



E-MAILED
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3rd April, 2014

To whom it may concern

RE: Ward Boundaries

In response to the review of Wards and Representation discussion paper, Item 9.3 of the December Council Agenda, the Dampier Community Association would like to propose the following argument in relation to this review.

It is our preference, and that of the Dampier community which we represent, that the status quo with regards to the wards and the number of Councillors be maintained (i.e. the Ward of Dampier is maintained and 2 Councillors are elected by the community to represent that ward). Whilst this does not fulfil the expectations of the review, it does provide the level of local government representation which we feel is required given the unique nature of our community, and complexity of the challenges that we face.

If we are unable to maintain the status quo, the Dampier Community Association would strongly advocate to maintain the Ward of Dampier, with a reduction in the number of Councillors to 1 (Option 3 or Option 2a). Maintaining our voice and identity as a unique town in the Pilbara is crucial to our community as the residents of Dampier have told us through our ongoing community consultation process. The maintenance of a Ward of Dampier is fundamental in this equation, with Councillors who live in our town and understand the nature of our environment and the challenges we face – particularly in retaining and growing the services available to us and managing the relationships between local government and key industry bodies.

The following points outline our reason for this recommendation:

- **Normalisation** – there are many unique, complex and significant challenges which need to be addressed to finalise the normalisation of the Dampier town site. Until this occurs, there will continue to be much confusion regarding supply of services and ownership of areas within the town. We need informed local representation to ensure Dampier's specific issues are well understood and effectively communicated to the Shire overall.
- **Rio Tinto's influence on the town** – relationships with both Rio Tinto and the Shire of Roebourne need to be maintained and approvals from both parties are required in many instances.
- **Tourism potential** – It is recognised that tourism is a relatively untapped sector across the entire Shire but we believe the tourism opportunities differ from town-to-town and the surrounding areas. As you are aware, Dampier and its immediate surrounds are home to a wide range of distinctive tourism opportunities from major industry (Dampier's port is second largest bulk export port in the world) to the rock art of the Burrup Peninsula (Murujuga National Park). Furthermore, the Dampier Archipelago has untapped tourism potential with access to world class fishing and island reserves. There is however, limited accommodation and few tour operators or commercial operations to support the growth in tourism. Again we strongly argue that having local representation will see the entire Shire best placed to maximise any and all opportunities through the use of local knowledge and direct two way communication with our community.

- **Town revitalisation** – the revitalisation plans for Dampier including the Community Hub, Marina, increased residential units and a number of other significant projects for the town require extensive community consultation and communication to be successful.
- **Demographic trends** – Dampier has the highest number of teens aged between 12 and 17 years in the Shire with limited infrastructure or services available within the community (ABS Census Data 2011). This is a very similar problem for our senior demographic.
- **Loss of services** – Over the past few years, our community has lost services including a medical centre, pharmacy and post office and residents are concerned that this trend will continue with services such as the Police Station and Primary School potentially being next. This is a very real concern facing Dampier that doesn't appear to be replicated across other towns in our Shire and having local Dampier Representation will assist to alleviate the angst in our community. Our Councillors are not only acting as strong advocates for Dampier but are also available to directly communicate with the local residents to ensure they feel informed and understand the rationale behind decisions and outcomes. It is very important that these types of messages come from one of our own who has a trusted relationship with Dampier residents.

We understand that there are areas across the Shire that do not have the same level of good local representation that Dampier residents have experienced with our past and current Shire Councillors, but we do believe that having this local representation has been very beneficial in many ways. Therefore, we strongly advocate for the maintenance of this situation. This includes the clear lines of communication we have been able to maintain with our community in regards to shire proposals and projects (including the Community Hub) and has resulted in a very active and engaged community.

We are happy to discuss any of these points further.

Regards



Conor O'Brien
President