

Taegan Salt

From: HELEN ROSS <helensnicedinner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, 15 August 2017 11:09 AM
To: Info
Subject: Painting and Maintenance of buildings in Goldsworth Park

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Categories: Fern

Good Morning,

In the financial year 2016/17 funds were allocated for painting of the Rotunda, BBQ Shed and Light poles in Goldsworthy Park in the general maintenance budget. This work was not done due to a variety of reasons. Funds allocated for a particular maintenance project do not carry forward into the next financial year. I am requesting that this project be allocated funds in the 2017/18 budget. As the funds were not used last year one would imagine there should be an amount still waiting to be used on this project. Nhill has a great reputation for tidy gardens and well maintained streets and we should be proud to have our town admired by passers by. The assets in Goldsworth Park, namely the Rotunda, BBQ Shelter and the Antique Light Poles are always much admired and photographed. It seems a shame to allow that high standard to drop and for our town to appear not to care about our most public attractions.

Please consider this request seriously. Maintenance of these features should be a priority.

Thank you for your attention

Helen Ross

Secretary.

Nhill Town Committee

Mr. Greg Wood, CEO
Hindmarsh Shire Council

16/08/2017

Dear Greg,

Thank you for the opportunity to see council's comprehensive 2017/18 draft budget and plan and to provide feedback before its adoption.

With regards to the proposed expenditure it would be appreciated if the following could be passed onto councillors for consideration.

In the community consultations on rate adjustment, figures presented indicated that road funding, which is so critical to farmers', would have to be sacrificed, if there was no rate increase. If council provides 100 services (p. 5, HSC Budget 2017/18) and can increase councillor and employee remuneration, why has the critical roads budget been the chosen area to be cut?

I believe the additional \$145,000 needed can be found in other areas of the budget and I have outlined areas of concern below.

CARAVAN PARKS AND CAMPING GROUNDS (304)

1) The indoor salaries have increased from a budgeted \$122,000 and actuals of \$160,000 in 2016/17 to a budgeted \$200,000 in 2017/18 whilst revenue is projected to increase by only \$45,000 from the actuals of 16/17. Are there business plans in place to justify this increased level of employment given caravan park and camping ground expenditure already exceeds revenue and can these be accessed by ratepayers?

2) Effective marketing is essential for any park's success. With a projected turnover of \$185,000, a 10% budget for marketing would be the norm. Can the allocated budget of only \$7,000 for advertising and marketing be enough to achieve these targets and why was this not fully acquitted in 2016/17 to maximise our investment?

3) Given that the overall annual projected loss is \$125,000 (not including depreciation) how does council justify an additional capital investment of \$10,250 for bikes for the Riverside Holiday Park Dimboola? Is there a business plan in place for this? The budget fees show a half-hour hire fee of \$5. This would require an average 40 hires a week over a year before the cost of the bikes is recovered, and this does not include cost of administration, storage facility, maintenance, bike replacement, depreciation and insurances.

4) Would it not be better for the paying communities if the management of the parks in Dimboola, Jeparit and Rainbow be sent to tender before any further investment is made?

TOURISM / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (301/ 302)

Total budgeted expenditure is \$650,000 for the coming year, with over 35% of this spent on indoor salaries. Can ratepayers see evidence of the council's delivery in these areas? Is there data available on increased visitation and revenue growth from tourism and business and in which areas of the local shire is there increased visitation?

With only \$20,000 of this budget actually available to business (in the form of small, matching Business Grants), could the \$242,000 in salaries be trimmed? Are there Key Performance Indicators to show ratepayers that these departments are addressing the critical community issues such as on-the-ground support for business, marketing the region and connectivity? Anecdotally, business owners do not feel supported, are subjected to high levels of regulation and complain of lack of personal communication from council employees and councillors. In a Shire the size of Hindmarsh, engaging and connecting tourism operators and local businesses will build a stronger, more effective economy. Can Council focus more on empowering our communities by acknowledging and assisting businesses and community groups in the unpaid work that they do and can this be documented in a way that is transparent to ratepayers?

KAREN PROGRAMS (301)

The Karen's introduction into Hindmarsh is a prime example of a successful business and community initiative. This renowned plan has resulted in a win-win for the Karen people and Hindmarsh communities and the Karen continue to provide and support new residents through their network, as jobs become available in our region. Whilst I appreciate the council's assistance in the Karen settlement programs, attempts to introduce further settlers, without the infrastructure and existing jobs to sustain them, is a funded program that draws on resources better spent elsewhere.

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE (402)

With projected salaries this year of \$331,737 is it possible for ratepayers to see the reintroduction of policy that mandates a response to all enquiries from constituents? Many letters, emails, and phone calls to council continue to get no response. With a Shire adult population of only 4,000 (and a percentage of those would have queries) this should be a policy that is easy to be mandated and would provide a Key Performance Indicator that is transparent to ratepayers.

DIMBOOLA LIBRARY

As federal funding for the Dimboola Library Project was not received could the \$200,000 set aside in council funds to match the grant funding be better used to offset the rate increase?

KIATA WINDFARM

The Kiata windfarm will provide approximately \$80,000 in additional rates revenue. Where is this welcome windfall reflected in the draft budget?

Yours sincerely,

Wendy Robins
30 Madden Street, Nhill Vic 3418