

Commissioner takes the reigns at Shire of Exmouth

Commissioner Ian Fletcher AM JP has been appointed by the Governor of Western Australia to carry out the duties and function of the Exmouth Shire Council.

Commissioner Fletcher was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and has more than 45 years' experience in both the private and public sectors. This includes holding the position of the executive chairman of the WA Regional Development Council.

Commissioner Fletcher is working closely with Acting CEO Keith Woodward to assess governance, operations and priorities for the Shire of Exmouth. This includes reviewing the Shire's strategic and financial plans and the Ningaloo Centre project construction and operational budgets.

"The Shire is continuing to carry out its core functions to serve the community while in the background we are undertaking wide ranging reviews of the Shire's integrated strategic plans, midyear, annual and 5-10 year

budgets," Commissioner Fletcher said.

"This is necessary to ensure the Shire's strategic planning and budgetary processes are robust and have the capacity to guide Shire operations well into the future.

"Shire staff have been working hard to support this process while continuing to get on with the day to day work of making Exmouth a great place to live and visit."

Commissioner Fletcher also flagged the development of a new Strategic Community Plan for Exmouth to examine local community needs and aspirations and sets a clear path to achieving them. The Shire's current plan is due for review.

More information on the role of the Commissioner is available in the frequently asked questions section overleaf. Further questions can be directed to the Shire by calling 9949 3000 or going online and filling out an online enquiry form at www.exmouth.wa.gov.au.

Ningaloo Centre building nearing completion

Construction at the Ningaloo Centre building continues at a steady pace and is scheduled to be completed on time and on budget by March.

Freeman Ryan Design have moved into the building to install the interpretive displays which will give visitors to the centre a unique and interactive insight into our town, its history, cultural heritage and World Heritage Listed natural landscape.

The Ningaloo Centre is expected to be fully operational by August, in time for September's celebrations marking 50 years since the official opening of the Exmouth townsite and Naval Communications Station Harold E Holt.



Sneak peak: Some of the interpretive panels in the En Route to Exmouth historical exhibition will tell the story of Cyclone Vance hitting Exmouth.

Your questions answered:

Wondering how the suspension of Council and appointment of a Commissioner will impact on the Shire of Exmouth? Here are the answers to some of the most common questions we have been asked at the Shire in recent weeks.

What is the role of the Commissioner?

In accordance with section 2.38(1) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the role of a Commissioner “...is to exercise the powers and discharge the duties of the council..and its president.” The Commissioner has been appointed for six months from 4 January, 2017.

Will council meetings still be held?

Council meetings are held each month. Residents are welcome to attend council meetings and ask questions during public question time as per normal procedures. A list of council meeting dates and agendas are available on the Shire website at www.exmouth.wa.gov.au.

When will Council be reinstated?

The Exmouth Shire Council was suspended for a period of up to 6 months. Under section 8.28 (2) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, an order suspending Council “ceases to have effect when:

- (a) the period of suspension expires; or
- (b) the Council is dismissed under Division 2; or
- (c) the Council is reinstated by the Minister under subsection (3).”

Any order reinstating Council will fix a day for a poll to fill any offices of members that are vacant.

What is being done to address outcomes of the recent Corruption and Crime Commission (CCC) inquiry?

Former Chief Executive Officer Bill Price and former Strategic Projects Officer Andrew Forte were dismissed following the CCC inquiry. The Shire Council has also been suspended. The CCC report will be presented to the

Western Australian parliament after the State election.

The Commissioner and Acting CEO are now reviewing the financial and strategic plans of the Shire as well as its governance. These reviews will determine any changes that may need to be implemented to improve Shire operations. The community will be kept informed about the outcomes of these reviews.

What changes are being implemented to ensure the Shire follows proper process in the future?

The CCC investigations were centred around a failure to follow existing Shire policy. Once all governance matters have been reviewed, staff will receive education and support to ensure policy and procedures are followed correctly. Elected members will also be required to undergo training in their period of suspension.

Who do I talk to if I have a comment to make on Shire matters?

If you have any questions or concerns about Shire operational matters, such as planning and building approvals, you should continue to direct them to the staff member responsible or their direct manager. Alternatively you can fill out an enquiry form online at www.exmouth.wa.gov.au. The Commissioner will continue to deal with the community on matters before Council.

When will a permanent CEO be appointed?

The Commissioner has resolved to seek applications for the position of Chief Executive Officer. It is expected that a decision will be made in May.

Is the Ningaloo Centre project going ahead?

The Ningaloo Centre building is almost completed. The Centre’s business and operational plan are currently being reviewed but the Centre is expected to open in time for the 50 year celebrations in September.