



Shire of Victoria Plains

## Minutes of a Special Meeting of Electors held

On	Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2004
At	Calingiri Recreation Hall, Calingiri
Commencing	8.05pm.



# Shire of Victoria Plains

## Minutes

FOR AN SPECIAL MEETING OF ELECTORS HELD ON WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2004  
AT CALINGIRI RECREATION HALL CALINGIRI COMMENCING AT 8.05PM.

### 1 DECLARATION OF OPENING

The Presiding Member declared the meeting open at 8.05pm.

### 2 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

**Apologies:** Jim and Merrill Pond

**Attendance:**

A J Edmonds	Alan Gould	Bob King
Adrian Edmonds	Alf King	Brad Sinclair
Aubrey King	Allen Kent	Brian McGill
Barry Johnson	Arthur Jones	Brian Slater
Bevan Clarke	Beau Mete	Brian Westlake
Bill Cocking	Betty Howard	Bruce Edmonds
Bill Hart	Brendin Flanigan	Cherie Westlake
Bob Harridge	Brett Clarke	Chris Edmonds
Carey Loton	Brian Kelly	Cliff King
Casey Westlake	Cameron Waters	Colin Guthrie
Chas Edmonds	Carol Johns	Daniel Court
Cliff Clarke	Charles Burgess	David Maher
Clive Duggan	Clair Hardie	Don Nixon
Daniel McGill	Claire Dermott	Don Westlake
David Lovelock	Colin Glass	Donna Gibson
Debbie Davidson	D Scotney	Doris Martin
Dennis Halligan	David Holmes	Dorothy Jones
Don Cocking	David Keys	Dorothy Waters
Douglas McGill	Donna Clarke	Elizabeth Glass
Fiona Watson	Gary Edmonds	Garry Stewart
Graeme Buscumb	Graham Johnson	Gary McGill
Grant Sinclair	Graham Nixon	Gwenda McGill
Ian Wright	Greg Linke	Iain Nicholson
Jane Fetherstonhaugh	Gus Clarke	Jacqui Corless-Crowther
Jennifer Percy	Hamish Purser	Janice Coxon
John Brennan	Ian Woods	Jim Kelly
Julian McGill	Janos Fertig	Jos Percy
Kerrie King	K Kelly	Kathleen Lovelock
Lou Witham	Kevin Manuel	Kathrine Edmonds

Malcolm Purser  
Margaret Johnson  
Merle Manuel  
Murray Riddick  
Neil Smith  
Pat Bradley  
Pat Watson  
Paul Sinclair  
Petrina King  
Phil Wilson  
Rachel Guest  
Ramon Harvey  
Raymond Martin  
Rex Glass  
Richard Kingston  
Richard Smith  
Rick Watson  
Rob Durant  
Sally Hart  
Serena Syred  
Sharon Ellis  
Simon Forrester  
Steven Wood  
Tony Mitchell  
Trish Edmonds  
V Linke  
Veronica Rive  
Vicki Smith  
Wes Howard  
Winston Scotney

Leon Bradley  
Lexie Neville  
Lorry Freestone  
Luanne Martin  
Margaret Edmonds  
Michael Nixon  
Milton Browning  
Mitchell Clarke  
Monica Lee  
Murray Clarke  
Narelle McGill  
Nicole McInnes  
Pamela McGill  
Peter Nixon  
Phil Syred  
Rex Thorpe  
Rhonda Edmonds  
Roger King  
Ruth Young  
Samantha Woods  
Sandra Nixon  
Sarah Mason  
Shaun Westlake  
Stuart King  
Suzanne Woods  
Tim Nixon  
Tom Field  
Trevor Walker  
Von Hutchison  
Yvonne Bessant

Ken Edmonds  
Kevin Clarke  
Laurie Rive  
Leon Cocking  
Lincoln Mead  
Lois Hart  
Lyle Georgeson  
Marion Colmer  
Matt Edmonds  
Max Smith  
Michael Brennan  
Michael Martin  
Monte Driessen  
Neil Watson  
Neville Clarke  
Nick Scotney  
Pat Durant  
Paul King  
Pauline Clarke  
Peter Mete  
Rob Menzies  
Robert Jones  
Ron Waters  
Shirley Clarke  
Simon Witham  
Steve Young  
Susan Johnson  
Tom Kelly  
Tracey Glass  
Wayne Taylor

### 3 BUSINESS

The President asked Catherine Stone to start proceedings as she had presented him with the Petition calling for the meeting.

Catherine Stone

Spoke in favour of CRC Project due to her being a young mother not wanting to see the shire die. She went on to say that “many of her friends were originally against the project because they were given the wrong information. The wrong information was that they were going to have to pay for the CRC but they were not going to have to pay for it. To give back \$500,000 in funding is ridiculous. Another reason why a lot of my friends changed their minds is that \$77,000 had already been spent leaving \$23,000 to be spent. We should all pull together as a community. Let’s think of the young people in the community. A lot of the older people out there don’t want to leave town and we need resources available here. Thankyou.”

#### **Motion 394/04**

**Moved Susan Johnson (Piawaning) seconded Ruth Young (Calingiri) that the standard rules of debate apply at this meeting in the interests of fair play.**

**CARRIED**

Gloria Thorpe

Asked if a time limit of say 5 minutes for each speaker be applied.

Gary McGill

Just a point in Catherine's assertion that no one would have to pay we know that the plan is for \$100,000 in cash via a loan which the ratepayers would be obliged to meet, also in kind, that is a cost to the ratepayers and we should not forget the obligation of the ratepayer for the future, as long as the CRC existed until it fell down or was pulled down or whatever else, there will be an obligation by the ratepayers to the cost of running it. It has been admitted that there will be deficiency of revenue sources over costs; therefore it is not true to say that the ratepayers will not have to pay for it. They will be asked to pay upfront and into the future.

Monica Lee

If we give back this funding to RTC what response are we going to get if we apply for further funding in the future such as Roads 2 Recovery, Blackspot and stuff like that, can somebody please answer that question.

President

I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that question please.

Chief Executive Officer

In respect to Blackspot and Road Funding there will be no affect in respect to future funding, from those other sources where you have given back the cash I will leave that to your own imagination.

Millie Ferguson

I am a Community Development Consultant who wrote those funding applications, I have worked all over the state and have ten years experience, a double degree in sociology and community development, and as far as I know you are the only ones in the state and as far as I know throughout this country to give back funding – you are a laughing stock!

Suzanne Woods

My question is directed at Councillors and the President. Mr President, you state that there will be the need to employ an additional staff member, could you please substantiate that statement as it is in direct contradiction to the Business Plan. Second statement that has been made is that there has been a significant blow out in costs, I find that very curious because to date no tenders for the building have been received, perhaps you could give us some substantiation for that.

President

The first question was answered at the last shire meeting in my answer and I do not have to re-answer it and regarding the costs where did that statement come from.

Suzanne Woods

I will answer the second part first – Australia Post has been very profitable as there has been a lot of material sent out and some of them mention cost blowouts and you have accepted these peoples' views that the project should not go ahead. With the first part on the substantiation of a second staff member I was at the meeting but many others were not.

Ruth Young

My first question is that I wasn't able to be at the shire meeting therefore I didn't hear your answer, so I think myself and probably a lot of other people here would appreciate the answer to that question that Suzanne asked. For myself I am only interested in the facts, I am not so much interested in each individuals opinion so as far as increases in the costs I would be interested in seeing the new business plan and the new figures that show the costs have changed or a new person would have to be employed so if there is a new business plan, bring it on, I would really like to see it, and I would simply like to ask the Councillors that changed their mind about the project I am really interested in Why? What were the facts and figures that changed to make you change your minds? Thankyou.

Chris Edmonds

While I am up here I would like to thank you for changing your vote and putting a stop to the CRC, I think there are a lot more pressing issues in this shire that we could be addressing as a shire, that need addressing straight away and the Council has been completely pre-occupied with this for the last two years. The state of the existing infrastructure and roads, we need to get off this thing and get on to other things and you have made the right decision and I think it is wrong that people are hounding you now because you have spent a lot of years on the shire and have provided the shire with a lot of community support and I thank you for that.

Cr Anspach

Read the answers given to the Council meeting on the costs of the CRC.

Suzanne Woods

Can you please indicate Mr President where this information came from?

Cr Anspach

From your business plan.

Wayne Taylor

The Victoria Plains CRC intends having a dedicated child minding centre – Mr Taylor then read out the required staff to children ratio's for having a child care centre.

Suzanne Woods

Once again you are quoting misinformation. The child minding area is a room where parents using the centre would leave their children as they do now.

Ruth Young

Mr President, my question is what facts and figures have changed to make Councillors change their minds, it is a simple question. I am just interested in the facts and figures what has changed in the business plan to make the Councillors change their minds after spending the money and receiving the grants.

Cr Anspach

I revalued the whole project, I looked at the costings and income, expenses the whole lot, I considered the shire's position.

Ruth Young

What were the facts and figures?

Cr Anspach  
The business plan.

Ruth Young  
Can you give me the details?

Cr Anspach  
I haven't got time to go through the whole business plan. For those of you who have read the whole business plan and analysed the whole process with inflation the way it is we have got to expect price rises in the future.

Graham Nixon  
I have lived in the shire for 35 years. I came to the rate payers meeting last February and was surprised to learn that an internal audit report had been given to Councillors warning that this shire was getting pretty close to the edge in terms of borrowing, relative to its rate income. Many of us would be aware that there has been a significant increase in rate income and this had been after government grants had been cut back and it was understood but none the less it is very clear that the burden of rates is getting pretty high for a lot of people in this shire and that is probably more so in the western and southern parts of the shire but none the less significant everywhere now a lot of people are starting to get pretty concerned about it when this issue is being raised here and I don't want to knock it too much as an issue it is clear that there is not the support for it as much as the people who have promoted it would like this is demonstrated in the fact that when a poll was called after there were four public meetings and a poll was called for an clearly a majority stated that they did not want to proceed with the project. I received a blue paper from John Young Snr a few weeks ago where he talks about the process of events that took place for this creation to get to where it is today, which is very far but omits the fact that a poll was held and what the result was and the result was that this was rejected and that was overturned which is most un-Australian. Now of course a lot of people have taken umbrage to that and are certainly not interested in proceeding with this and in addition to this since that day over 270 people have now put their names to a letter that has been printed and signed, which is right across the shire, eligible electors in the shire so there is a significant number now who have demonstrated they are prepared to put their names down in public and there are others who opposed this in the ballot who are reluctant to put their names down in public. What concerns me is that the cost escalation is a very real threat I would congratulate the President and those Councillors that have taken the position that they have because I believe they are looking at reality and the reality is that already on professional fees there has been a blow out, now you can argue that there has been a bit of a penalty of \$4,000 because they closed it off but back in May a resolution was passed saying that no more money should be spent on architects and you wonder why, I mean there was advice given that to get a true cost of this time tenders would need to be called, yet tenders have still not be called but the architect ended up charging a hell of a lot more, we are dealing with people which charge \$450 for a round trip to Calingiri, I mean that is just the travelling expense. You can imagine these so called professional people are going to charge when they come up to this building. The reality is that this place is not going to do very much at all because people have already got arrangements to use in other parts of the district and the state and they won't come to Calingiri. My advice to people you support this place is to form a trust and carry on with it themselves and don't expect the ratepayers to keep funding it that is just being unrealistic as there is not the support for it. There is much higher priority in other areas. People are very concerned that not enough money is being spent on roads, there is some good work being done in roads I am not trying to knock that but there is still a lot more to be done and the fact does remain that we are heavily indebted as a shire and there is a lot of sealing and resealing that has got to be done in the next few

years and that is going to require quite a lot of money from somewhere so we should not be syphoning it off into a project like this, so I would say to the President and his fellow Councillors who made this decision you have done the right thing and there are a lot of people in the shire right behind you.

Jackie Crowther

I was opposed to the Resource Centre what my argument is 55% of you people voted against it that's fine but these Councillors decided to ignore you and go ahead with it, that was the point of no return, they then went and spent \$77,000 of your money and then changed their minds – how stupid is that? They ignored you when you first had a vote and 55% of you said you didn't want it and they as a Council – that includes Mr Anspach and Mr Kelly – they ignored what you wanted and then they came along 9 months later after they had spent \$77,000 of your ratepayers money and said no. I want to know why?

Sue Johnson

Can I make a couple of points about the things Mr Nixon raise, first of all about the poll. Now a majority of people, and I don't have the figures because this is not why I came here tonight, but about half the people responded to the poll, it is usual practice to accept that those who did not accept the poll were happy to accept that Council was speaking for them. Someone today told me of a case in the City of Stirling – this is different they had a poll about building new buildings – 10% answered – 10% of all the people who answered said they didn't want it but it was presumed that 90% wanted the building to go ahead so they hadn't responded. So just because some residents in the Shire of Victoria Plains replied to that poll doesn't mean that the entire residents of the shire agreed with that poll. That is the first point, the second point is on the shire financial state, it was mentioned in the paper and that caused some concern with me, I queried and I found that was concerned with the 2002 financial year and a grader had been brought in that year and whoever it was in Local Government gave the all clear for the financial situation in Victoria Plains in Victoria Plains and the last occasion that the financial organisation had occasion to audit the Shire of Victoria Plains accounts which is in August this year said the level of borrowing was perfectly sustainable and that included the borrowings that were going towards the new CRC.

Kerry King

I represent the karate club that just held a tournament here at the hall and I thank Mr Anning and Mr Walker for their support. Comments received from members of our karate club were that we had a good hall – other comments were that there was not enough room available to hold meetings during the weekend. If the shire is interested in attracting other events like this then I would urge the Council to rethink their decision to can the CRC.

Alf King

I have followed this right through, I have spent 50 years in public life around this area and my farm was in a completely different shire, but everything I did I drove out of my front gate and into Victoria Plains, now like a lot of old people, I don't like change any more than a lot of other but sometimes you have to sit back and accept it. Now if you don't accept this change you are not going to get another chance. I don't know if you are going to operate from that donga behind the shire or whether you are proud to do that, if you are proud enough to do that then go for it because you won't get another change. If you are going to upgrade the shire where are you going to get the money from? You've got \$500,000 there to do something with and you are going to toss that aside then you're going to borrow more and do half the job.

Bob Harridge

There has been lots of meetings around this vast shire from Gillingarra to New Norcia and all around the shire down to Bolgart and there was a very strong feeling that people needed a say in polling. There was a lot of disagreement with having a Resource Centre of this magnitude and of grand scale the feeling everywhere at New Norcia was unanimous not to go ahead with it due to the mammoth size of it, anyone living right in Calingiri I acknowledge you would want it but it is a vast shire there are lots of ratepayers and I believe the five gentlemen who supported dropping this Resource Centre are to be commended, I think the President has handled himself with dignity and the Vice President and we should remember that a couple of the Councillors changed their vote when all the information came out and I congratulate the five Councillors who followed what the people said.

Roger King

My question is addressed to the President, I am mainly here on a fact finding mission tonight as much as anyone here to find out what is going on. I think myself like a lot of other people would appreciate if when asked a question you could answer it honestly and completely first time and you could actually give us some facts and figures as to where the cost blowouts are supposed to be occurring because there is so much interest about this tonight and no one seems to know and you are sitting up here and you are not exactly giving us any confidence in what is going on. You have not given us any information to substantiate any figures or facts and for all the people that are congratulating the guy – they have spent \$77,000 before canning it and you are congratulating them for that!

Cr Anspach

In regard to your question on the blow out I don't know who the author of that document is and where he got the figures to say that there is a blow out.

Suzanne Woods

While we are discussing the extra staff member it is a significant point perhaps Mr Anspach you could describe the work that the extra staff member will have to do.

Cr Anspach

I will take that question on notice Mrs Woods.

Suzanne Woods

You will take that question on notice is that correct.

Cr Anspach

Yes

Suzanne Woods

So just for your argument that an extra staff member will need to be employed but you are unable to describe to us here now the work that the extra staff member will be doing, I find that contradictory.

Cr Anspach

That is your opinion Mrs Woods.

Sarah Mason

I would like to know that if we have spent \$77,000 I can accept that there are lots of people here that don't want this CRC but what is Council going to do about the overcrowding in the shire office.

Cr Anspach

Council will address that when it becomes an agenda item.

Sarah Mason

When will it become an agenda item?

Cr Anspach

I will ask the Chief Executive Officer to answer that.

Chief Executive Officer

This item was in my last Council report and it was received by Council.

*At this point the tape ran out and comments and questions were abbreviated as the minute taker Finance and Administration Manager – Harry Hawkins was unable to take down everything.*

Catherine Stone

Mr Anspach, you reviewed the business plan, can you give us details of that review or if you can't could one of the other Councillors.

Suzanne Woods

There is only one budget and that shows a profit of \$5,000.

Paul Sinclair

I would like you Mr Anspach to respond to the question and tell us about your review.

Cr Anspach

I requested the Chief Executive Officer prepare a business plan at the May Council meeting and I am still waiting for it.

Tom Field

In 1996 John Randall – then shire building surveyor was asked to look at the shire offices as the ceilings were falling down, the walls were cracking and the bomb shelter was inadequate. There were also problems with rooms to meet guests and people for meetings, inadequate kitchen facilities; bathroom/plumbing became a problem. Ceilings were fixed and the building re-roofed. The quote then to upgrade the administration centre was \$360,000. You are far better off to cop the \$200,000 committed by Council than to cover to total cost of an office upgrade.

Gary McGill

It appears this evening that we will be toing and froing and going nowhere. There are three groups here tonight that shall never meet. One group supports the CRC, one group opposed to CRC and one group who want the administration office upgraded. I have a solution, those people who want the CRC go out amongst your supporters and raise the \$100,000 cash and

\$100,000 in kind plus costs to run the centre and put it in a reserve to cover costs and you can then have the CRC.

Sarah Mason

I am a painter who is moving to Sydney and would not get a benefit from the CRC but I will paint the whole building.

Cr Woods

In a few weeks we have received pledges of \$15,000. I am prepared to donate gravel and I am sure someone would donate sand.

Malcolm Purser

The shire has already spent \$77,000 it was disappointing that they did not speak to resident. The figures in the business plan would not even be used by Mark Latham. Income transferred from the shire to fund facilities. I have read the circulars listing benefits of the CRC, these benefits are only for Calingiri. My community (Piawaning) are raising \$5,000 on a \$ for \$ basis for the roof on our hall, why can't Calingiri raise \$50,000 on a \$ for \$ basis for the CRC.

Dennis Halligan

I am 100% in favour of the CRC but meetings were 80-95% against. I urge those for the process - to keep working at it. The shire Councillors had no option but to back out due to community opposition. If you can come up with \$50-\$60,000 then you can have it.

Suzanne Woods

I would go back to my original question – why is an additional staff member required?

Leon Bradley

We are going around in circles here, in my opinion Council has made a good decision. I would like to move a motion to make these 3 agenda items redundant.

Bob King

Whether you get a CRC or not you have to increase the size of the shire office, why not add \$500,000 of free money and get a good building.

### ***Motion***

**Moved Leon Bradley seconded Graham Nixon a vote of confidence in the President and Council for their decision rescinding the Calingiri CRC.**

Leon Bradley

(Opening debate) in reply to Mr King there is nothing in this CRC proposal about an upgrade to the shire office. I have concerns over the rate burden, cost blowouts and I believe that road works are a more urgent priority.

Cr Young

Sadly in this whole issue all logic has gone out of the debate. The Council offices do need to be upgraded and in a couple of years this will need to be done. Councillors in this debate have voted on a ward basis. This issue is about the whole shire and should not be decided on ward politics. Council has made a bad decision.

Graham Nixon

There has been no funding application for the upgrading of shire offices. I have been to other offices and an upgrade is not required. The landcare staff could be in another part of the shire, they don't have to be in Calingiri. Look at Moora there was a big building project there with the same architect and there was a big cost blow out there, it is more important to fix the roads as the CRC would only be used sparingly.

Steve Young

I was in favour of the CRC and when the vote from the poll came in I thought – oh well that's how it goes. I was surprised at Council's decision to go ahead. Then Council did go ahead and spend \$77,000 before canning the project. I am very disappointed in this decision.

Gary McGill

When going down a pathway in business you have to constantly re-evaluate. Do you keep putting money into a black hole? On this re-evaluation in August, Council made a decision and I am happy they did as I don't want more money spent on this black hole.

Alf King

We have had just one chance to do this and now we are going to hand back \$500,000 we are a joke to other Councils. In the near future this shire will be gobbled up by other shires.

**Motion 395/04**

**Moved Leon Bradley seconded Graham Nixon a vote of confidence in the President and Council for their decision rescinding the Calingiri CRC.**

**MOTION PUT & CARRIED 107/57**

Cr Smith

There have been discussions for many years on Council contributions to halls and on Councils policy regarding upgrade of halls. The hall here in Calingiri has been used 76 times this year that equals 3 times per week. We must be the only shire in Australia that does not want a CRC. There are other shires of similar size to ours that have a CRC, the Shire of Westonia, Shire of Mt Marshall, the Shire of Wongan Ballidu has a Telecentre. I live in the far north east corner of the shire and would not use the CRC but that does not mean that I believe we should not have it.

Ruth Young

I am new to the shire and I think it is a beautiful place to live and the people are very friendly, my concern is that the community will be split by this issue and I don't want this to happen. I would like people to put this behind them and remain friendly. I don't want this to spoil that.

**4 DECLARATION OF CLOSURE**

There being no further business the President, Cr Anspach declared the meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed this ..... day of ..... 2004

Presiding Member .....