

MEDIA RELEASE

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Council rebuild efforts on-track in Onslow

Community consultation has been carried out and initial concept plans are under review as the Shire of Ashburton continues its efforts to rebuild Onslow's Shire offices, town hall and library as quickly as possible, following a fire in January 2013.

The Shire's project team, including both Shire President Kerry White and Councillor Ann Eyre, is collaborating with nominated architects Gresley Abas to progress towards a swift project completion while ensuring that the current and future needs of the community and council are met.

"Architects Gresley Abas came to Onslow in late January to meet with our Shire's project team," informed Cr White. "As part of their visit, they reviewed the site and conducted community consultation, gathering the information necessary to draft the initial concept plans, which we are currently reviewing."

The seven members of the community who attended the consultation meeting expressed a shared desire to closely recreate the former facilities. According to Cr White, current and future space requirements of the building have also been taken into consideration, such as increasing the size of the library.

"While the community feedback is certainly being incorporated, we are also looking at ways to improve on the design layout and sustainability, essentially 'future proofing' the building so that it will meet our needs today and into the future," explained Cr White.

The proposed layout of the new building will create a contemporary yet traditional presence on the main street of Onslow. Public spaces will occupy the ground floor while the second level will house the Shire's office staff. "The scale of the building is designed to be welcoming to all and instil a strong sense of community pride," affirmed Cr White.

The estimated cost of the new building is \$9.5 million. \$4.2 million was received from the insurance settlement in March and is being held in reserve, leaving the Shire seeking \$5.3 million in additional funds to complete the project. Cost efficiency continues to be a key consideration for all involved.

"The architect's design reflects the prudent use of Shire funds in both the initial construction outlay and ongoing running and maintenance costs of the new building," said Cr White.

"Upon Council informally reviewing and agreeing to the concept plans, the proposal will proceed to Council for formal acceptance, budget allocation and the development of a Design & Construct tender to turn the concept into reality.

"Feedback received to date has been very positive and we look forward to the proposed building becoming a landmark for the Shire and Onslow community."

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IMAGE DESCRIPTION: An artist's impression of the proposed new council building on Second Avenue, Onslow.

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