

## Ningaloo Centre will be centrepiece for regional tourism

Shire of Exmouth Commissioner Ian Fletcher is confident that the Ningaloo Centre project will be a jewel in Exmouth's crown and a major draw card for regional tourism.

Mr Fletcher said that in the last four months Shire staff and a team of experts had been analysing every aspect of the Ningaloo Centre project and putting together plans to future proof the centre.

The Shire had engaged specialist assistance and advice from the WA Museum and National Anzac Centre, who were working to complete an operational plan for the Centre.

Mr Fletcher said WA Museum CEO Alec Coles, while recognising the challenges of the project, was excited by the possibilities of the Centre and was working with the Museum's regional director James Dexter to help activate the centre's gallery space.

The National Anzac Centre's Matthew Hammond had been seconded to the Shire to help put in place a plan to successfully occupy the centre.

In addition, NS Projects, has been appointed as the Shire's representative to oversee the construction and fit out of the building and manage the practical completion and defects liability period. NS Projects has extensive experience managing projects that bring together various stakeholders in a purpose built facility.

"It is no secret that this project has been controversial in some sections of the local community in the past and that the Corruption and Crime Commission inquiry cast a considerable shadow over it," Commissioner Fletcher said.

"Since arriving at the Shire in January it has become clear that from the outset, not enough planning and consideration was given to how the centre was going to operate.

"As a Shire, we have been grappling with these issues in recent months but I am confident that we have now



**Almost done:** Landscaping is underway at the Ningaloo Centre. *Photo credit HRM productions*

worked ourselves into a position where we can make this building fulfil its potential."

Mr Fletcher said the aquarium project has been a particular focus and acknowledged that there were concerns about how the aquarium would be maintained.

"But I am confident that we can develop a good operating plan that will see the tank open and a centrepiece of the facility," he said.

"However until we have got it right, we will not put any of the Ningaloo Reef's incredible marine life in it."

Mr Fletcher said he hoped that after a rough start, the community would embrace the centre as its own and be proud of the facilities it offered the community and its visitors.

"The Ningaloo Centre will be a focal point of activity in Exmouth and when you combine it with what this town has to offer, it has the potential to become an international tourism destination," he said.

"I would love to see this centre become a driving force for the local tourism economy and with the help of some dedicated staff, a team of experts from around the State and careful planning and analysis, I am confident we can now achieve that aim."

March 2017

## Community reference group to provide advice to council

The Shire of Exmouth has established a Strategic Community Reference Group (SCRG) to advise Council on matters of significant community interest and provide input into the Shire's strategic planning processes.

Commissioner Ian Fletcher approved the establishment of the Committee at this month's council meeting. He told those attending the meeting that the group was an important first step towards opening channels of communication between the Shire and the community and restoring trust following the recent Corruption and Crime Commission investigations.

Commissioner Fletcher said a number of key groups,

organisations and individuals had been identified to be part of the group. They represented a broad cross section of the community and a diversity of views in areas including local business, seniors, tourism, defence, health, sport and culture and environment.

The group would also have representation from Council and the Chief Executive Officer of the Shire.

Kerry Graham has accepted the role of Chairperson and Mark Lucas was nominated as the Deputy chair.

The Strategic Community Reference Group's terms of reference will be finalised in coming weeks with the group to meet on April 11, 2017.

## Have your say on Exmouth's future

Exmouth residents will be asked to consider their goals and aspirations for the local community when the Shire of Exmouth reviews its Strategic Community Plan this year.

The Exmouth Strategic Community Plan document identifies the needs and priorities of the Exmouth community and governs all future Council and Shire operations.

It is a community driven document that is developed in response to resident's views on what Exmouth's social, economic, environmental and governance objectives should be.

The review process will kick off in June with a series of public meetings scheduled from the 6-8 of June. These will be followed by focus group meetings and a community survey to give all residents the opportunity to have a say in setting the strategic direction of the Shire.

For more information on the review process please contact the Shire on 9949 3000 or e-mail [communications@exmouth.wa.gov.au](mailto:communications@exmouth.wa.gov.au).

## Internal Governance review continues

Community members attending the Shire of Exmouth Annual Electors Meeting this month were told to expect honesty, integrity, excellence and respect when dealing with the Shire of Exmouth.

The Shire is working with the Department of Local Government to review the Shire's policies and delegations and provide training to staff and elected members of Council .

Elected members will complete compulsory Department of Local Government training by 30 June, 2017. The training will include instruction on meeting procedures, roles and responsibilities, integrated planning and reporting, financial interest and financial management responsibilities for elected members.

"It is very important that Councillors understand their roles and responsibilities under the Local Government Act and under the terms of their suspension, Councillors have to complete this training before they can be returned to office," Commissioner Ian Fletcher said.