongoing operations of the Saleyards? Why is development of such plans not included in the Terms of Reference?

Kathy Alexander indicated that the Committee will be able to have input into the operational and strategic issues.

Has the Council given any consideration to form a Section 86 for the purpose of formalizing the Advisory Committee?

Kathy added the proposed Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee are for the period of operation up to end of June 2017, at which point the future of the Saleyards will be decided. At that point it may or may not be relevant to consider a Section 86 Committee.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Regarding Geelong Saleyards – why wont City of Greater Geelong work with stakeholders to develop strategic and business plans for ongoing operation of the saleyards? Why is development of such plans not included in the terms of reference?

The City of Greater Geelong is undertaking a Market Analysis and developing an Agribusiness Strategy in collaboration with G21 regional councils and other stakeholders. The Agribusiness Strategy will inform the strategic plans for the future of the Geelong Saleyards.

The Saleyards Advisory Committee will be able to have input into the operational and strategic issues related to the Saleyards.

Has the Council given any consideration to form a Section 86 for the purpose of formalizing the Advisory Committee?

The proposed Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee are for the period of operation up to the end of June 2017, at which point the future of the Saleyards will be decided. At that point it may or may not be relevant to consider a Section 86 Committee.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Patricia Fyfe asked as a ratepayer and a livestock producer who is very interested in the current issue of the Geelong Saleyards, could you please provide me with the detailed financial reports of the Geelong Saleyard Operations for the past ten years? Could you also please provide these reports to the Geelong Saleyard Users Group? I would appreciate these being available by 31 January 2017?

Kathy Alexander responded Council would put the information on the website.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

*Please provide me with the detailed financial reports for the past 10 years?
Could you also please provide these reports to the saleyards users group?*

I can confirm that financial information for the past 10 years has been published on the Saleyards page on the Geelong Australia website and is available to view.

I would also like to thank you for meeting with me on Monday 6 February 2017 where we discussed the financial information.

In reference to subsequent questions you have raised regarding the detailed breakdown of the costs associated with the financial data, I would like to confirm our appointment to meet to discuss this in further detail with our Finance Manager, Mr Michael Kelly on Monday 20 February 2017, 4.00pm City Hall, Meeting Room 1, 30 Gheringhap Street, Geelong.

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.

Geoff Gugger asked how will the public know what the Committee is advising, and whether Council and/or officers accept the Committee's advice?

Kathy Alexander responded the Minutes of the Saleyards Advisor Committee will be available on the new Saleyards website, and we would like to be as open and transparent as we can.

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

Thank you for submitting your questions regarding the Geelong Saleyards.

Please find below responses to your questions.

Regarding Geelong Saleyards - How will the public know what the committee is advising and whether council and / or officers accept the committee advice?

*At the January meeting Dr Kathy Alexander Chair Administrator advised that the minutes of the Geelong Saleyards Advisory Committee would be made available on the new saleyards page on the Geelong Australia website.
<http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/>*

If you require additional information or have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me on 5272 4317.