

Claire Hall of Burnie:

Question 1

Pigeon population numbers are continuing to grow within the CBD. The birds have been an issue for several years and although interventions of euthanasia and birth control were publicised as being implemented in 2021 and 2022, there has been no continued effort to eradicate them.

Property owners and local businesses, some of which have invested large amounts of money to restore heritage buildings or improve property facades, to the benefit of the town, are incurring additional costs in an effort to minimise the impact of the bird population on the buildings. This includes blocking accessible areas to reduce perching, nesting, and breeding, with further out of pocket costs arising for the services required, to frequently clean the significant mess they cause.

The extensive droppings are a public health hazard due to infection and diseases, however this issue is ultimately impacting street appeal and the presentation of the town. Council efforts to make the town presentable through flowers and signage are defeated when the streets and buildings are lined with bird faeces. It is well overdue; when will a permanent solution be decided and implemented to control, reduce and/or remove the pigeon population?

The Chairperson provided the following response:

You are correct that Council undertook a pigeon control program in 2021/22. Council noted a summary report about the program in March 2022. Since that time, no funding has been set aside in Council's budget to continue the program.

We acknowledge the increase of pigeon numbers in recent months and will reintroduce the product to interrupt the breeding cycle as per the previous program. More importantly though, consideration will need to be given to ongoing and sustained programs to ensure pigeon numbers remain at an acceptable level and this discussion will occur in the setting of the upcoming operational budget.

David McLean of Burnie:

Question 1

Could the council please advise current status and current expenditure for the following ICT projects that were approved in the current Annual Budget.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| • CCTV | 175k |
| • Computer Desktop Equipment | 490k |
| • Mobile Phones | 188k |
| • Router upgrades | 20k |
| • Switches | 130k |
| • Backup Server and Tape drive | 50k |

Anything not completed will add to a budget surplus hopefully resulting in lowering the pressure on increasing rates above cpi.

The Chairperson provided the following response:

The figures you referenced below appear to be drawn from the Council's 4-Year Asset Management Strategy (AMS), which outlines the planned expenditure for renewal of council assets across the 2024/25 to 2027/28 financial years.

For the 2024/25 capital program specifically, the current forecast allocations are as follows:

- **CCTV – \$0**
- **Computer Equipment – \$172,000**
- **Mobile Phones – \$25,000**
- **Router Upgrades – \$5,000**
- **Switches – \$20,000**
- **Backup Server and Tape Drive – \$0**

At this stage, all projects are progressing in line with these budgeted amounts. Based on current forecasts, there is no anticipated underspend or surplus in this financial year.

Ashleigh G of Burnie:

Question 1

Regarding the LGBTIQA+ working group, I support the motion that a consultation process and working group should be established. An apology or statement or combination of working groups is simply not enough. What plan does the council have to ensure a fair and safe consultation process with community?

The Chairperson provided the following response:

This matter will be debated later in the meeting and a determination made whether to proceed with a working group or not. How the group consults with the community will be determined as part of any working group terms of reference.

Question 2

If the council upholds its stance on inclusivity, yet members are outwardly non inclusive, what is the council doing to ensure its own policies and procedures for staff volunteers and residents are inclusive?

Again, the matter will be debated later in the meeting. Council has measures in place to ensure staff and volunteers comply with policies and procedures.

The following public question was received and taken on notice:

Paula Kirkpatrick of Ulverstone:

Question 1

Federal and State are to fund the 3 storey high new courthouse opposite the police station. Would Council consider the following?

Current 3 storey council chambers to be converted to new courthouse. Council relocate to an alternate building eg. share with library like Devonport does, Reece house, Purchase Jenny Craig/Tyre Right and build new Council chambers with park leading to Burnie Arts.

Request Federal and State allocate the \$86 million to Burnie for us to build our indoor sports stadium (1st committee formed 2019), further upgrades to pool with a new hydrotherapy pool now the hospital pool is closed. Further equipment such as indoor skate ramp. Anything to give our youth something to do rather than them visiting the new 3 storey \$86 million courthouse.

Try a compromise?

The General Manager provided the following response:

Thank you Paula for your question. Council notes your comments and thanks you for your ideas.

Significant planning work has gone into site identification and rationale behind construction of a new Court facility in Burnie. The new Burnie Courts Complex is expected to be completed in early 2027.

Your proposal is too late in the process to be considered.

Question 2

Begents Building – newspaper article it may be chemist medical services – brilliant. Great its in the CBD.

But old uni on Mooreville Road only part, not all until stage 2 – medical chemist etc. are we doubling up on the same services, different locations? Stage 1 – 24hr, 7 day laboratory restrict who can lease rest of old uni?

The General Manager provided the following response:

Thank you Paula for your question.

Council does not own either of these buildings. It is a decision of the land owner as to whom they lease their building to, providing it meets all regulatory compliance requirements.

The General Manager provided the following statement:

Council has received 4 questions from members of the public tonight relating to the conduct of Councillor Trent Aitken, particularly his public use of social media. These community members have a shared view that his social media comments include derogatory and inflammatory commentary targeting LGBTQIA+ persons and aboriginal communities, amongst other matters, and ask what actions will be taken by the council to address Councillor Aitken's public opinions.

We recognise this is a serious matter that interests many members of the community, however rather than respond to each question individually, this is a collective response to all. This will ensure we do not overrun Council public question time at the meeting and not repeat similar questions.

Whilst Trent Aitken is an elected member of the Burnie City Council, his personal social media activity and opinions are his own and do not reflect the views or values of Burnie City Council. We can assure you that our council remains committed to inclusivity, respect, and supporting all members of our community.

Council has, and will continue to, work with Councillor Aitken to require that his conduct does not adversely reflect on the reputation of the council or cause harm to any individual. Council are using the limited tools it has available, specifically through Work Health and Safety legislation as a PCBU. All Councillors have previously been supplied with legal advice and training in relation to their obligations to ensure the ongoing health and safety of Elected Members, employees and any other person at a council workplace. Council have informed the Minister for Local Government of actions taken to date and possible next steps.

A copy of these public questions received and relating to this matter will be provided to councillors for their awareness and included within the minutes of the meeting.

The 4 Public Questions received are provided below.

Debbie Agar of Burnie:

Question 1

Do you think that councillors should make hateful comments about transgender people? I would have thought that a councillors personal opinion/conduct should not reflect poorly on the reputation of our council.

Zara Charles of Burnie:

Question 1

Given the publicly visible conduct of Councillor Trent Aitken — particularly on his public Facebook page — which includes derogatory and inflammatory commentary targeting LGBTQIA+ persons, Aboriginal communities and the public education system, how does Burnie City Council intend to address what appear to be clear breaches of the Councillor's Code of Conduct?

Specifically, I believe Councillor Aitken is in breach of the following provisions:

5(b): Bringing the council into disrepute.

6: Failing to show respect when expressing personal views publicly.

7: Engaging in personal conduct that reflects, or has the potential to reflect, adversely on the reputation of the council.

It is deeply concerning that a member of the public is required to lodge a formal complaint — at a cost of \$93.50 — in order for such conduct to be addressed. This cost is a significant barrier and places the burden on individuals, rather than on the Council, which should be proactively ensuring its members uphold the values of respect, inclusion, and professionalism. It is frankly disgraceful that the responsibility to report and financially support the process of accountability falls to the community, especially in cases involving hate speech.

Additionally, it is my understanding that the current Mayor has previously received a Code of Conduct caution and a reprimand. To my knowledge, this was not the result of a paid complaint lodged by a member of the public. How, then, is it that the Council can act in that instance without a formal public complaint, but Councillor Aitken is apparently not held to account for his ongoing public and derogatory commentary?

The public deserves clarity on what mechanisms the Council uses to hold its members accountable and whether there are internal processes being utilised — or neglected — in cases where councillors are engaging in harmful public discourse.

Kellie Eason of Burnie:

Question 1

I ask about the councils stance and opinion regarding social media posts by councillor Trent Aitken regarding the LGBTIQ+ community and how it is a 'fictitious lifestyle' and 'phases'. I have significant concerns for the mental health of young people within the LGBTIQ+ community, and our community as a whole when an elected representative in our community is posting misinformation, hurtful and disturbing rhetorics in a public domain. Particularly given the code of conduct for councillors particularly in regards to treating all persons fairly, showing respect in all personal views expressed, and his public posts are having the effect of bringing our council into disrepute.

Question 2

What actions will be taken by the council to address Councillor Aitkens public opinions that are comprised of hate speech, misinformation and a lack of consideration or respect for ALL members of the Burnie community.

An individual response has been sent in regards to each of these questions.