



SHIRE OF IRWIN
DONGARA-PORT DENISON
A BRILLIANT BLEND

AGENDA FORUM

Tuesday 2 December 2025 – 6.00pm



NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the next Agenda Forum of the Shire of Irwin will be held in the Council Chambers, 11-13 Waldeck Street, Dongara at 5.00pm on Tuesday 2 December 2025.

Maurice Battilana
(ACTING) CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
28 November 2025



AGENDA & BUSINESS PAPERS

Agenda Forums and Ordinary Council Meetings for 2025 will be held on the following dates in the Council Chambers at 11-13 Waldeck Street, Dongara.

DATES	
Agenda Forum - 5.00pm	Ordinary Council Meeting – 6.00pm
2 December (Tuesday)	8 December (Monday)

Members of the public are always welcome to attend the Agenda Forums and Ordinary Council Meetings.

Agenda Forum Information

1. Your Council generally handles all business at Ordinary or Special Council Meetings.
2. From time to time Council may, for a Committee, Working Party or Steering group examine specific subjects and then report to Council.
3. The purpose of the Agenda Forum is for council members and community members to be informed on agenda items before the next Ordinary Council Meeting.
4. Generally, all meetings are open to the public. Occasionally Council will be required to deal with person, legal and other sensitive matters and on these occasions, Council will generally close that part of the meeting to the public. Every endeavour will be made to do this as the last item of business of the meeting.
5. **Public Questions Time:** It is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1995* to allow at least fifteen (15) minutes for public question time. At the Agenda Forum all questions asked must be related to the items listed on the Agenda Paper. Please note the following.
 - a) Meetings are scheduled for a 5.00pm start (unless otherwise advised)
 - b) Record your full name and suburb of resident on the Attendance Form available in the public seating area.
 - c) When invited by the Presiding Member to ask your question/s, please state your full name for the benefit of the note taker and those present,
 - d) A minimum of 15 minutes is allocated to Public Question Time, which may be extended at the discretion of the Presiding Member.
 - e) You may ask up to 2 questions before other members of the public will be invited to ask their questions to ensure all have an equal and fair opportunity to ask questions.
 - f) The Presiding Member may elect for written questions to be responded to as normal business correspondence.
 - g) The Presiding Member may decide that a question shall not be responded to where the same or similar questions has been asked at a previous meeting and a response has already been provided;
 - A statement has been made and is not reformed into a question; or a question is offensive or defamatory in nature and is not reformed into a question.
 - h) A question may be taken on notice by Council for a later response. Responses will be provided in writing to the member and summary will be included in the agenda of the next Ordinary Council Meeting of Council.
 - i) Members of the public are encouraged to raise matters relating to operations and administration through the Shire's Customer Request System.
 - j) Should you wish to provide written questions prior to the meeting please submit them by 4.00pm the day before the meeting. By submitting written questions, this assists the administration with preparing a response.
 - k) Should you wish to provide a presentation at the Agenda Forum, a request will need to be submitted in writing directly to the Chief Executive Officer by 4pm the day before the meeting. The presentation must be related to an item listed on the agenda paper.
 - l) Presentations have a time limit of 10 minutes and a limit of 2 representatives will be allowed to speak.
 - m) Agendas for the Agenda Forum and Ordinary Council Meetings are available to the public from the Shire of Irwin Administration Centre or via the Shire's Website www.irwin.gov.au seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting.
 - n) Recording of Minutes for Agenda Forums is not required by legislation however a summary of notes from the Agenda Forum will be presented to Council at the next Ordinary Council Meeting.
6. No person is to use any electronic, visual or audio recording device or instrument to record the proceedings of an Agenda Forum without the written permission of the Presiding Member.

Disclaimer

The Shire of Irwin:

- advises that the purpose of an Ordinary Council Meeting is to discuss and, where possible, make resolutions about items appearing in the agenda. No person should rely or act on the basis of any decision, advice or information provided by an Elected Member or Officer, or on the content of any discussion occurring during the course of the meeting. No person should rely on the decisions made by Council until formal written advice of the Council is received by that person.
- expressly disclaims any liability for any loss or damage whatsoever and howsoever caused arising out of reliance by any person or legal entity on any such act, omission or statement or intimation occurring during Agenda Forums, Council or Committee Meetings.
- disclaims any liability for any loss arising from any person or body relying on any statement, discussion, recommendation or decision in the audio recording. Council minutes provide the definitive record of Council's resolutions.

Nature of Council's Role in Decision Making

Advocacy	When Council advocates on its own behalf or on behalf of its community to another level of government/body/agency.
Executive	The substantial direction setting and oversight role of the Council e.g., performance of the Local Government's function under law, administration of Local Laws, adopting plans and reports, accepting tenders, directing operations, setting and amending budgets.
Legislative	Includes adopting local laws and local planning schemes.
Review	When Council reviews decisions made by Officers.
Quasi-judicial	When Council determines an application/matter that directly affects a person's rights and interests. The judicial character arises from the obligation to abide by the principles of natural justice e.g., local planning applications, building permits, other permits/licences (e.g. under the Health Act, Dog Act or local laws) and other decisions that may be appealable to the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT).

By allocating these roles, the Shire ensures that the Council's decision-making is structured and aligned with its legal responsibilities, allowing it to effectively govern, serve its community, and maintain compliance with applicable laws.

Notes for Members of the Public

Meeting Formalities

Shire of Irwin Council Meetings are governed by legislation and regulations. During the meeting, no member of the public may interrupt the meetings proceedings or enter into conversation.

Members of the public shall ensure that their mobile phones are switched off and not used during any Shire meeting.

Members of the public are hereby advised that in line with Council Policy CP48 – Recording of Council Minutes, no person is to use any electronic, visual or audio recording device or instrument to record the proceedings of a Council Meeting without the written permission of the Council.

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AGENDA (Draft)

of the

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

to be held

8 December 2025

Commencing at 6.00pm

- 1. DECLARATION OF OPENING / ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS**
- 2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE / APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Members

Councillor P Summers
Councillor J Melsom
Councillor A J Gillam
Councillor I Scott
Councillor S Hansen
Councillor L Berecz
Councillor L Musulin

Staff

Mr M Battilana
Mr M Connell
Ms F Boksmati
Mr M Jones
Miss P Machaka
Mr M Antony
Ms S Mearns

(Acting) Chief Executive Officer
Manager Development
Manager Community Services
Manager Operations
Manager Finance
Community Emergency Services Manager
Executive Assistant

Guests

Apologies

Approved Leave of Absence

Gallery

Items 3 – 9 will be dealt with at the Ordinary Council Meeting being held on Monday 8 December 2025 with the exception of Item 7 – Petitions and Deputations.

3. RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS PUBLIC QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME****5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST****6. APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE****7. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS****8. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES AND TABLING OF AGENDA FORUM NOTES****8.1 Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 25 November 2025**

The Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 25 November 2025 are included in the *Attachment Booklet – December 2025*.

RECOMMENDED:

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held 25 November 2025.

8.2 Agenda Forum Notes – 2 December 2025

At the Agenda Forum held 2 December 2025, Shire Officers presented background information and answered questions on items to be considered at the December 2025 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Notes from the Agenda Forum are included in the *Attachment Booklet – December 2025*.

RECOMMENDED:

That Council confirms the Notes of the Agenda Forum held 2 December 2025.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PERSON PRESIDING WITHOUT DISCUSSION

10. REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

10.1 Finance Reports

FIN 01-12/25 Accounts for Payment - November 2025	
Author:	S Clarkson, Senior Finance Officer
Responsible Officer:	P Machaka, Manager Finance
File Reference:	2.0057
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Simple Majority

This item will be published as a late item.

FIN 02-12/25 Monthly Financial Statements - October 2025	
Author:	P Machaka, Manager Finance
Responsible Officer:	S Ivers, Chief Executive Officer
File Reference:	2.0057
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Simple Majority

This item will be published as a late item.

10.2 Development Reports

DEV 01-12/25 November 2025 Development Delegated and Authorised Authority Report	
Author:	M Connell, Manager Development
Responsible Officer:	S Ivers, Chief Executive Officer
File Reference:	3.00125
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Simple Majority

Report Purpose:

For Council to receive the partial November 2025 Development Delegated and Authorised Authority Report.

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
That Council by Simple Majority, receives the November 2025 Development Delegated and Authorised Authority Report, as contained in DEV 01-12/25 Attachment 1.

Background:

Local governments utilise levels of delegated authority to undertake day-to-day statutory functions, thereby allowing Council to focus on policy development, representation, strategic planning and community leadership, with the organisation focussing on the day-to-day operations of the Shire.

The use of delegated authority means the large volume of routine work can be effectively managed and acted on promptly, which in turn facilitates efficient service delivery to the community.

In addition, as of 1 July 2024, the determination of development applications for single houses or any development associated with a single house (excluding development associated with a heritage place), can now only be done by the CEO or authorised employees of the local government.

Officer's Comment:

This report presents the details of development functions made under delegated or authorised authority for the partial month of November 2025 (up until 25 November 2025), with 8 building permits/certificates, 3 single house applications and 1 application for development approval having been issued.

Consultation:

Nil.

Statutory Environment:

- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996*
- *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*

Policy Implications:

Nil.

Financial/Resource Implications:

Nil.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031

Strategy 4.2.1 Ensure compliance whilst embracing innovation and better practice principles

Strategy 4.3.2 Adopt and follow better practice processes

Attachments:

Attachment Booklet – December 2025

DEV 01-12/25 Attachment 1: November 2025 Development Delegated and Authorised Authority Report

DEV 02-12/25 Disposal of Land by Lease – Dongara Irwin Race Club	
Author:	M Connell, Manager Development
Responsible Officer:	S Ivers, Chief Executive Officer
File Reference:	P25/70 – A8942
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Simple

Report Purpose:

For Council to consider the disposal by way of a new lease of portion of Reserve 40590 Brennand Road, Dongara to the Dongara – Irwin Race Club (Inc).

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
<p>That Council by Simple Majority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dispose by way of lease portion of Reserve 40590 (Lot 11765) Brennand Road, Dongara to the Dongara – Irwin Race Club (Inc) for the purpose of Equestrian Race Club including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. conducting public horse racing meetings; b. use and operation of and equestrian centre for equestrian activities; and c. such other incidental uses as may be required from the Lessor from time to time consistent with the vesting of the land in the Lessor for recreational purposes. 2. Set the conditions of the lease as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a term of twenty one (21) years commencing on the date at which the consent of the Minister for Lands is granted; and b. a lease fee of \$1.00 per annum. 3. Authorise the Chief Executive Officer to execute all documents necessary for the lease.

Background:

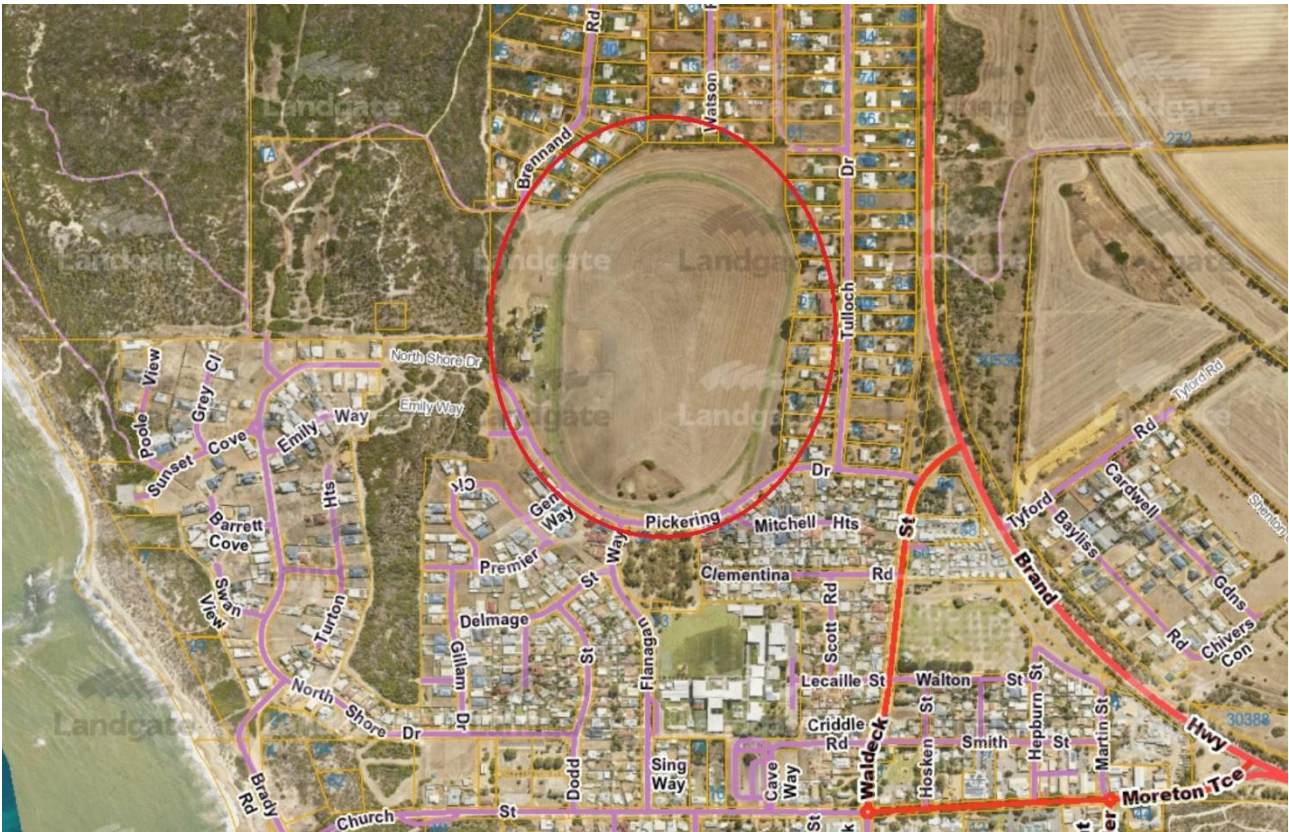
Reserve 40590 comprises Lot 11765 on Deposited Plan 14550 and is vested in the Shire for the purpose of "Recreation". The Shire has been granted care, control and management of the site under a Management Order with the power to lease for any term not exceeding 21 years, subject to the consent of the Minister for Lands.

The site is occupied by the Dongara Irwin Race Club (Club) who currently lease the premises. The current lease does not expire until 1 July 2029, however the Club have requested an early extension of the lease period to provide long-term security that will enable them to:

- Continue running the Club in a way that supports local tourism and encourages community participation in a variety of events;
- Maintain the Club as a sustainable organisation that brings visitors to town, particularly on race days;
- Invest in planned infrastructure upgrades, including racetrack improvements and the installation of a new sprinkler system;
- Access funding opportunities for upgrading the racetrack and horse yards;
- Support future committee succession by ensuring certainty of tenure; and

- Continue attracting and retaining sponsors.

Location Plan



Officer's Comment:

The draft lease is contained in DEV 02-12/25 Confidential Attachment 1 and key aspects of the lease are:

- The lease is for the site along with all buildings and improvements, which are to be maintained, replaced, repaired, cleaned and kept in good repair by the Lessee.
- The lease is for a term of 21 years.
- The proposed lease rent is to be \$1.00, which is the equivalent to the old 'peppercorn' lease term.
- The permitted purpose of the lease is for equestrian activities including conducting public horse racing meetings and incidental recreational purposes.
- The Lessee may make the premises available for hire on a casual basis for equestrian purposes or private functions.
- The lessee is required to pay all outgoings and charges.

The draft lease is generally consistent with the substantive terms of the current lease but has updated terms and conditions to reflect contemporary lease drafting standards.

Consultation:

Nil.

Statutory Environment:

Section 3.58 of the *Local Government Act 1995* details the process governing 'disposing of property' which includes disposal by way of lease.

Disposal would normally involve getting a valuation for the land and publicly advertising the disposal. However there is an exemption under section 3.58(5)(d) of the Act which refers to "any other disposition that is excluded by regulations from the application of this section".

As the Dongara – Irwin Race Club is an incorporated body with charitable objects then the exemption from section 3.58 applies and advertising and valuation is not required.

Policy Implications:

Nil.

Financial/Resource Implications:

The draft lease proposes the lease rent to be \$1.00 with no rent reviews. The preparation, execution and registration of the lease is estimated at \$5,000 and the Club have agreed to cover all costs.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031

Strategy 1.2.4 Acknowledge and celebrate volunteers and community advocates

Strategy 4.2.1 Ensure compliance whilst embracing innovation and better practice principles.

Attachments:

Confidential Attachment Booklet – December 2025

DEV 02-12/25 Confidential Attachment 1: Draft Lease

10.3 Community Services Reports

COM 01-11/25 CSRFF Dongara Golf Course Reticulation Upgrade Funding Model	
Author:	F Boksmati, Acting Manager Community Services
Responsible Officer:	S Ivers, Chief Executive Officer
File Reference:	3.00484
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Absolute Majority

Report Purpose:

For Council to consider the Dongara Golf Club's request to renew and upgrade the existing Dongara Golf Course reticulation and control system using the recommended project funding model following the unsuccessful CSRFF grant application.

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
<p>That Council by Absolute Majority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports the updated funding model for the \$200,000 project to upgrade the golf course reticulation, control system, water pumping system, and installation of a shed whereby: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golf Club installs the shed at their own cost, valued at \$40,000, reducing the remaining project cost to \$160,000 in 2025/26. • The Shire finances the remaining project cost through a four-year loan, initiated in 2026/27, with loan repayments of \$40,000 per annum set over the four-year term. • Year 1: The Golf Club contributes 100% of the loan repayment (\$40,000) in 2026/27. • Years 2, 3, and 4: The annual \$40,000 repayment is shared 50% Shire and 50% Golf Club (\$20,000 each per year) (2027/28 – 2029/30) 2) Commits a cash contribution of \$20,000 per financial year for three years (years 2, 3 and 4), commencing in the 2027/28 Financial Year Annual Budget, up to and including the 2029/30 Financial Year Annual Budget, equating to total contribution of \$60,000 or approximately 40% of the total project value of \$160,000.

Background:

The Dongara Golf Club, established in 1932, has been a central part of the community for over 90 years. It is a vital community asset that provides recreational opportunities, promotes physical health, and fosters social connections for those interested in the sport of golf or as a function venue available to the general public. With over 130 regular members, omitting visitation by tourists and local visitors which has also steadily increased annually, maintaining a quality golf course is essential to operations and ensuring the club's sustainability locally and to support local tourism.

The existing reticulation and control system is heavily contributing to inefficiencies, and presents the following three (3) key contributory challenges;

1. **Outdated Technology:** The existing system is over 20 years old and lacks modern features such as smart scheduling and moisture sensing.

2. **High Water Usage:** Inefficient watering practices result in excessive water consumption, increasing costs and negatively impacting the environment.
3. **Maintenance Concerns:** Frequent breakdowns and costly repairs divert necessary resources and staff from standard club operations.

The upgrade plan includes replacement of controller valves and wiring, upgrade to the pumping system, installation of a commercial plus water meter, and the supply and installation of an 8 metre by 8metre shed to house the upgraded system.

Expected benefits of the upgrade includes;

1. **Water Savings:** Estimated reduction in water usage by up to 30% annually
2. **Cost Reduction:** Decreased operational costs and a reduction in water, electricity and maintenance bills
3. **Environmental Impact:** Provides the opportunity to align with the club's and environmental sustainability goals including improved compliance with regulations
4. **Enhanced experience:** Improved course conditions results in increased member satisfaction and the likelihood of returning visitors.

The previous CSRFF grant application sought funding to support a total project value of \$424,461. The grant was unsuccessful, requiring reassessment of the project scope and funding structure. Following review, the project has been refined to align with essential components and available financial capacity, now estimated at \$200,000.

Officer's Comment:

The renewal and upgrade of the Dongara Golf Club reticulation control system is essential for the sustainability and quality of the club, and the satisfaction of all members and visitors. The course itself is renowned for its spectacular reviews and quality greens, providing recreational opportunities to not only members, but to the general public, and is highly popular with visiting tourists. With the reticulation system at end of life, there is risk of losing the course. Investing in an upgrade and more modern technology represents a crucial step towards supporting a sustainable and successful future for the Dongara Golf Club with water usage and maintenance costs also anticipated to reduce significantly.

The revised funding arrangement ensures the project remains viable and equitable, with the Golf Club committing a substantial upfront investment and ongoing contributions. The phased cost-sharing model supports project progression while allowing flexibility to leverage future grant opportunities.

Consultation:

- Craig Vinci, Regional Manager Mid West - Gascoyne for Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSCI)
- Golf WA have provided a letter of support for this project
- Dongara Golf Club Inc.

Statutory Environment:

Local Government Act 1995

Policy Implications:

Nil

Financial/Resource Implications:

The Shire will undertake a four-year loan to finance the \$160,000 of the project remaining, with repayments shared as outlined. The revised arrangement reduces the Shire's commitment in Year 1 (one) and spreads its contribution over subsequent years.

The Shire and Club will continue to seek external funding opportunities to reduce the total cost impact.

A revised funding model is being proposed to accommodate the work which essential components can be completed at an estimated project cost of \$200,000

Revised Funding Approach:

2025/26 The Golf Club installs the shed to house the reticulation and pumping systems at their own cost, valued at \$40,000, reducing the remaining project cost to \$160,000.

The Shire finances the remaining project cost of \$160,000 through a four-year loan with loan repayments of \$40,000 per annum set over the four-year term.

Year 1 (2026/27): The Golf Club contributes 100% of the loan repayment (\$40,000).

Years 2, 3, and 4 (2027/28 – 2029/30): The annual \$40,000 repayment is shared 50% Shire and 50% Golf Club (\$20,000 each per year).

This approach enables the project to proceed despite the unsuccessful grant application, while maintaining a shared cost structure and minimising the Shire's early financial burden.

The Shire and the Golf Club will continue to actively pursue alternative funding sources to further reduce financial exposure.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031:

Strategy 1.1.1 Identify and support services, events and programs for building capacity, social inclusion and wellbeing (including those catering for families, youth and seniors)

Strategy 1.1.2 Advocate for retention of existing and enhanced facilities and health and social support services

identity and lifestyle

Strategy 1.2.3 Support community-initiated projects and activities

Strategy 3.1.1 Prepare for and manage natural disasters and environmental risks

Strategy 3.1.3 Identify, provide and manage Shire assets (including community infrastructure, Shire controlled reserves and freehold land) in accordance with agreed service levels

Strategy 4.1.1 Enhance the Shire's profile through marketing initiatives and community engagement

Strategy 4.1.3 Maintain effective working relationships with relevant stakeholders

Attachments:

Nil

COM 02-12/25 Magic on Moreton Budget Amendment	
Author:	T Tang, Tourism and Events Officer
Responsible Officer:	F Boksmati, Manager Community Services
File Reference:	2.00046
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Absolute Majority

Report Purpose:

For Council to consider and support an increase to the Magic on Moreton 2025 event budget from \$15,000 to \$19,000, ensuring adequate funding for entertainment, logistics and community engagement activities associated with the event scheduled for Saturday, 6 December 2025.

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
<p>That Council by Absolute Majority,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports the proposed increase of the Magic on Moreton 2025 event budget from \$15,000 to \$19,000 within the 2025/26 Financial Year to ensure sufficient funding for entertainment, logistics, and community engagement activities associated with the event. 2) Notes that the additional expenditure will be incorporated into the existing Community Services 2025/26 event budget.

Background:

Magic on Moreton has become one of the Shire of Irwin's most popular community events since its introduction in 2021, celebrating the vibrancy of the Shire during the festive season. The event transforms Moreton Terrace into a Christmas-themed street festival featuring local food and market stalls, roving entertainment, live music and a range of family-friendly activities for residents and visitors.

In 2024, the event was delivered with a budget of approximately \$28,500, which supported a full program of entertainment, decorations and operational requirements. For 2025, the Shire allocated \$15,000 to the event, supplemented by \$6,000 in sponsorship from Mitsui. Several cost-saving measures have also been applied, including in-kind toilet hire (approx. \$1,000 saving) and live music provided by the Dongara Hotel Motel (approx. \$4,000 saving).

Despite these efficiencies, the 2025 program introduces additional children's entertainment and enhanced Christmas decorations to further strengthen community engagement and the festive atmosphere. The current funding allocation is therefore insufficient to deliver the event to the standard expected by the community. An increase to the event budget is requested to ensure Magic on Moreton 2025 remains a safe, inclusive and high-quality celebration.

Officer's Comment:

Magic on Moreton is one of the Shire's key community events, celebrating the festive season and bringing together residents, visitors, and local businesses for an afternoon of food, markets, live music, and entertainment along Moreton Terrace.

For 2025, the event will maintain its successful format while adding more children's activities and Christmas decorations to enhance the family-friendly atmosphere. Despite sponsorship from Mitsui and cost-saving measures, the expanded program and annual 5% increase in service costs have placed pressure on the event budget.

An increase in the budget from \$15,000 to \$19,000 is therefore proposed to ensure the event can continue to meet community expectations and deliver a safe, vibrant, and high-quality celebration.

Consultation:

The Manager Community Services engaged with Mitsui via email to secure sponsorship for the Magic on Moreton event and held in-person discussions with Nic and Dylan Grove, Managers of the Dongara Hotel Motel, in October 2025 to seek local business support. As a result of these engagements, both parties confirmed their sponsorship and participation in the event, with the Shire's contribution to the Hotel as per previous years, being absorbed by the business.

During the Council Agenda Forum held on 21 October 2025, the event format and key components were presented to Council for direction and confirmation, ensuring alignment with Council objectives and community expectations.

Statutory Environment:

Local Government Act 1995

Policy Implications:

Nil

Financial/Resource Implications:

The proposed increase from \$15,000 to \$19,000 for the 2025/26 Financial Year reflects the additional costs associated with expanded children's entertainment, enhanced Christmas decorations and general increases in service costs of approximately 5% annually.

The revised budget will ensure adequate funding for logistics, entertainment and community engagement activities, enabling the event to continue meeting community expectations while maintaining safe and inclusive delivery.

As this proposed budget increase is managed internally, the Community Services team would be required to accommodate the additional costs within the existing events budget. This may result in reduced allocations for other community events throughout the year to offset the increased expenditure for Magic on Moreton.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031

Strategy 1.1 The community has access to suitable community spaces, vibrant events and relevant services

Strategy 2.1 Opportunities are maximised to promote economic growth and local development

Strategy 4.1 An engaged and inclusive community

Attachments:

Nil

COM 03-12/25 Community Assistance Scheme and Events Committee – Community Members	
Author:	G Jewell, Community Development Officer
Responsible Officer:	F Boksmati, Manager Community Services
File Reference:	3.0016
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Absolute Majority

Report Purpose:

For Council to consider appointing two (2) community members to join the Community Assistance Scheme and Events (CASE) Committee.

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
That Council, by Absolute Majority, appoint Kelli Dawson and Steph Bligh-Lee as the CASE Committee Community Members for a term of two (2) years or in line with the Local Government Ordinary Election, expiring October 2027.

Background:

The role of the CASE committee is to administer, assist and evaluate the distribution of the Community Assistance Scheme funding within budgetary guidelines approved annually by Council. The CASE committee also discuss and provide recommendations to event organisers to stimulate and encourage projects, events or activities to meet the needs of the community and offer the best opportunity to provide economic benefits and potential to market Dongara and Port Denison outside the Shire.

The CASE Committee Terms of Reference for Community Members states that the CASE committee will consist of up to five members and that membership will be:

- Manager, Community Services
- 2 x Elected Members; and
- 2 x Community Members.

The CASE Committee Terms of Reference for Community members also states that the tenure of the committee will be in accordance with Section 5.11 of the Local Government Act (1995) and that membership of the committee continues until;

- The person no longer holds office by virtue of which the person became a member;
- The person resigns from membership of the committee;
- The committee is disbanded; or
- The next ordinary elections day, whichever happens first.

In anticipation of the appointment of two (2) Councillors as Elected Member delegates to the CASE Committee, the Community Development Officer (CDO) commenced advertising for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to fill the two (2) vacant committee positions held by community members. Two (2) EOI's were received. The two (2) EOI's from the remaining candidates are now being presented to Council for review.

The candidates are:

- Ms Kelli Dawson (new candidate)
- Mrs Steph Bligh-Lee (current committee member re-nominated)

Officer's Comment:

To ensure transparency, the candidates have been presented to Council to consider and appoint. Given the suitability of the expressions of interest received and given that only two expressions of interest have been submitted, it is recommended that these community member vacancies be filled unopposed.

Consultation:

The Manager Community Services engaged with Mitsui via email to secure sponsorship for the Magic on Moreton event and held in-person discussions with Nic and Dylan Grove, Managers of the Dongara Hotel Motel, in October 2025 to seek local business support. As a result of these engagements, both parties confirmed their sponsorship and participation in the event, with the Shire's contribution to the Hotel as per previous years, being absorbed by the business.

During the Council Agenda Forum held on 21 October 2025, the event format and key components were presented to Council for direction and confirmation, ensuring alignment with Council objectives and community expectations.

Statutory Environment:

Local Government Act 1995

- Section 5.8 Establishment of committees

Policy Implications:

C7 Financial Assistance Funding Policy

Community Assistance Scheme and Events Committee – Terms of Reference for Committee Members

Financial/Resource Implications:

At the August Ordinary Council Meeting, Council adopted the 2025/26 budget including a \$30,000 allocation to the Community Assistance Scheme. The CASE committee will make recommendations to Council for the expenditure of this allocation and for future budget allocations.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031

- 1.1.1 Identify and support services, events and programs for building capacity, social inclusion and wellbeing (including those catering for families, youth and seniors)
- 1.2 Arts, culture, heritage and recreation are valued
 - 1.2.2 Support *the strong sporting culture that shapes the Shire of Irwin's identity and lifestyle*
 - 1.2.3 Support *community-initiated projects and activities*
- 4.1.1 Enhance the Shire's profile through marketing initiatives and community engagement

Attachments:

Confidential Attachment Booklet – December 2025

COM 03-12/25 Attachment 1: 2025 CASE Committee EOI Candidate Profiles and Application Letter

COM 04-12/25 Visitor Centre Closure of Saturday Operations	
Author:	F Boksmati, Manager Community Services
Responsible Officer:	S Ivers, Chief Executive Officer
File Reference:	2.00046
Council Role:	Executive
Voting Requirements:	Simple

Report Purpose:

For Council to note the cessation of Saturday operations at the Shire of Irwin Visitor Centre, currently staffed from 9.00am to 12.00pm, effective from 29 November 2025, due to low visitation levels and the cost-inefficiency of maintaining these hours.

Officer Recommendation:

RECOMMENDED:
<p>That Council by Absolute Majority,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Notes the permanent cessation of the Shire of Irwin Visitor Centre operations on Saturdays, effective from 29 November 2025, due to low visitation and disproportionate staffing costs 2) Notes the implementation of alternative visitor information measures to ensure continued access to essential tourism resources

Background:

The Shire of Irwin Visitor Centre provides tourism information services for visitors, with current operating hours including a Saturday shift from 9.00am to 12.00pm. Historical visitation data over several years shows consistently low attendance on Saturdays, with minimal community or visitor demand during these times.

A review of the 2025 operational year shows that Customer Service Officers collectively covered 47 Saturday shifts at the Shire of Irwin Visitor Centre. These shifts were delivered consistently throughout the year as part of the Centre's weekend operating schedule. Across these 47 Saturdays, 22 days recorded zero visitor interactions, demonstrating that nearly half of all Saturday openings resulted in no foot traffic, calls, or visitor enquiries. When interactions did occur, they remained minimal. The total annual interaction count results in an average of only two (2) visitors per Saturday, further reinforcing that weekend demand for in-person visitor servicing has remained extremely low throughout 2025. The current cost of operating on Saturdays annual is approximately \$6,500.

More recent data continues to show no improvement in visitation, even during traditionally higher-activity periods. Between 1 August and 25 October 2025, which aligns with peak tourism season, the Visitor Centre operated for 13 consecutive Saturdays. During this 13-week period, the Centre recorded a total of only 13 interactions, averaging one visitor per Saturday. This confirms that the longstanding pattern of low visitation remains unchanged even when visitor numbers in the region are typically at their highest.

Despite ongoing efforts to promote tourism engagement, the level of foot traffic received does not justify the staffing and operational costs associated with remaining open on Saturdays.

To maintain responsible resource allocation and align service levels with actual community need, the Shire has reviewed available alternatives to continue providing accessible tourism information without requiring physical staffing on weekends.

Officer's Comment:

Based on a review of previous years' visitation statistics and current resourcing considerations, it is evident that Saturday operations at the Visitor Centre are no longer justified. Attendance during the three-hour Saturday shift remains extremely low, and the staffing cost required to maintain this opening period significantly outweighs the benefit to the community. In addition to the low return on investment, the impact on staff has been a key factor in assessing operational viability.

Saturday shifts require Officers to work weekends on a rotational basis, reducing opportunities for consistent family time and interrupting normal weekend routines. These shifts fall outside standard business hours, create work-life balance challenges, and provide limited organisational benefit, particularly given that no Shire administrative duties are undertaken during these periods.

Transitioning away from Saturday openings will enable the Shire to better support staff wellbeing, implement more sustainable rostering practices, and redirect resources toward activities that provide greater value to the organisation and community.

To ensure visitor information remains accessible, a range of alternative measures will be implemented, including:

- Enhanced tourism information on the Shire's website, providing 24/7 access to maps, brochures, trails, attractions, tours, and local services.
- A display stand positioned outside the Visitor Centre containing maps and brochures available for collection at any time.
- A prominently displayed "Events and What's Coming Up" calendar to highlight upcoming activities and community events.

These alternative arrangements will maintain effective access to visitor information while eliminating the need for weekend staffing.

Consultation:

Internal consultation has been undertaken with Community Services staff to assess operational impacts and confirm that no Shire administrative duties are undertaken during the Saturday shift. As such, ceasing Saturday operations does not affect the Shire's statutory or administrative obligations. Staff also provided feedback that the requirement to work Saturdays had ongoing impacts on their ability to spend allocated weekends with their families, noting the personal and work-life balance challenges created by these shifts.

At the Councillor Discussion Session held on 28 November 2023, Council considered Visitor Centre opening hours during the Christmas period. Councillors acknowledged previous years' visitation statistics and the costs associated with staffing the Centre during traditionally low-activity periods. It was agreed that administrative closure could be supported through enhanced alternative visitor information methods, including notices on windows, website updates, a front-of-building information stand, and a publicly displayed Events Calendar.

External consultation was not required, as alternative visitor information methods ensure continued access to essential tourism information.

Statutory Environment:

Local Government Act 1995

Policy Implications:

Nil

Financial/Resource Implications:

The cessation of Saturday operations will reduce staffing costs currently allocated to physically manning the Visitor Centre during low-demand periods. Resources saved can be reallocated to enhance digital and printed visitor information, thereby improving service accessibility without increasing operational budgets.

Maintaining Saturday operations would continue to incur staffing costs without demonstrated benefit to the community or visitors.

Additionally, no Shire administrative duties are conducted during Saturday operations, meaning closure will not affect statutory responsibilities or service obligations.

The proposed cessation aligns service delivery with actual demand and supports more efficient allocation of staffing resources.

Strategic Implications:

Our Brilliant Future – Strategic Community Plan 2021 – 2031

Strategy 1.1 The community has access to suitable community spaces, vibrant events and relevant services

Strategy 2.1 Opportunities are maximised to promote economic growth and local development

Attachments:

Nil

10.4 Operations Reports**10.5 Office of the CEO Reports****10.6 Committee Reports**

Items 11 – 14 will be dealt with at the Ordinary Council Meeting being held on Monday 8 December 2025.

11. MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN**12. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN****13. URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY PERSON PRESIDING OR BY DECISION****14. MATTERS FOR WHICH THE MEETING IS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC****15. CLOSURE**