Tuesday, 16 December 2014

**City celebrates a productive six months**

The City of Bunbury has celebrated the end of the calendar year with a host of major projects either being completed or having begun.

The first stages of the proposed and highly anticipated Water Playground development – earmarked for alongside the Leschenault Inlet – has begun with successful community consultation being carried out in the month of October.

Several information days were held giving children, families and the wider community a chance to have their say on what they’d like to see at the site including play equipment, other infrastructure and safety measures.

The City of Bunbury is now looking for a suitable contractor to design a concept plan for the playground and provide construction costings.

On the other side of the Koombana bridge the Koombana swimming pontoon was launched on 27 November in the boating-prohibited area. The popular structure is free for all to use and is a guaranteed hit in the warmer months among the community and visitors to Bunbury.

Toilet refurbishments at Koombana have also been completed and were opened for use in early-November and included upgrades to both male and female toilets, new ramps, upgraded lighting and security and equal access.

In exciting news for developers and local tourism the City adopted three Back Beach Tourism Mixed Use planning documents, allowing this area to become an important tourism node for Bunbury. This rezoning will allow for a multitude of planning possibilities along the Bunbury coastline.

The City’s events team continued to deliver fun and entertaining events with the annual Christmas Carnival and Parade kicking off the festive season on 7 December. This event drew thousands of spectators to the CBD and Graham Bricknell Music Shell for an evening of festive-inspired entertainment.

The events team are now busying themselves with planning for next month’s Australia Day celebrations – another City of Bunbury event not to be missed.
It was a clean sweep for the City of Bunbury’s waste management team at the Keep Australia Beautiful Awards in November.

The City’s sustainability efforts were acknowledged winning three major awards. Another three awards were handed out to the team in October thanks to the City’s organics bins initiative.

Bunbury hosted the National Sister City Conference for the second time on 16-19 November at the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre.

Attendees remarked the event was the best to date. Notable speakers at the conference included international affairs expert Dr Ketih Suter, Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler and Young Australian of the Year Khoa Doa.

Delegates from across the globe descended on Bunbury for the event.

In another boon for the City of Bunbury, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the State Government, Vue Group and Chinese animation company Shanghai Hippo Animation to facilitate the construction of a multi-million dollar animated film studio in the CBD. It is set to be the biggest production studio in Western Australia.

The studio will see hundreds of students per year call Bunbury home and a further 200 people will gain employment through its development.

Meanwhile the world premiere of Bunbury’s Drug Aware Happy film took place in December as part of International Day of People with Disability. The red carpet event was well attended and the video has been viewed more than 1100 times via You Tube.

The City’s Works and Services team has been busy the past six months with the following projects:

- Upgrades to the Spencer Street, Forrest Avenue, Beach Road intersection (near the Plaza) are close to completion with the removal of overhead power lines and upgrade of the water main to better accommodate vehicle movements as well as improve pedestrian accessibility at the site.
- Traffic lights have been installed at the intersection of Mangles and Blair Streets
- Completion of the bike path from Parade Road to Dalyellup – linking the two suburbs together
- Planting colourful annuals along Victoria Street
The refurbishment of the seawall along the front of Frank Buswell foreshore.

The Schools Frontage Program being implemented at Bunbury Primary School.

Improved safety measures have been implemented across Bunbury including the installation of solar lights on Ocean Drive and the long-awaited CCTV network installed in Withers.

It is hoped the CCTV network will help stamp out anti-social behaviour in the suburb.

A replacement of all entry statements was completed in July-August in response to a letter addressed to City of Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan from two young local boys.

The project was combined with a condition assessment of all signs in the Bunbury area.

Over at the South West Sports Centre, its 50-metre pool underwent refurbishment with the vinyl liner being removed and replaced with new tiles to improve safety and maintenance and extend the life of the pool.

The Bunbury Wildlife Park – another popular City of Bunbury amenity – proudly welcomed more visitors with a 44 per cent increase in revenue, 10 per cent increase in paid admission and a 65 per cent increase in café sales in the past year.

Community consultation has played a big part in 2014 – with submissions being called for regarding dog exercise areas, the Big Swamp Master Plan and Council performance to name a but a few.

City of Bunbury Mayor Gary Brennan said 2014 had seen the beginning of many exciting and long-awaited projects.

“Looking back it has been a big year for Bunbury with many projects being given the green light,” Mr Brennan said.

“Council’s vision for a vibrant Bunbury is coming to fruition.

“It really is a sensational time to be in Bunbury.”

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