



Community Update

Reference: 101; 102; 103/6
Report Author: Interim Administrator

It is very pleasing to note that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP, has approved the formation of the Wingecarribee Local Planning Panel and the appointment of Ms Julie Walsh as Chair until 29 February 2024.

The Panel is an important step in improving transparency and consultation in the operation of Wingecarribee Shire Council and the staff are thanked for preparing the late item to this meeting to ensure expert members and community representatives are in place and all documentation completed for its next meeting.

Council adopted its Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030 in November 2020. This followed what appears to have been a comprehensive process over two years, however, the document remains controversial.

A number of approaches have been made to me in relation to the document and what I would generally call the nexus between economic development in the Shire and tourism. In my view both have a different skill set and I have not had the opportunity (or time!) to better understand the operations, role and responsibility of the Tourism and Economic Development section of Council. The section is branded Destination Southern Highlands and appears to operate remotely from Council.

The Acting General Manager has raised concerns with me regarding the Southern Highlands Innovation Park which has no master plan. He has set up a project group of staff to investigate the development of a master plan and servicing strategy. The three stage process will require the Council to undertake in Stage 1, reframing the viability of the project in the context of 2021 from both a geographic and thematic perspective.

As Council moves into the next phase of review outlined in my previous Minute the above no doubt will become clearer.

In my view there are too many 'voices' in the economic development area and I am unsure whether they have political overtones or have simply filled a vacuum by virtue of personality and Council dysfunction. What I do know is that issues like this do the Shire no favours – especially for such a strategically important function which the Council has statutory obligations and must accept responsibility.

In an endeavour to unite all players and provide an open and frank opportunity for constructive dialogue I am presently arranging an independently facilitated workshop or round table to develop a way forward.

AGENDA FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Wednesday 20 May 2021

INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR MINUTE



The format would involve up to 20 people registering and presentations from two major NSW regional Councils who in the industry's view undertake their economic functions well.

In accordance with my earlier views, Councillors past, suspended or prospective will be excluded together with their agents. The politics and personality have to stop and it is time to put the community first and that is what I will do.

Viv May PSM

Interim Administrator