

# SHIRE MATTERS

Issue 135 - May 2020



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## THREE NEW MOBILE PHONE TOWERS TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY



Photo credit – Elesa Kurtz at Farm Weekly

We have been advised that the Federal government has announced the location of 182 new mobile phone towers across regional Australia, including three in the Shire of Dandaragan.

The three new macrocell towers in Badgingarra East, Hill River South and Yathroo, will be funded under round 5 of the Commonwealth's Mobile Black Spot Program.

The Shire has been an ongoing advocate for improved telecommunications with improvements to mobile blackspots being a four-year priority in our Corporate Business Plan.

Communications Minister Paul Fletcher said "These activities are critical year-round, but particularly important with people responding to the COVID-19 crisis and spending more time at home".

The three towers are scheduled to roll out in the coming months, with the first new base stations expected to be activated by the end of the year. Regional Communications Minister Mark Coulton said the program connected rural communities and businesses, allowing them to contribute more effectively to the national economy.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Cr Leslee Holmes  
Ph. 0408 419 468

As I write this today I am in my kitchen looking out over the beautiful view of Ronsard Bay, Cervantes. This serene view and the lack of people here in our little town have made me realise how very fortunate we are to live in a place, that would be regarded by the rest of the world, as remote. I am sure many of you wake up in the morning and wonder if this was all a very bad dream. This is due to the fact that Covid-19 has not come close to us and we are doing everything in our power at the Shire to make sure that it does not.

We have an Emergency Management Team who monitor and act on all the directives both State and Federal and take care of any issues that come up locally. I am very proud to be part of that team who are so dedicated to keeping us safe and cannot praise my colleagues highly enough in their endless work.

## Working from home

We now have most of our staff working from home and doing a very good job of it. I must admit I find it a great challenge as I love to be around people and the company of my husband and the puppy has its limitations. In the first week of isolation we did nothing but eat and drink and then decided to get into a healthy routine so that we did not

have to sign up for Jenny Craig or AA when this is over. We walk on the beach in the morning before breakfast and I have a swim. Breakfast comes next then Peter gets on with lots of work that has been neglected around the place due to an unhealthy addiction to bowls. I make sure I shower and brush my hair before I get into my office or I could be caught in my dressing gown in the afternoon. Working on Skype and Zoom can also reveal under dressing and over casual regalia. For anyone out there who is also using this "new normal" way of working I urge you to put the computer on the breakfast bar and work standing up. One of the disasters from this period is going to be all sorts of back and hip problems from sitting down too much. After 3 weeks it will be difficult to get out of the chair. Do the best that you can to remain active and motivated.

## Social Media

This is a time when social media is being used more and more and unfortunately some of the messages regarding the virus are blatantly being used to confuse and harm us. Facebook announced this morning that they are going to put a tag on what is now known as fake news so that people can be warned. Conspiracy theories about the origins of the virus are rife and while I agree some of what is being put out there does seem plausible it is not helpful and we need to trust our leaders to tell us what is important. There will, no doubt, at the end of all this be a thorough worldwide investigation into what has happened and we can make our own deliberations then. I am so amazed by some of the YouTube videos that very intelligent friends and associates of mine are sending around. We are not experts and it is important not to panic and indulge in spreading falsities that can harm or mislead vulnerable people.

## Regional Travel

Our sincere thanks must go out to all those people who did not come to the coast at Easter or the Anzac Day long weekend. This must have been so hard in the wonderful weather when you own a holiday home and cannot visit. There will be plenty of time in the very near future to get back to normal again and you will be most welcome. Small business has been ravaged by the lack of customers and I fear some will never recover. Our citizens have done a great job of using local businesses and I urge you to keep doing so. We will be calling on them to support our local community groups in the future and we need them to keep going so that in turn they can help us. I have been looking at some of the posts from people who find themselves stuck on the road as they have no fixed address and chosen the life that many of us dream of. Some of the uncharitable and downright threatening comments and behaviour these people have encountered all over Australia is quite awful.

Remember that these are part of the group of travellers we will be trying to encourage to come here and spend their money in the future.



## Good News

The best part of this communication is that the Rock Lobster Industry is slowly getting back into the swing of things again and we hope that this is just the beginning. So many jobs have been lost or put on hold on the coast and we need them to all start working again.

I love the sound of the motors of the cray boats even at 4am as it means things are starting to return to some kind of normality.

In addition to this I am proud to advise that Council has supported the allocation of our Drought Funding towards the five community's 'marquee projects' identified in our Corporate Business Plan. \$1M in foreshore and local streetscape development across our towns will assist and support our local businesses as we upgrade our towns' amenity for all to enjoy.

We are very fortunate to have the great leadership displayed by the Premier of WA Mark McGowan and his team. He has shown great resilience and courage in his handling of the cruise ships in Fremantle which cannot have been an easy task. Our Prime Minister who has taken on an extraordinary task in steering us in the right direction must be praised. It is a great burden that our leaders have taken on and that they would never have expected to shoulder in this lifetime.

## Families

It is very rewarding to see families together walking their dogs and spending some valuable time together that they never have before. This is a unique opportunity to do things together. Many families are getting to know and participate in activities with their children like they never have before. I have to commend our teachers for the great job that they do. How difficult must it be to have some children in the classroom and some at home? This situation is constantly evolving and I hope a return to normality for schools comes soon. I am glad I do not have to do home schooling as it requires a lot more patience than I have. I am teaching Peter how to use his computer and I can tell you it is a challenging task. My bossy domineering self wants to push him off the chair and take over to do it myself but I have to stand back and watch him fiddling about whilst gritting my teeth. Enjoy and reflect this time as it will (hopefully) never ever happen again. I have to mention the delightful local artist and mum Keira Wiulleman who took her children to the Turquoise Way path and did some lovely artworks in chalk which we have all admired. Hopefully we will be engaging her to do some permanent pieces.

## The way we work

This is the greatest change that we are going to see in the coming months and years. I believe that more people will work from home and even full time workers will perhaps have a day a week working from home. We desperately need to become a country that manufactures again and the challenge is as always wages. There must be a way forward in this regard and I know some great minds are getting together to see how we can overcome the challenges of returning to actually producing things that don't have to be sent overseas to be made and sent back to us. We also need to be prepared to pay a bit more for good quality, home grown produce. This will help our farmers who are the backbone of this country. Governments must stop the great shopping centre chains from pushing prices so low that our producers are going broke. This is wrong and it is very sad that they are able to ruin markets in this way. We seem to have become a nation happy to buy inferior goods, often made overseas and ending up in landfill rather than buy less things and seek better quality. I welcome all your ideas on all of the above as wisdom often comes from places you least expect. Please do not hesitate to call or email me with your thoughts. Please be safe and together we will get through this.



## SHIRE OF DANDARAGAN COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM NOW OPEN

The Tronox Management and Shire of Dandaragan Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund, and the Shire of Dandaragan Community and Environmental Grants will open this week.

Please go to the Shire website or contact the Manager Customer and Community Service at [mccs@dandaragan.wa.gov.au](mailto:mccs@dandaragan.wa.gov.au) for more information. Applications for funding must be received by the Shire by 5pm 31 May 2020



## SALVATION ARMY DROUGHT COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVE

The Salvation Army is delivering assistance through the Australian governments Drought Community Support Initiative (DCSI – Round 2). The second round of this assistance commenced on 21 November 2019.

If you are a farmer, farm worker, farm supplier or farm contractor in the Shire of Dandaragan who is doing it tough due to the drought you may be eligible for a one off payment of up to \$3,000.

To be eligible you need to be:

- Over the age of 18 years
- Be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- Live and / or work in the Shire of Dandaragan
- Have not already received this payment from The Salvation Army or St Vincent de Paul since 21 November 2019.

The maximum amount a household can receive is \$3,000. If more than one eligible household members reside in the same residence, the total assistance provided to the household cannot exceed \$3,000.

You can apply for the drought assistance online at [www.salvationarmy.org.au/drought](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/drought) or by calling the 24/7 Telephone Assistance Line on 1300 551 030. If your preferred method is to call the Telephone Assistance Line, please only use this line to make a new application and please leave a voice message with all the information requested.

The Salvation Army has distributed over \$28million of this funding to over 9,900 drought affected households since 21 November 2019, and as at 31 March 2020, were distributing over \$1.2million every three days. As you would appreciate, demand for this assistance has been high.

The Salvation Army will call you to complete your assessment as soon as they can



## COUNCIL ADOPTS JURIEBAY AIRPORT MASTERPLAN

The Shire's vision for the Jurien Bay Airport is of a readily utilised land asset for the sub-regional centre of Jurien Bay and its broader population. The Shire believes that growth of the Airfield should follow a clear, strategic and sustainable direction for efficient economic and social development.

The Shire recently partnered with the Department of Transport through the Regional Airports Development Scheme to develop a masterplan to achieve the Shire's vision, which was adopted by Council at the 23 April 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting.

It is noted that the proposed major infrastructure projects assigned by the masterplan, will be heavily reliant on external State and Federal grant funding, with any grant generally needing to be matched at least 50% by the Shire.

To view the adopted airport masterplan, go to the Major Developments page under Services on the Shire of Dandaragan website [www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au](http://www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au).

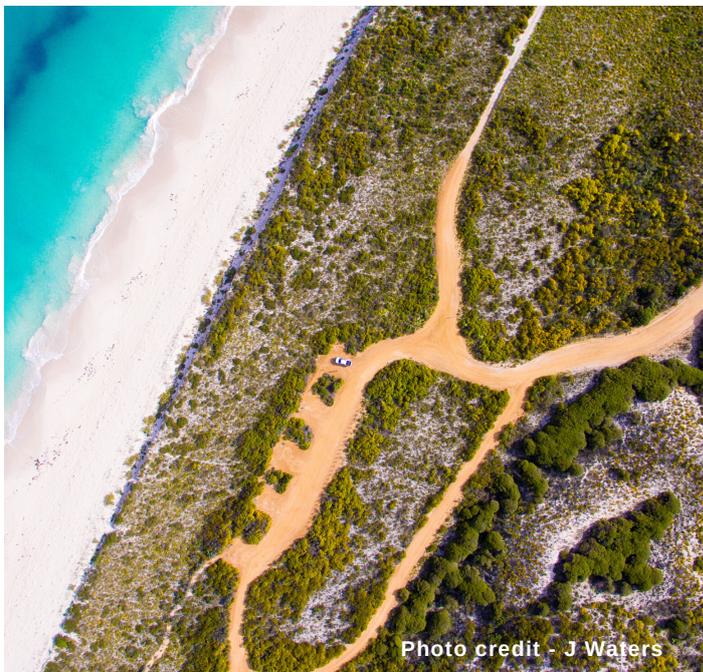
## SHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT 2020-21 ROUND NOW OPEN

The Shire of Dandaragan Environmental Grant Program supports projects that benefit the environment and community through environmental improvement, sustainability education and the promotion and enabling of sustainable living as a way of life.

The 2020 / 2021 grant round is now open until midnight Sunday 31 May 2020.

Applicants are encouraged to consider how their proposed project may address issues such as climate change, water-wise community spaces, biodiversity, recycling and waste avoidance.

For further information, go to the Grants page under Community on the Shire of Dandaragan website  
<https://www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au/services/community/grants>



## LEEUVIN SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Each year the Shire of Dandaragan offers a fully funded scholarship for a Youth Explorer Voyage on board the STS Leeuwin II. If you're aged between 15 and 18, head to the Shire's Youth page on our website and fill in an application form. Applications close 31 May 2020.



## COUNCIL ENDORSES COVID-19 FACILITY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT

At the Shire of Dandaragan Special Council Meeting on Thursday 8 April 2020, Council endorsed the development of a community group building maintenance /improvement grant program, as part of a broader COVID-19 fiscal response package.

The grant is to enable groups who have maintenance responsibility, or a current peppercorn lease, for a Shire building, to apply for amounts up to \$5,000 to undertake building maintenance or minor building improvements.

The Shire's Building Reserve will fund the program, designed to reduce the economic impact of COVID-19 and increase economic opportunities for local businesses and community groups.

For further information, go to the Shire website at  
<https://www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au/services/community/grants>





## BETTER BEGINNINGS AT HOME

Did you know all four libraries in the Shire of Dandaragan are members of the Better Beginning program which helps you build your child's early literacy skills in fun and engaging ways?

Dandaragan Library has moved their Better Beginnings online where you can sing along to welcome songs, listen to books and rhymes, and do activities in your own home. Go to <https://www.dandaragancrc.net.au/better-beginnings.html>

Ask a friend to join you over Facebook or Facetime to watch the newest session.

For even more Better Beginnings, the State Library of WA invite you to go online for their Better Beginnings at Home program. Like the State Libraries Better Beginnings Facebook page and join in every day at 10:30am and 2:30pm for fresh ideas for free.

We hope Better Beginnings at Home helps you to read, talk, sing, write and play with your child every day.

Download the Better Beginnings Home Literacy Calendar to help you read, talk, sing, write and play through the month:

<https://www.better-beginnings.com.au/books-more/home-literacy-calendar>



## SUPPORT MEASURES TO ASSIST RATEPAYERS AND BUSINESSES THROUGH COVID-19

The Shire of Dandaragan has taken decisive action at a Special Council Meeting, announcing a range of fiscal measures to assist ratepayers, residents, local businesses and community groups, to ensure continued support of our community through the COVID-19 crisis. Effective immediately, Council has resolved to implement the following package of support measures:

1) Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Amend interest rate charged on all overdue rates from 10% to 0% effective immediately.</li> <li>II. Implement payment arrangements on a case by case basis for ratepayers impacted by COVID-19 providing deferral opportunity to end of 2020/2021 financial year.</li> </ul>
2) Debtors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Implement payment arrangements on a case by case basis for debtors impacted by COVID-19 providing a deferral opportunity to end of 2020/2021 financial year.</li> </ul>
3) Community Group Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>II. Amend existing community group self-supporting loan agreements to defer any remaining 2020 loan instalments. Make these instalments due at the end of the loan agreement terms.</li> </ul>
4) Community Group Building Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Establishment of a \$5,000 Shire facility maintenance and improvement grants program for all community groups with a current peppercorn lease and maintenance responsibility for a Shire building. <u>Utilise</u> the Building Reserve to finance this grants program.</li> </ul>
5) Fees and Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Waive food premise licensing fees.</li> <li>II. Waive food premise inspection fees.</li> <li>III. Waive accommodation venue licensing fees.</li> <li>IV. Waive accommodation venue inspection fees.</li> <li>V. Waive planning application fees for small businesses*.</li> <li>VI. Waive building application fees for small businesses*.</li> </ul>
6) Caravan Park Leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Deferment of any lease instalments due in 2020 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021.</li> </ul>
7) Airstrip User Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Waive all landing charges for airport users for the balance of 2019/2020 financial year.</li> </ul>

\* Small businesses as defined by the Australian Tax Office

These measures will offset some of the financial pain caused by new restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 health emergency.

In addition to the above measures which relate to the current financial year, the draft budget preparation is underway and will also include a range of targeted local projects and procurement to support our local community and economy.

Council has endorsed the following parameters for guiding the budget process with respect to rates, fees and charges in 2020/2021:

1) Rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. 0% rate yield increase. (Note – The annual UV revaluation will still be applied redistributing UV rates however no increase forecast).</li> <li>II. Set interest rate charged on all overdue rates at 0%.</li> <li>III. Set interest rates on instalment plans at 0%.</li> <li>IV. Set instalment administration fees at \$0.</li> </ul>
2) Fees and Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. No increase in fees and charges where they are set by Council rather than independent statutory bodies – e.g. Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.</li> </ul>

Within the context of the above package and broader economic conditions, we know that next year's budget will be challenging. Council will be considering the utilisation of reserve funds, borrowing capacity and savings measures to ensure fiscal responsibility continues to be maintained.

We encourage all businesses, community groups and ratepayers to review their eligibility for the range of support programs at all levels of Government as we all do our best to respond to these challenging times.

For more information about these new measures and how your individual circumstances may be affected, please call 9652 0800 to speak to Shire staff or email [council@dandaragan.wa.gov.au](mailto:council@dandaragan.wa.gov.au).