**CITY OF ONKAPARINGA – GEOFF EATON - THALASSA WARD COUNCILLOR UPDATE JANUARY 2022**

Welcome to the New Year and I hope that everyone had an enjoyable but most importantly a safe time during the festive season. During December I attended the Port Noarlunga Blues Festival, along with the Port Noarlunga Jetty Centenary event which was officially launched by the Governor Frances Adamson AC and Mayor Erin Thompson on the evening of Friday 10 December. Following that we attended the opening of the Surf Art Exhibition held at the Port Noarlunga Art Centre. During Sunday 12 December I ventured back down to Port Noarlunga to experience the centenary events. I have to say the beach and jetty were packed and there were dozens of people diving on the reef and the restaurants in the area were packed with people enjoying the live entertainment and food. For us “northerners” it is a great experience to see the large number of people enjoying themselves at this location, so if you get a chance take the drive and enjoy, and please keep COVID safe.

**Australia Day Breakfasts/Australia Day Bush Fair/Beachside Food and Wine Festival**

Australia Day breakfasts are still scheduled to be held at four locations around our city on
Wednesday 26 January 2022 from 8am until 11am, but that could change due to the increase of Covid-19 cases. The breakfasts are a fantastic opportunity for the community and families to come together to celebrate Australia Day and to enjoy a free breakfast provided by the City of Onkaparinga. There will be entertainment along with activities for the children.

The breakfasts will be held at four locations around our city:

* Aldinga Beach – Symonds Reserve, Butterworth Road
* Happy Valley – Happy Valley Sports Park
* Noarlunga Centre – Ramsay Place
* Willunga – The Old Court House

So if they go ahead residents need only bring a picnic rug or chair and their facemasks. The breakfasts have a great atmosphere and are enjoyed by all ages. So come along to meet and connect with your community and reflect on our history, diversity, achievements and bright future. But please check with organisers in case they are cancelled due to the pandemic.

Unfortunately the City of Onkaparinga Australia Day Fair and the Beachside Food and Wine Festival have been cancelled due to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases.

**Santos Festival of Cycling**

Events SA have advised that the Santos Festival of Cycling 2022 that they are progressing with their events as planned. Our city will host the Women’s Westpac Stage 2 (McLaren Vale to Echunga) on Monday 24 January and the Men’s Be Safe Be Seen Stage 3 (McLaren Vale to Willunga Hill) on Saturday 29 January 2022.

**Statutory Declarations Witnesses by Elected Members**

Changes to the Oaths Act commenced on 1 December extending provisions enabling elected members and some council staff to witness statutory declarations. In response to the COVID-19 emergency, a temporary expansion of categories of persons who could witness a South Australian statutory declaration was made, which included elected members and some council employees. On 1 December 2021 changes to the [*Oaths Act 1936*](https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/__legislation/lz/c/a/oaths%20act%201936/current/1936.2278.auth.pdf) (**Oaths Act**) commenced. These changes result in the permanent extension of the temporary measures provided by virtue of the Section 16 Regulations (made under section 16 of the COVID-19 ER Act).

**Netball and Tennis Hard Court Review**

This project delivers on an action in Council’s approved Sport and Active Recreation Action Plan (SARAP) “*to develop Outdoor Sports Needs Analysis Plans for each District to understand future demand and inform the Sports Assets Works Plan*.” Growing participation in netball and tennis across the City of Onkaparinga is important to us, as is ensuring the player experience is as positive as it can be. We are experiencing significant demand for quality court space across our region.  Balancing the needs of both netball and tennis is an ongoing challenge, as is meeting the expectations of clubs with how much money we have available to invest in facilities and when.

The Hard Court Review is a partnership between Recreation Services and Community Assets.  The aim is to review and update our demand (participation) and court (asset condition and supply) information to further strengthen our efforts to prioritise our investment and ultimately grow participation.  Also, bringing it all together in one document, together with our engagement with clubs along the way, will help manage expectations regarding the nature and timing of future investment.

At the highest level, the methodology and indicative timeframes are:

* Briefing of all Clubs and other external stakeholders [December 2021]
* Data capture via survey and court inspections supported by individual discussions with Clubs and sports peak bodies [By end February 2021]
* *State of Play* status report [March 2022]
* Hard Court Review report [May 2022]
* Council consideration [Mid 2022]

**Federally Funded Projects Continues**

Council secured a fresh injection of $4.92 million through a federal government stimulus program and has submitted a list of 14 priority projects to deliver with the funding.

The list was approved at November’s Council meeting, with the funding— through Phase 3 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program—to become available from 1 January 2022, pending federal government approval.

The projects include six sporting changeroom and clubroom upgrades, joining a long list of those underway or completed across the city, and helping to directly support increasing participation in sports across the city, particularly women playing Australian rules football.

We have already received $8.64 million through Phase 1 and 2 of the LRCI program, with 51 projects completed or on the way across Onkaparinga. Projects funded through LRCI are delivered in addition to council’s 2021–22 and 2022–23 annual capital works programs.

Phase 2 projects are required to be finished by June 2022, while Phase 3 projects need to be completed by June 2023.

The federal government told us that the additional funding available through Phase 3, and its longer delivery window, allows us to pursue larger, more complex projects that may be a higher priority and have a bigger impact on the community. The LRCI program was created to support local councils to deliver priority local road and community infrastructure projects across Australia, supporting jobs and the resilience of local economies to help communities bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Cherry Gardens Road Cherry Gardens Road Safety Project**

Residents in the Cherry Gardens area would have received the following information from council staff but it is worth advising the broader community of this road safety upgrade in that area.

Through the Federal Government’s Black Spot program, we are able to improve safety by constructing wider road shoulders and installing guardrail in conjunction with minor ancillary works as required on Cherry Gardens Road, Cherry Gardens. These treatments are proven to reduce the likelihood and severity of ‘run off road’ accidents and assist through giving drivers more roadside where they can recover from any minor lane departures and a barrier to protect them from more serious incidents.

We are undertaking works on Cherry Gardens Road between Boko and Dorset Vale Roads in two stages. The first stage of works involved constructing sealed shoulders on both sides of Cherry Gardens Road and a reseal to improve the condition and longevity of the road surface.

In early 2022 we will commence with stage 2. These works include line-marking improvements of the Vicks Road intersection, the installation of guardrail within the section between Boko and Dorset Vale Roads and finally an upgrade to the Orchard Road intersection. The guardrail installation locations have been identified where roadside hazards, such as trees and steep slopes, continue to pose a heightened risk to drivers.

We have prioritised locations where significant gains to safety can be achieved in line with the state government’s vision to have zero fatalities on our roads by 2050. The guard rail installation will not impact on current driveway access and will be undertaken in a manner that is sensitive to the vegetation in this area. Please refer to the enclosed plan showing the locations for the guard rail.

If you have any questions please contact our Customer Relations team on 8384 0666 or mail@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au and quote reference number 5571388.

**O’Sullivan Beach Shellfish reef construction complete**

Construction is complete on the new five-hectare shellfish reef off O’Sullivan Beach to restore a native ecosystem. With an area the equivalent of two Adelaide Ovals, the new reef will provide a boost for the local marine environment as well as new jobs, tourism and recreational opportunities.

The O’Sullivan shellfish reef restoration project was mainly funded under the Australian Government’s Reef Builder initiative. Reef Builder is a $20 million partnership between the Australian Government and TNC to bring shellfish reefs back from the brink of extinction.

Thirteen sites have been identified nationally for reef restoration while providing economic boosts for communities impacted by bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions. The O’Sullivan shellfish reef restoration project also received generous funding from City of Onkaparinga.

The reef foundation has been laid with locally-sourced limestone and this will now be seeded with juvenile, hatchery-raised Australian Flat Oysters, which have been settled onto recycled oyster shells, to create a flourishing marine habitat. Over the next few years, these juvenile oysters will grow and recreate a living shellfish reef, providing a home for many marine species.

Shellfish reefs are part of South Australia’s natural heritage, providing homes, feeding and nursery grounds to hundreds of marine species. These reefs once thrived around Australia’s coasts but were victim to overharvesting and dredging in the late 1800s. This project has it all, from providing recreation and economic benefits to our city, through to helping to revive a critically endangered ecosystem. Big thanks to TNC and the state and federal governments for partnering with us to make it happen.

**Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this article are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of Council.

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