

Ordinary Council Meeting 12 November 2024 – Public Question Time

Summary of Questions on Notice and Preliminary Responses

Jane Di Sabato, Coolbellup

Subject: Turtles and Fox Control

Q1. Foxes have had an impact on our local native fauna at Bibra Lake – last year killing over 120 turtles during the dry autumn.

This summer is predicted to be the hottest and driest on record by the Bureau of Meteorology. Again, Bibra Lake will be subject to drying. More effective fox control will be essential to protecting turtles this summer.

This year already, Turtle Trackers have noted fox predation of numerous turtle nests and multiple adult female turtles, with one fox being interrupted during attempted predation in daylight hours.

Fox control is most effective and economical when coordinated over a larger area.

Will the City of Cockburn live up to its claim of being environmentally conscious, be forward thinking and lead action in this area by increasing fox control at Bibra Lake from two to four times per year, and also work with the Perth South West Alliance Group and fox controllers to coordinate fox control for better environmental and more economical outcomes?

A1. While there is a high probability of a warmer than average summer, the Bureau's long-term forecast indicates that rainfall between December and February is more likely to be consistent with the historical median. The predictions indicate a 45%-55% chance of the historical average being exceeded.

Perth has also received 52mm of rain in October and November 2024, which is more than double the amount of rainfall received between October 2023 and April 2024. This early rainfall data and projections are encouraging for the wetlands in the City of Cockburn, including Bibra Lake.

Regarding fox control, the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance (PSWMA) agreed to investigate commencing a targeted control program across the region at its meeting on November 7.

The control program is intended to be complemented by a regional monitoring study to review its impact on local populations. Opportunities for the Turtle Trackers to collect data will be considered throughout the preparation of monitoring program scope.

All member Local Governments are supportive of this project, which is testament to the advocacy efforts of the Turtle Tracker volunteers.

Q2. Turtle nesting cages (now defunct) were not removed in time for turtle nesting at Bibra Lake as promised this year. Will the Council set a date during August 2025, for the removal of nesting cages from the Bibra Lake foreshore, in preparation for the 2025 nesting season, so that turtles can have cage free areas to nest, and revegetation of those areas can be commenced?

A2. The scope of the City's annual turtle monitoring program required the expert consultants from Murdoch University to recommend alternative sites for the nesting cages.

The ideal relocation site would have an established turtle population but would also be inaccessible to Quenda, which have been observed to predate upon the eggs at Bibra Lake.

Unfortunately, the 2024 monitoring program was significantly delayed because of the drying out of wetlands that occurred across the region.

The advice on relocation sites was therefore not received before the current nesting season commenced. Relocation of the cages should not occur during nesting season because of the high probability of disturbing the surrounding nests.

Following the winter rainfall, the 2024 monitoring has now been completed with the final report due to be submitted to the City in the coming weeks. This means that the cages will be relocated well before the 2025 nesting season.

The City also obtained quotes to remove the cages and place them in temporary storage over the nesting period. The quotations received were expensive and the City determined that relocating the cages, after the receipt of expert advice, would represent better value for money, as it would result in savings on transportation.

Elsbeth Taimre, Bibra Lake

Subject: COVID Vaccines

Q1. Please would the Council advise what action you intend to take regarding the information submitted to you in person on 6 November, with evidence of DNA contamination in Covid19 vaccines that the public received and are still receiving?

A1. The Director Planning and Sustainability advised the authorisation, administration, and delivery of COVID19 vaccines and vaccinations are controlled by the Federal government, not the City.

Karly Massang, South Lake

Subject: Fox Control – Yangebup and Bibra Lake

As Ms Massang was not present at the meeting, a copy of responses to her questions has been forwarded to her.

Q1. What measures are the City of Cockburn taking for effective fox control in Yangebup and Bibra Lake?

A1. The City currently undertakes two fox population control programs each year. These occur in spring and autumn to coincide with fox breeding cycles. Control has been shown to be most effective at these times because juveniles can be captured when moving into new territories and adults can be removed prior to breeding.

In response to the observed predation on wetland fauna, both the spring and the autumn control programs were increased by an additional week in 2024 at Bibra Lake.

Specific methodologies employed in the fox control program are provided on the City's website.

To relieve the pressure on biodiversity, the Perth South West Metropolitan Alliance has agreed to investigate commencing a targeted control program across the region.

The control program is intended to be complemented by a regional monitoring study to review its impact on local fox populations.

Opportunities for community volunteers to collect data will be considered throughout the preparation of monitoring program scope.

Chris Johansen, Leeming

Subject: Petitions at Council Meetings

- Q1. Unlike some other local Councils, why does the City of Cockburn no longer allow presentation of petitions at Council Meetings?
- A1. The Chief Executive Officer advised in 2017 Council resolved to amend the *City of Cockburn Standing Orders Local Law 2016*. This amendment removed petitions from the order of business, and deleted a clause which regulated the way in which petitions were presented.
- Q2. Are City of Cockburn Councillors informed when residents submit petitions? If not, how can petitioners engage in two-way, face-to-face discussion with the whole Council to inform them of their collective concerns, and particularly for matters of significant public importance, such as the nuclear safety issues inherent in the intended porting and servicing of nuclear-powered submarines at Garden Island and within the City of Cockburn, at Henderson?
- A2. The Chief Executive Officer advised, as per the City's website, Elected Members are notified when petitions are received and "*The responsible officer will inform the petition initiator of the action proposed in dealing with their petition and inform Elected Members of the outcome. This may involve having to prepare a detailed report for a future meeting of Council for consideration.*"

Public Question Time and Deputations can facilitate verbal engagement with Council.

Petitions are not a mechanism for two-way face-to-face discussion with the whole Council. Under the Standing Orders prior to the 2017 amendment, presentation of a petition did not result in discussion, debate or voting on a petition (other than a motion to receive the petition).

Robyn Walsh,

Subject: Henderson Defence Project

- Q1. Prior to the City of Cockburn confirming support for the recently announced Defence precinct at Henderson, were the implications of having a nuclear 'designated zone' and nuclear waste facility for the depot level maintenance of nuclear-powered submarines considered?
- A1. The Director Planning and Sustainability advised that, in clarification, the Council, at its meeting on 14 May 2024, formally resolved to support AUKUS and the benefits it brings to Cockburn, including jobs, infrastructure, investment, and growth.

In its media release on 16 October 2024, the City stated it applauded the federal government decision to establish a Commonwealth-owned Defence Precinct at Henderson, creating 10,000 jobs over the next two decades, as it would enable Henderson to fulfil its potential as the state's premier shipbuilding and maritime precinct.

The federal government have confirmed the Defence Precinct will be the home of depot-level maintenance and contingency docking for Australia's future conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines, together with the construction of new landing craft for the Australian Army and new general-purpose frigates for the Navy.

At this stage the details of what exact elements that would be developed in the defence precinct have yet to be released.

- Q2. Has the City ascertained, from either Defence or the Australian Submarine Agency (ASA), how long any radioactive waste will be stored at Henderson?
- A2. The Director Planning and Sustainability advised that, as previously indicated, the federal government has not released any details of whether there would be any nuclear waste facility associated with the defence precinct.
- The federal government have committed that all nuclear waste, including spent fuel, will be managed safely, informed by international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments.
- Q3. Where will it be transported to and how - will it be on the already over congestion roads and through residential areas in our City or will it be shipped through our precious Cockburn Sound?
- A3. The Director Planning and Sustainability advised that, as previously indicated, the federal government have committed that all nuclear waste, including spent fuel, will be managed safely, informed by international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments.
- Q4. Is worker and community safety and security worth sacrificing for the promises of jobs and economic growth?
- A4. As previously stated, the federal government have committed that all nuclear waste, including spent fuel, will be managed safely, informed by international best practice and in accordance with Australia's international and domestic legal obligations and commitments.
- Q5. Have existing civilian industry and businesses in the Australian Marine Complex (AMC) been consulted about all of these matters?
- A5. The authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety is ARPANZA and currently they would be responsible for the assessment and approval of any nuclear waste management, including consultation on any proposed facilities.

Anthony Certoma

Subject: Various

- Q1. Has a report been prepared and provided to the Elected Members in relation to the September AUKUS trip by the Mayor and CEO? If not, why not? If so, will the report be tabled at an OCM? When?
- A1. The Director Planning and Sustainability advised the Perth South-West Metropolitan Alliance are currently preparing a report for all member Councils, which will be provided in January. The report will be circulated to all Elected Members and is not intended to be formally tabled at Council's meeting.
- Q2. What is the dollar value of books purchased for Library Services in Financial Years FY2023 and FY2024?
- A2. The Director Community and Place provided the following information:
 FY22/23 - \$101,583.00
 FY23/24 - \$119,397.52
 Please note: Figures are inclusive of books, DVD and all e-resources.
- Q3. Of these what is the dollar value of books purchased with credit cards for each of the two Financial Years?

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- A3. The Director provided the following information:
FY22/23 - \$101,583.00 (\$57,641.00 credit card expenditure).
FY23/24 - \$119,397.52 (\$47,484.00 credit card expenditure).
- Q4. Can the City confirm that I attended a meeting with the Head of Library and Cultural Services and the CEO on the morning of Monday 14 October to discuss a number of issues relating to Library Services?
- A4. The Director advised, yes, that is confirmed.
- Q5. Can the City confirm that at this meeting on the issue of Library Book purchasing the Head of Library and Cultural Services stated that the Library received substantial discounts on the purchase of books from suppliers and that the Head of Library and Cultural Services was very confident that the current purchasing process gave the City and its residents the required books at the best price possible?
- A5. The Director advised yes, the Head of Library and Cultural Services confirmed that certain suppliers will issue 10% discounts for public library book acquisitions.
- Q6. Can the City confirm that I sent in a couple of questions relating to the purchase of books on credit cards on 1 July 2024 for Dymocks Online for \$528.79, on 2 July 2024 for Booktopia for \$365.03 and on 18 July 2024 for Dymocks Garden City for \$165.81 to which the Head of Library and Cultural Services replied via email on 22 October 2024 detailing the books bought and the quantity bought?
- A6. The Director advised yes, that is confirmed.
- Q7. Can the City confirm that on the day after being 23 October 2024 I sent the Head of Library and Cultural Services an email and I quote, "can we get together next Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon to review my analysis. I believe I can save the City more than 15% on book purchases based on the sample provided."?
- A7. The Director advised yes, that is confirmed.
- Q8. Can the City confirm that the following day being 24 October 2024 the Head of Library and Cultural Services sent me an email and I quote, "Thank you for reaching out and for your offer to review your analysis. I appreciate the time and effort you've dedicated to identifying potential savings for the City. The City has rigorous, well established procurement policies and workflows that are well established and meet our current purchasing needs."?
- A8. The Director advised yes, that is confirmed.
- Q9. Why did the Head of Library and Cultural Services make that decision given I had concrete analysis that the books could have been purchased at least 15% cheaper?
- A9. The Director advised that during the meeting held on the 14 October 2024 with the CEO and Head of Library and Cultural Services, Mr Certoma was advised the City was undergoing a public tender process for the supply of local library stock items which closes on the 14 November 2024.
- Q.10 Doesn't the City have a duty to the CEO, Council and ratepayers to utilise Library funds as efficiently as possible?
- A10. The Director advised yes, hence the decision to review and re tender for the supply of local library stock to ensure best value for money.

- Q11. Given the questions and answers above, will the City arrange for a meeting to be held so that I can present my analysis and based on that review current purchasing procedure and suppliers for Library Services? If not, why not?
- A11. The Director advised no, a meeting will not be arranged as there has already been a meeting with yourself, the CEO and Head of Library and Cultural Services on this matter. Any further information or queries can be submitted in writing to the City of Cockburn.
- Q12. Can you assure Council and ratepayers that this inefficient use of ratepayers' funds and unwillingness to change practices in the face of demonstrated potential savings is not widespread in other areas of the City?
- A12. The Director Advised the City of Cockburn has some of the lowest rates in the metropolitan area, while continuing to provide high quality services and assets to the community. Council has committed to a three-year Service Review Program that will focus on prioritising resources and identifying operational savings and efficiencies.

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