

Media Release

Community Forum Summit a Success

13 April 2016

Community members from across Buloke met with Councillors and Council Officers in Wycheproof on Monday night at Buloke Shire Council's latest Community Forum Summit. The summit is designed to give community forums an opportunity to discuss their community's priorities informing the priorities in the annual budget and council plan.

Mayor, Cr David Pollard opened the evening by underlining the importance of the Council Plan, "Council is currently putting together the plan and its annual budget and at times like this community engagement is pivotal. Whilst Councillors put the plan together, it must reflect the community's priorities over the next four years".

Chief Executive Officer, Lucy Roffey outlined Council's financial transition to a more stable financial position which had been achieved through disciplined financial management and reduction in some services over the last few years. She highlighted that Council's cash reserves will enable it to pay back its loan as scheduled in 2019, and should consider moderate debt in the future to fund assets that would be used by future generations.

Director Works and Technical Services, Anthony Judd presented a look at the 2017/18 Capital Works Program. Mr Judd outlined the proposed \$11.3 million program which will be funded substantially through State and Federal Grants. He outlined how the program is put together including the challenges of delivering a balanced geographical spread across the Shire. This forms one of the largest programs for many years with a focus on sport and recreation facility upgrades, and road renewal.

Acting Director Corporate Services, Hannah Yu helped tie the recently completed Customer Satisfaction Survey results to the drafting of the Council Plan. Some key findings from the satisfaction survey included a focus on sealed road maintenance and improving on community consultation processes.

Jessie Holmes, Director Community Development then lead the next section breaking down results from the Council Plan consultation before breaking the main group into workshops to give detailed insights into three strategic objectives of the Council Plan.

Wycheproof resident Averyll Loft found the summit of great interest, "It was great to see how Council was both sitting financially and how they intend to proceed. It was also very interesting to hear what Council was investigating as they put together their four year plan. It was a very open session, I felt included and that my feedback was important to the future direction of Council".

"Our Forum Summits are growing more and more each time. We again had members from each of our townships and some great discussions had on a range of topics. I think the fact that at the end of the official part of the evening people stuck around to continue these conversations underlines how engaged everyone was across the evening. Council will now take the information gained from the evening and feed it in to our Council Plan", said Cr Pollard.

Councillors will continue to work on the Council Plan with their next workshop to be held in Donald on Wednesday 19 April. A draft Council Plan will be available for further community feedback during May before Council adopt a final plan in June.



End release

For further information contact Media and Communications Officer, Travis Fitzgibbon on 1300 520 520 or tfitzgibbon@buloke.vic.gov.au