

Front page

The International Awards for Liveable Communities

LivCom

Rewarding communities which have a focus on *environmental management* and the *creation of liveable communities*.

“Geraldton: a friendly port city with a small town feel that enjoys sports, the sunny warm climate and a relaxed lifestyle on the beaches with amazing sunsets!” - From the 2012 Geraldton Feel campaign, part of the 2029 and Beyond Project.

The City of Greater Geraldton

Western Australia, Australia

2012

“Encouraging best practice, innovation and leadership in providing a vibrant, environmental sustainable community that improves the quality of life”

The City of Greater Geraldton can demonstrate our commitment as a community to this, and more.

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Cover page: The cover page features illustrations from the “Geraldton Feel” series of postcards and bookmarks based on designs submitted by community residents. This initiative was part of the 2029 and Beyond Project.

Printed on recycled paper (recycling sign)

Introducing the City of Greater Geraldton

For 40,000 years this region has been home to the Yamaji people. Their deep and enduring connection to the land is recognised and celebrated. The area's great agricultural and mining potential led to the establishment of Geraldton in 1850. When Geraldton was gazetted it could hardly have been imagined that the hot, sandy streets of the fledging colony town would one day be a flourishing, friendly, multicultural community.

This now-vibrant City offers a diverse range of entertainments, opportunities, health services and educational choices, all wrapped up in a strong sense of community. The city blossoms with ideas and innovation; community initiatives complement municipal programs; leaders mentor young people to ensure the future, and policy is made collaboratively.

Of the 40,000 people who live within the boundaries of the City of Greater Geraldton many take the opportunity to contribute to decision making and doing; our community groups are full of willing and able volunteers. Building capacity in the community is a foundation platform of the City.

It's not all easy though – Geraldton is currently at the beginning of a resources boom that is already affecting the city; fly in fly out workers stretch the fabric of community bonds; overloaded community facilities are creaking at the joints and new ways are being found to manage changing culture.

Similarly, the region has one of the largest Indigenous populations in Australia bringing with it the issues common to dispossessed and marginalised communities everywhere. Reconciliation starts with small gestures – and programs such as the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Good Heart Art Program, Alice Nannup Trail all lead to shared knowledge and understanding.

Climate change is already having an effect – rainfall is substantially lower and drought causes new problems for the agriculture sector which has been the predominant economic base of the region. Finding ways to be sustainable in the long term is key and programs such as the Hundred Trees Program, the City's Wastewater Plan, and the School's Eco-Program are all designed to help us live in harmony with our environment.

Geraldton has attracted the interest of international players: the region jointly won the global bid for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) and winning a spot in IBM's 2012 Smarter Cities Challenge which is a huge boost and will help the City capitalise on the new broadband internet.

Geraldton is currently in the midst of a massive economic expansion and has significant capacity for further growth. Land availability is good, housing prices are affordable and existing infrastructure is well-established. Local governments, businesses and the community support a vision of expansion, sustainability and liveability for the city.

Strong business and economic connections already exist between Geraldton and the mining areas to the far north. Cutting edge science and technology will complement mining activity in the region and bring a variety of economic, training and education opportunities for its residents. The shared vision is for Geraldton to be a city that is built around a rich fabric of diversity, attractive to people from all walks of life. It will become a vibrant economic, cultural and social hub in its own right but will also retain the idyllic seaside feel that people recognise as uniquely Geraldton.

The City is governed by a Mayor and 14 Councillors who represent the city proper and the satellite

towns of Mullewa (160km east) and Walkaway (25km south). Council is responsible for governance, policy, local laws and financial appropriation, assisted by a CEO and a staff of more than 320, with a portfolio of some \$424m of assets and an annual budget of more than \$90m.

A word from the Mayor

“Liveability means many things to many people, but to me and my fellow Councillors, who represent the people of Greater Geraldton, it’s about resilient enough to make the best of the people, the environment and the opportunities around us.

“Sometimes it may be hard to see the opportunities, as they can appear as challenges. Through our 2029 and Beyond community engagement program we have all started to see things we never thought of. That’s a liveable community”.

Welcome

Wajarri Welcome to Country

Nhurra Barndi?

(Nhu-rra barn-di)

Nganajungu ini Ross Boddington

(Ngan-a-jung-u ini Ross Boddington)

Ngatha Yamaji barna

(Nha-nha yam-a-ji barn-a)

Yanayi, nhurra waggajigu

(Yan-ay-l, nhu-rra wang-ga-ji-gu)

Barndi guwa

(Barn-di gu-wa)

Wajarri to English Translation:

“How are you all?

My name is Ross Boddington, and I am a Yamaji person

I’d like to welcome you all and hope you have a good time.”

Composed with the assistance of Esther Simpson; written by Vaso Elefsiniotis (Irra Wangga – Geraldton Language Program)

STOP PRESS: June 20, 2012. Mayor Ian Carpenter has just been elected Deputy Chair of Regional Capitals in Australia , a peak body for all Australia’s regional capitals initiated by the Australian Parliament. The group of regional capital cities in Australia has been founded on the belief that the role of these organisations can be expanded to help to increase national productivity.

Representative government

1. Enhancement of the Natural and Built Landscape

Describe the key features or vision of the community's landscape, and demonstrate how landscaping in the community has brought together all of the distinct elements, both built and natural, so as to establish a sympathetic relationship between the built and natural environment.

The City of Geraldton sits on the edge of the oldest landscape in the world; it would be easy to see the region as lacking beauty but for Geraldton residents, the low heath vegetation, long hot summers and wind is just a reminder of the beauty around us; our beaches, the magnificent sunsets, the ranges that bound the city, the gentle greening of the pasture land when the rains eventually come. The City of Greater Geraldton is committed in protecting both its natural gifts as well as the built environment and works to understand how citizens interact with their built and natural environments, and how this can be enhanced and improved.

Enhancing the built environment: Turning back to the sea

The local sense of place is imbued with the outdoor lifestyle based around the Indian Ocean. Ironically, until recently the city turned itself away from the sea. An example of how the City is animating the built spaces is the transformation of the foreshore from its former industrial aspect into a magnificent community playground which is enjoyed by local families and tourists. Now the sea is celebrated—the Geraldton Foreshore, five years in the making is the heart of the City -- featuring acres of safe, open air play space, exercise options and regular community-wide family events which bring residents and visitors alike together in celebration. The 2012 Australia Day celebrations on the foreshore attracted around 12,000 people. Planning is underway for more facilities to take advantage of this unique location, including a multi-purpose facility which will provide a hub for citizen activity.

Using the landscape to advantage

Geraldton's most iconic landscape structure is a memorial to a ship which was lost during World War II – the HMAS Sydney II went down off the coast of Geraldton with the loss of 645 souls. The memorial was the vision of the local Rotary Club who took a denuded useless piece of hilltop and built a place of remembrance, a park, a tourist magnet and a viewing platform for the whole city. The last of the five composite elements was formally opened this year. It was funded and built by local businesses through the Rotary Club, and gifted to the community.

Transport

One of the challenges of the built environment is balancing car use with alternative transport including biking and walking. Getting people from one place to another without a vehicle is an increasingly important part of community planning. Bike paths and footpaths not only improve physical health, but allow people to be more engaged with the environment around them.

A Million Trees

The Million Trees Project is an exciting new initiative in which a million trees will be planted in Greater Geraldton by 2015 to improve in biodiversity, land conservation, 'green infrastructure', carbon sequestration and aesthetic values. The project materialized as a community aspiration from

the World Cafes held as part of the *2029 and Beyond* project.. A volunteer operated community nursery will propagate local species for the project.

Community Gardens

A Community Gardens Project in which gardens are being created in local areas like churches, schools and vacant land is part of the City's *2029 and Beyond* project. People will get together and grow fresh food, learn, relax and socialise with new people. Growing produce and eating it will have great health outcomes.

2. Arts, Culture and Heritage

Demonstrate how the community values and embodies its own unique culture through recognition of its languages, its unique arts and craft and cultural practices within their way of life and how it values its heritage both in its buildings and monuments and its spiritual places or historic events through recognition, interpretation and protection.

The City is committed to delivering outstanding arts, culture and heritage services for its unique community and has created a manager level position, working with the City's Library and Heritage service and Community Development to deliver a rounded and well-used cultural landscape. These City resources are complemented by local community cultural initiatives which are supported and resources by the City; outdoor cinema, local movie making and production, local theatre productions, outdoor musical events by local schools, exhibitions around the City in different commercial and public locations; the Arts and Cultural Development Council (ACDC); community art projects undertaken by local community artists all add flavour and colour to the city's growing vibrancy.

Our Indigenous heritage

The traditional owners of the land have a long and proud tradition going back some 40,000 years; there are several language groups, collectively known as the Yamaji people. The City is only the second Local Government in WA to have developed and endorsed a Reconciliation Action Plan which encourages goodwill, mutual respect and recognition of the effects of non-Indigenous settlement on Australia's first peoples. The Aboriginal flag is flown alongside the Australian flags and "Welcome to Yamaji Country" signs are erected at City entries. The local community and visitors are able to learn about the ancient Indigenous culture through cultural trails, Wajarri language classes, dreamtime storytelling and 'bush tucker' experiences.

A community arts project which illustrates in prose and pictures the way people feel about their City resulted from last year's "Geraldton Feel" program. This year the City created a range of postcards and bookmarks that use the words and illustrations from this City-wide engagement.

The City of Greater Geraldton has a unique cultural identity created from the melting pot of cultures that have come in settlement waves in the last 200 years: starting with the British establishing farms and commerce; then the Europeans with market gardens; the Vietnamese refugees, and more recently Middle Eastern settlers from the Ba'Hai and Islamic faiths.

The City also offers a rich tapestry of more contemporary cultural experiences. World-class facilities

include the WA Museum Geraldton, Regional Art Gallery, Regional Library, Queens Park Theatre and the Yamaji Arts Centre. Festivals, markets and regional agricultural shows are featured in the annual program of community events which exemplify the creative aspects of city life.

Fostering collaboration in the cultural sector to build capacity, secure and share resources, and marketing is a new direction for the City's cultural arm.

Since first contact...

Greater Geraldton is also well known for its rich and fascinating maritime heritage; coastal waters are littered with shipwrecks, the most famous being the 'Batavia' in 1629. Geraldton's museum located on the City's Marina features a world class display that commemorates the wrecks.

More permanent and planned settlement was developed on the back of pastoral and mining opportunities which were sought out in the mid-1800s. The settlement at Greenough River was established in 1839, followed by the town site of Geraldton in 1849. The Central Greenough Historical Settlement is one of Australia's best preserved nineteenth century towns.

Big Sky Readers and Writers Festival

The City coordinates an intimate, annual Readers and Writers Festival, named Big Sky where lovers of literature come together, share thoughts and ideas or just soak up the atmosphere. The Festival brings together a huge range of literary and arts greats from all over Australia, and the world.

Artists in Residence Program

An Artist in Residence program is presenting a broad range of critically-acclaimed artists, doing public displays and performances and education. The first artist was saxophonist Julia Banholzer from Frankfurt, Germany, in May.

Mid West Art Prize

The Mid West Art Prize, presented by Art Gallery of WA and sponsored by the City provided a showcase of some of the region's most talented artists.

"The Mid West Art Prize is a wonderful opportunity for state and local artists with a significant prize pool of \$45,000 worth of non-acquisitive awards, and a top prize of \$20,000. It is rapidly becoming a significant cultural event in the West Australian arts calendar." – James Davies, Director of the Geraldton Regional Art Gallery".

New Program Streams at Queens Park Theatre

The Queens Park Theatre, owned and operated by the City, is working to increase the quality, quantity and audience engagement of its programming, presenting dozens of high-profile national and international acts.

The amphitheatre has recently reopened with a 'Moonlite Cinema' and 'Sunset Music' Series. Visual art exhibitions and an after-show Piano Bar Series are held in the spacious foyers.

Young emerging artists are mentored and encouraged to perform in the theatre and outdoors in the Queens Park Theatre Street Festival outdoors in the local mall.

Redevelopment of Geraldton Regional Art Gallery

The city has committed to redeveloping the heritage-listed Regional Art Gallery to provide a broader

range of arts opportunities. In partnership with the Mid West Development Commission a Schematic Master Plan is underway. The Gallery will be able to show exhibitions of National standing and run community workshops.

Indigenous art emerging as a new industry

Indigenous art is an emerging industry for Aboriginal people in Geraldton and exemplifies the value of supporting local people. Yamaji Art, Geraldton's Aboriginal owned art centre, represents Aboriginal artists from more than five cultural groups. Over the past year, Yamaji Art has exhibited throughout Europe and North America, and developed the international profiles of Geraldton's outstanding Aboriginal artists.

The Good Heart Midwest Indigenous Art Exhibition, sponsored by a local resources company, features works by local Indigenous artists in an exhibition mounted, first in Geraldton, and then in the capital city of Perth. Proceeds from the sale of the works go back to the artists.

3. Environmental Best Practice

Demonstrate how the community has adopted innovative environmentally sensitive practices and pursues initiatives that result in sustainable management of the environment. Demonstrate that the community is involved in efforts to apply sustainable development and promoting best practices that lead to the development, conservation and preservation of the environment.

Making the most of our natural environment

In terms of the natural environment, the key directions are to: enhance areas of high biological diversity; ensure environmentally responsive development; reduce the vulnerability and risks of climate change and encourage citizens to act as stewards of the environment.

Biodiversity Strategy

Prepared jointly by the City of Greater Geraldton and the Shire of Chapman Valley is the Local Biodiversity Strategy, which is currently under development and being prepared for adoption by council. The aim is that the strategy will create a framework where biodiversity matures at the same rate as our economy. Geraldton is part of Western Australia's internationally recognised Biodiversity Hot Spot. The biodiversity of our local natural areas is highly valuable and important to our environment; the wellbeing of all global and local communities is dependent on the services provided by nature. Less than 18 per cent of pre-European extent of native vegetation remains in the study area and nearly half of that could be lost as the city boundaries continue to expand. The Strategy, which will cover some 32,410 hectares, recognises the risk that the ecological, cultural and economic values of Geraldton's biodiversity will be lost.

Natural Bushland Planning

A natural bushland assessment will highlight specific management issues for each reserve in the municipality and prioritise the City's natural areas. Locations requiring more detailed surveying, or areas that should need priority management action will be identified.

Alice Nannup Park

A stand of quongdong trees (Australian native peaches) mark the spot where one of Geraldton's Aboriginal elders lived and raised her children, on the edges of the town, decades ago. This tiny patch of native bushland is adjacent to a main road and has lain dormant for many years. Now, in conjunction with the local Indigenous community, the local natural resource management group and other volunteers it is being developed to become a commemoration of the life of Alice Nannup and other Indigenous women of the area, as well as an interpretive centre for Indigenous culture and bush foods.

Hi Everyone,

Things are happening in the Chapman Regional Park :

- On the nature front the season has broken and buds are bursting into flower -
- On the action front work is due to start on an improved path starting from the NC Highway bridge at Spalding Park -
- Meanwhile trail and quad bikes and 4WDs are causing more and more damage
- We want to formalise the Friends of Chapman Regional Park

And we need volunteers for busy bees for bush protection

Come and join us for a short briefing and then a walk (as short or as long as you like)

WHEN? Saturday afternoon 23rd June 2.30 pm meet at Spalding Park car park (enter off Chapman Road)

If you cannot be there but want to show support or find out more please email or phone Jenna on:

Jenna Brooker,

Jenna is compiling a list of what is flowering this month - email her if you would like a copy!

Kind regards, **Robyn Nicholas**

Senior Environment and Sustainability Officer

Department of Sustainable Communities



4. Community Participation and Empowerment

Demonstrate the method and style of ongoing involvement of individuals, groups and organisations in the planning development and management of the local community, and how the local community is empowered and reacts to the opportunity of being involved in its development.

2029 and Beyond is a community-based planning process initiated by the City to address coming challenges and opportunities. It responds to requests in the community for citizens to be more actively involved in planning for the future of the City Region and the desire to participate in collaborative decision making. Through this process, the City offers the community ongoing opportunities to participate in planning processes to collaboratively create the healthy, sustainable and creative City Region that we are confident that the community truly desires.

The Community Charter: The City's covenant with its people

2012 will usher in a new era for Geraldton, with the dedication of a newly created "Community Charter" in February this year - an agreement between the community and the local government that is the basis of the 2029 and Beyond Community Action Plan.

The Community Charter has emerged from the huge amount of consultation and discussion with the community's residents since the instigation of the 2029 and Beyond Project in 2010.

Since then 2000 community members and stakeholders have been involved in a variety of deliberative processes including World and Conversation Cafés, the Deliberative Survey, the Deliberative Survey and Designing our City Forums, the Geraldton Feel Campaign and the

Designing Our Neighbourhood Stakeholder Workshops.

These extensive processes have enabled our community to develop a shared vision for the future that is considerate of global, regional and local trends. This vision has been captured in the 2029 and Beyond Community Charter.

The Charter not only clearly reflects the values and aspirations the community has for the future of the City region, it protects them while providing direction on how balanced outcomes can be achieved through the five pillars of sustainability framework. In February City Council endorsed the Charter to be used as a tool to guide both internal and external decision making and currently, the Charter is informing the development of the *2029 and Beyond Community Action Plan*.

The Community Action Plan will be the community's road map to reaching our shared vision. It comprises the strategies for sustainable growth and development and lists actions all sectors of government, the private sector, community agencies and the community can undertake to achieve our desired future. As both a resident and member of the 2029 and Beyond Team I feel very privileged to be part of a community and local government that is working together to plan our future.

The People and Passion: the 2029 Team in their own words:

2029 and Beyond Project Coordinator Janell Kopplhuber talks about her passion:

"Funny how things happen. My involvement in the Project began in early 2010 when I, along with 42 other members of the community, volunteered as 'Champions' and helped develop our community's vision for the future of the place we call home. Now, in 2012, I've got the job of helping write the landmark "Community Charter" and the "Community Action Plan"- and it feels fantastic!

Chloe Opalinski talks about community engagement:

"My role is about engaging with the community to involve as many people as possible in the decision making process. I took on this role to help improve the relationship between the City and the community and my goal is to help people understand that by participating in deliberative processes such as the Designing our Neighbourhood Workshops they are collaborating with the City to make the place they call home a better place to live."

Chontarle Bellottie on her role as a Community Engagement Officer.

“Community engagement enables the community to influence decisions made by Council that may affect people’s lifestyles, culture and values. As an Indigenous member of the community I believe home is where the heart is and that the City can build a strong relationship with its Indigenous population through positive community engagement which creates a sense of place for families in our city.”

Trish Delaney talks about being the City’s Indigenous Community Development Officer:

“My work focuses on facilitating a dialogue between the Aboriginal community and the City so their collective voice is heard. Focus groups with the Aboriginal community will help us prevent further marginalisation and possible exclusion of Aboriginal people as City population increases due to resource projects planned for the region.

“An outcome we’re all working towards is an Aboriginal Cultural Interpretive Centre and education precinct.

“A partnership with the Combined University Centre for Rural Health and the Midwest Aboriginal Organisations Alliance (MAOA) is addressing the first priority issue: a severe shortage of housing for Aboriginal people. The first result - collaborative research paper into Aboriginal housing and current housing supply and access - is about to be launched for discussion.

5. Healthy Lifestyle

Demonstrate a clear understanding of the health issues that affect communities, supported by appropriate research and a commitment to making improvements. It’s not just about mental and physical health of individuals, it is a ‘holistic’ assessment of the elements which, when added together, contribute to a range of ‘quality of life’ factors which then promote a sense of well being.

Emily O’Hara, Healthy Communities Coordinator talks about “Go GERO!”

“It was the air initially, that drew me to Geraldton. Crisp, sweet, yet salty. A refreshing combination. I could feel the vibrancy of Geraldton, as I casually rode a bike along the foreshore and throughout the town. Geraldton felt like a place of opportunity. The City received an Australian Government Healthy Communities Initiative Grant from the Federal Government and that said to me: ‘Geraldton has got it going on, their keeping ahead of the pace’.

“The Healthy Communities Initiative aims to reduce overweight and obesity within the target populations by involving adults in physical activity and healthy eating. This project enables the community to shine: growing skills, improving knowledge, strengthening relationships within one’s self along with the community of which we live. Take the community garden aspect of the project for example. Go GERO! aims to establish up to three community gardens in the City.

“Obesity and chronic disease paint an unpleasant picture, yet through Go GERO! those who struggle with the reality of chronic disease, can feel a sense of hope and support. Go GERO! Champions - local people who have encountered bumps in the road of life - shine with the opportunity that Go GERO! provides.

“One of the brilliant elements of Geraldton is that there is so much capacity to grow: the region, the

people, the places, the opportunities. I can't help but feel humbled by the opportunity to be in a place that has the feeling of a country town, yet the services of a great regional city. A place that myself and many new individuals and families from across Australia and the world now call home. Live. Laugh. Give. Believe. Go GERO!"

KidSport: sports free for all

Sport and recreation was identified in the 2029 and Beyond consultations and has now been signed off as important in the Community Charter. Sport makes for stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities.

An initiative called "KidSport and Community Volunteers" is increasing the number of children playing sport and parents volunteering by offering subsidised membership fees and assistance to clubs to train new members. Children who previously may not have been able to take part in organised sport due to financial constraints, are receiving membership fee subsidies and all the children of a family are included. The program strengthens clubs and contributes to the overall wellbeing of the community.

6. Strategic Planning

Demonstrate how the community determines its future and what planning processes are developed and how they align to create action plans to deliver the stated outcomes that the community desires.

Sara Walker, Organisational Development Coordinator says:

"I'm developing the City of Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan which outlines what will do to achieve the community's vision for our region.

"This 10 year plan, based on the extensive community consultation undertaken through the 2029 and Beyond project, forms part of the City's integrated strategic planning framework and sits above our Corporate Business Plan. It is informed by the 2029 and Beyond Community Charter and the Community Action Plan, which outlines key strategies for achieving the community's aspirations.

"The four year Corporate Business Plan outlines the City's priorities and actions for achieving the objectives of the Strategic Community Plan. To complete our planning framework, there is a City operational plan and individual team plans.

"We will monitor our progress through four key guiding principles: *Culture, Environment, Social, Economy and Governance*. Progress will be reported through annual reports."

Designing our city: town planning in partnership with the people

In August 2011 the City asked citizens to co-create the future of the City by taking part in a three day 'Designing our City' forum. More than 250 participants were asked what they liked about the place they call home; what they imagined Geraldton to be like in 2029 and what they wouldn't want to lose as the City grows.

Together with a multi-disciplinary team consisting of experts in planning and urban design and a cross section of local and state government agencies and experts, participants (approx. 100 self-

selected, 100 randomly selected and 50 invited stakeholders) deliberated population growth and planning constraints and came up with a town plan that is being used to inform the development of the Local Town Planning Scheme and has also become the foundation building block of ongoing precinct planning activities the City is currently undertaking.

As a result three suburbs adjacent to each other have been identified as in most need for rejuvenation. Key infrastructure stakeholders in the sub-region have entered into a *Partnership Working Group Agreement* for cohesive project delivery. The result will be a precinct plan endorsed by the community members and stakeholders, which will inform the Local Town Planning Scheme. This Partnership Agreement is the first of its kind in the City region that involves State and local government, private organisations and service providers and has already set a benchmark for collaborative planning and community engagement.