

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY 03 AUGUST 2016
OAK PARK RACE RESERVE – OAK PARK

Cr Gallagher opened the meeting at 10:10am

ATTENDANCE

Cr Tony Gallagher (TG)	BJ
Cr Warren Bethel (WB)	Cr Will Attwood (WA)
Mary Dixon	Michael Kitzelmann (MK)
Donna Lethbridge	Rebekah Hill (RH)

Community Members: Total of 3 people attended from the Oak Park Community

APOLOGIES

Thomas and Amanda Dixon	Mayor Warren Devlin (WD)
Russell Lethbridge	Cr Troy Barnes
Roland and Sally Everingham	Des and Ineke McDowall
Lux and Linley Lethbridge	

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY, EWAMIAN PEOPLE

We respectfully acknowledge the Ewamian People - the traditional custodians of this land where we meet for the Community Consultation Meeting in Forsayth. We pay our respects to the Ewamian People, especially the Elders, past and present and acknowledge their traditional customs and lores and recognize their continuing connection to this Country.

We look forward to a long and continuing relationship with the Ewamian People and value any opportunities in strengthening relationships and partnerships through collaboration by respecting their Country.

CHARLESTON DAM / COPPERFIELD RIVER GORGE DAM

MK - advised that Council has submitted a grant application to the National Stronger Regions program funds to construct the dam wall. Council is waiting to hear if the application is successful. The project is shovel ready and as soon as funding is secured construction will commence. In the overarching plan for the dam, council has designated for the dam to be a recreation area as well as a water supply. The recreation area is likely to include boat ramps, picnic shelters, electric barbeques and large shade trees.

In regards to the Copperfield River Gorge Dam the State Department is keen for council to take over ownership of the asset. If this were to occur it would allow the Einasleigh Plateau to open up for development.

Mary – If the council takes over the dam what happens to the public liability?

MK – That's part of the conversation. Council already has public liability insurance so there would be minimal impact. If council takes on the asset it will have to be proven to be cost positive, not just cost neutral.

IRRIGATION PROJECTS

WB - The Einasleigh Plateau will be aimed at small blocks that will encourage those Mum and Dad boutique agricultural projects. Coming up there will be a meeting in Einasleigh to consult with the community regarding the development.

On Monday 1st August there was a Gilbert River Agricultural Precinct Meeting (GRAP) in Georgetown where the group decided to move towards becoming an incorporated body. This will increase the

structure and make it easier to access funding. Council will be working on behalf of GRAP to develop a prospectus and to identify and narrow down their water infrastructure options.

The Vegetation Management Bill will be voted on in two weeks' time.

MK – Council put in a 29 page submission regarding the proposed changes to the Vegetation Management Act. One of our suggestions was to not change the legislation, but to establish suitable policy applicable to individual areas in the state.

MAIN ROADS

MK – We have the go ahead to widen and dual lane seal the remaining 3kms of the Kennedy Highway.

In regards to the Hann Highway, we will be progressively widening and dual lane sealing the road. Funding hasn't come through yet however Etheridge Shire Council will be partnering with Flinders Shire Council to upgrade the road. The TMR office will be based in Cloncurry and the designs will be produced to savannah land standards. The work spanning over four years will go to both Shires presumably a fifty fifty split, so the works won't go out to tender. TMR has approved a touch-up grade between Oak Park and Hughenden. Designs and plans are estimated to be completed in the next six months with works commencing next year.

TMR has committed \$40 million to the Western Roads Upgrade and out of that, Etheridge has shared \$5 million with Croydon to widen and seal the Gulf Development Road.

WIND FARM, HYDRO PROJECT & AVIATION PROJECTS

WB – Infigen won the appeal regarding who gets to use the transmission line however Ergon has put the tender back out to market. Infigen are still shovel ready. Genex has an agreement with Owen Cambell to put campers at Oaks Rush.

TG – Aviation College will be doing commercial pilot licence training for international students and for locals under the Vet Fee HELP loan as well as providing charter flights and light aircraft and helicopter maintenance. Students and the training centre will be based in Georgetown and Forsayth to begin with whilst utilising all airstrips within the shire.

There is also currently a company called Remote Research Ranges that are currently looking at opening a location at Mount Surprise. They do drone training and research facilities.

Donna – Chris Atkinson had a drone doing some filming at the Oak Park Races. Will safety be an issue with the increase in air traffic?

MK – The Aviation College will issue a NOTAM every time they do training.

GENERAL BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE FLOOR

MK – The Etheridge Shire Council Facebook Page will be going live on Monday.

Donna - You only have to take a drive through Blackbraes (looked after by Townsville National Parks) to see that our national parks aren't being looked after. There are 300 year old ironbark trees that are dead from their controlled burns, which tell me that the fires are too hot. The fires are killing the wildlife as well and you can hear the difference in the amount of birdlife from when you drive into Werrington from Blackbraes. National parks are not managing the parks they have.

WB – National parks should let cattle in for 6 months to knock the grass down and then get them out. We need to make a case against the current regulations regarding National Parks and play to the emotions of the southerners by showing them that the decisions they are making are hurting the environment.

Mary – The worst fires we've had to fight over the years were started in Blackbraes and people had to run for their lives.

Mary – there are noticeably more tourists travelling out on this road on their way to camp at Gilberton and to go fossicking. Thanks to council for their initiative in doing a thorough job on the roads. The

PolyCom trial on the roads definitely reduces the dust and it could be good to put down on bad corners.

Donna – Reminder to please put a sign up indicating there's a bad bend coming up at the sweeping bend at Cranky Creek. Also can we get a signpost at the Oasis with all our properties on it? Even though we tell people to head to Hughenden they still go to Einasleigh.

MK – Yes but we have to make it large and not on the road reserve.

Mary – Why are there no cattle exhibits at the Etheridge Show this year? There used to be horse events, cattle showing and a bull sale, I would like to take cattle up there for Thomas as he like to support the Forsayth Turnout.

MK – We've had a conversation with the committee that in future years the show will need to bring more cattle and agricultural exhibits back into the program. Currently the Friday is recognised as a Bank Holiday for the purpose of Etheridge Show, not an actual Show Holiday.

TG – Council has hired the rides for the show this year and at the last General Meeting passed a resolution for council to buy inflatable rides and a trailer to cart them that can be hired out to residents and community groups for events.

Mary – who's public liability does it come under if we hire it?

MK – Under the hire agreement there a few options: 1) Short time public liability arrangement gets set up just for the weekend/event date. The cost of which would be included in the hire. 2) If the event is on council land it will be covered by council's public liability. 3) If the event is on private property it will need to be the property owner's liability. 4) If hired by people that have already been inducted as volunteers of council they'll be covered.

WB – Council is looking at putting up an event sign in each location where local groups can advertise their event and the date.

Donna – Will council buy machinery again?

WA – Plant machinery was sold because 85% of the time it was not making money for council because there was not enough work. That may change if we have a long term contract or income stream to support it. Council would like to support small businesses and hire local contractors with graders, plant equipment, etc for works.

Donna – What's happening with the works overseer and engineer?

MK – They are both current still on leave as a formal complaint was made and we have to follow the process. We should have more information for you soon.

We are in the process of redoing our preferred supplier first for wet and dry hire and how we manage that.

Mary – the Oak Park community like the Inform and appreciate the updates in the editions. They would prefer to continue receiving the paper ones via post rather than migrate to email.

The residents of Oak Park raised concern over access to medical care, specifically in relation to incident response time frames and apparent confusion around issues related to responding to incidents in remote communities. For example on several occasions, the Royal Flying Doctor Service flight was requested and subsequent refusal resulted in patients who were very ill/had suffered a major accident were required to travel in excess of four hours on rough dirt roads to seek medical attention.

MK – Cr Attwood will take the concern to the Health Board.

CONCLUSION

Cr Gallagher closed the meeting at 11.49am