



Shire Bulletin December 2025



SHIRE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It only seems like the other day I was writing last month's column and here we are... another month behind us... and the final one for this year! We are certainly in that final straight of the race, when the days blur into each other and it feels like a sprint to the end.

For me this has coincided with a trip and a fall and some broken ribs. Other than a broken toe, this is my first ever experience of a fracture and I am missing a few most valued elements of life: energy (I'm sick of being tired), exercise (I'm no buff, but I do love a good brisk walk or jog down my dusty road to blow off steam), sleep (especially lying flat!) and a good deep breath (without a catching in my ribcage). It has however, forced me to slow down and reassess what is important – and I am grateful for that.

I attended the Remembrance Day service in Kalbarri followed by an opportunity to attend and speak at the Seniors luncheon. This was a genuine honour and joy for me. The KDA do an amazing job of helping to support many initiatives in Kalbarri and together with the Kalbarri Seniors Group, they organised a delicious meal prepared by Budda's Bites, and the opportunity to enjoy the company of others. I was pleasantly surprised at how many people in attendance had only lived in Kalbarri a few years, choosing the town as a place to retire.

We have recently lost a number of valued community members. I worked with Joy Garrard on the Ag Society Exhibition Hall committee for many years and recall assisting her at the Lions' Senior Citizen Lunch last year. My deepest sympathy to Ivan and his family.

Bob Bandy who also recently passed away has had an interesting life. He grew up on the farm where I now live at Ogilvie in "Charlie's" house (and we still have a paddock called Charlie's, named after his Dad). Bob served in Vietnam, as a Sergeant and was a skilled mechanic. He was the Senior Diesel Mechanic at Mawson '75 and Casey '78 and the Plant Inspector at

Davis '84 in Antarctica, and has a location in Antarctica called Bandy Nunataks, named after him. Bob had a keen interest in history and was a huge contributor to the Northampton Historical Society. My sympathy to his family.

I also extend my sincere sympathy also to the family of Graham (Syke) Simkin, who grew up in Binu, and has lived and worked in Kalbarri for most of his life, before moving to Northampton. Syke was a gentleman and a local champion who was loved and respected by so many.

I have had many discussions with residents and have seen a lot of comments on social media about the Oakajee intersection and I have written previously about the need to be extra cautious on that section of the road, particularly during the harvest period, when the volume of trucks is large. The best way you can get your concerns heard is to email Main Roads: enquiries@mainroads.wa.gov.au with your respectful concerns and suggestions.

Congratulations to the Kalbarri SES, St Johns and local volunteers who recently had a successful rescue mission off the Kalbarri coastal cliffs. The community and visitors to town are so incredibly fortunate that we have a core group of residents with safety knowledge and outstanding generosity of spirit.

I would also like to congratulate Tatiana Vafiades on the start she has made as Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. The prior warnings sent regarding the possibility of pending harvest bans, I know will be greatly appreciated by growers and land-owners. I also know that she is constantly monitoring conditions when there is a weather risk. It is vital that we work together to keep our area safe from the risk of fire, particularly in a year such as this, when the fuel load is higher than usual.

Neil Broadhurst has resigned as Executive Manager of Works and Technical Services with the Shire of

Northampton at end of November. I would like to sincerely acknowledge his contribution to the organisation. 27 years in the same workplace is a significant achievement. Neil's knowledge of the local road network, engineering and water systems, will be a loss to the organisation. His ability to showcase the Shire of Northampton as a contributor to community events, such as the Northampton Ag Show and other events over the years, will be very much missed. Neil has made Northampton his home and I hope that he will be able to continue to contribute to the community. Currently lead by Neil, the Lions Club continually work to do amazing things in Northampton, as well as provide a strong fellowship network for their members.

Finally, I would like to extend Season's Greetings to everyone who reads this. May you enjoy a happy and safe Christmas and remember to spread the goodwill, cheer and kindness to those around you.

Liz Sudlow
Shire President

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S MESSAGE

November 2025 marked a significant achievement for the Shire when it partnered with the Panaceum Group to re-establish medical services in Northampton. The response from the community thus far has been overwhelming with the three days per week operation achieving full bookings. This all bodes well for the expansion of the service to four days per week and then to five days per week if the community continues to support the medical service.

Bush fire season is well and truly upon us again and along with local Bush Fire Brigades, the Shire has been very active in identifying and working with landowners to comply with the Annual Fuel Hazard and Fire Break Notice. Please note that work orders and infringements will be issued for non-compliance.

On the topic of bush fire, in conjunction with DFES and the Shire of Chapman Valley, we will soon be advertising for employment of a Community Emergency Safety Manager (CESM). The CESM will split their time equally across the two Shire districts and add significant capacity to emergency preparedness and response.

Following on from the Strategic Community Plan process that set the strategic direction for the district over a ten year period, the Shire has now commenced the Corporate Business Plan process. The Corporate Business Plan has a four year currency and will be used to capture priority initiatives arising from the Strategic Community Plan process. The Corporate

Business Plan is expected to be finalised in March 2026 in time for the 2026/27 budget process.

Our works team and contractors have been busy maintenance grading for harvest. If you have any issues on individual roads, please do not hesitate to report to the Shire on 99341202.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Neil Broadhurst for his many years of service to the Shire of Northampton. Neil has been a fantastic employee for the Shire and strong advocate and volunteer for the local community. On behalf of staff, I wish Neil the very best for the future and look forward to seeing him around Northampton (when he is not away fishing of course!).

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy end to 2025.

Andrew Campbell
Chief Executive Officer

PANACEUM NORTHAMPTON

Access to quality healthcare is essential, especially in regional areas such as ours. In recent years Northampton has faced ongoing challenges in attracting and retaining consistent, high-quality health services.

The Shire of Northampton has long recognised this issue and has actively supported local medical practices by providing housing, clinic facilities, transport subsidies and other incentives to ensure the communities healthcare needs are met. We value the health and wellbeing of our residents and the importance of reliable, accessible medical services. While the responsibility for health service delivery primarily lies with other levels of government, the Shire has stepped in to help address this critical local need.

The introduction of a trial community medical service has been established in partnership with the Panaceum Group from Geraldton. This service will operate initially for three days per week and increasing to five days per week when bookings permit for a one-year trial period. Operation beyond the trial period depends on how much the community supports the medical service. We urge all residents to take full advantage of this opportunity as your support is critical to the success and continuation of medical services in Northampton.

Panaceum Northampton
51 Robinson Street, Northampton
Telephone: (08) 9934 1001
Email: northampton@panaceum.com.au

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Explore Local for Christmas

"Unwrap Local Gifts: Celebrate Christmas by Supporting Our Local Businesses. Discover Unique Gifts This Christmas Season!"

As Christmas approaches, we encourage you to look at what gift you could purchase at local businesses in Our Shire. By supporting this business, you help our community thrive and will find many unique and interesting gifts that will make you smile.

Community Grants

Exciting news! Community Grant Program Round 1 for 2025-26 has awarded the following events/projects in our community.

- Christmas in the Park – Kalbarri
- Australia Day Event 2026 – Kalbarri
- New Years Family Event – Horrocks
- Empowering change for our future Vision – Kalbarri Arts & Crafts Group
- 39th Kalbarri Sport Fishing Classic
- Northampton Basketball Club
- Botanic Line Extension stage 2 & 3 – Community Champion

Emergency WA App

As we enter a high-risk season, it's crucial to stay prepared. The Emergency WA app is available now on the App Store and Google Play, providing vital access to alerts and warnings for hazards across Western Australia. With features like setting custom watch zones, tailored notifications, and listening to emergency broadcasts, this app empowers our communities to remain informed and safe. Remember, emergencies can strike unexpectedly, disrupting power and communications.

Stay connected and informed by:

- Visiting Emergency WA and setting your watch zones
- Calling 13 DFES (13 3337)
- Tuning into ABC local radio at FM 106.1 MHz
- Following DFES on Facebook
- Staying aware of your surroundings
- Communicating with neighbours and loved ones



**DOWNLOAD
THE APP**



What's in a name – Chinamans Beach

The Murchison River has always been a lifeline for the people of Kalbarri and its surrounds, winding through ancient Nhanda country and weaving its way into local legends. For thousands of years, the area—once known as Wurdimarlu—was a vital artery for trade and culture among the Nhanda people, and its mouth is still believed to have welcomed ancient seafarers on their long journeys far from home.

One of the area's most enduring mysteries is the story behind Chinaman's Beach and its namesake, Chinaman's Rock. While many locals are familiar with these iconic sites, the identity of the "Chinaman" has long been a source of curiosity. Local lore traces the name back to the early 20th century, when Murchison House Station was a busy sheep property. During this time, a Chinese cook—unenthusiastic about the station's staple of mutton—would fish from the rocky outcrop at the river mouth, which became known as Chinaman's Rock.

Historical records provide further insight. Archival research points to a Chinese immigrant named Ah Ping, born in Singapore in 1854, who arrived in Western Australia in 1884. Ah Ping worked as a cook at various stations throughout the region, including Murchison House between 1916 and 1919. Described as a resilient man bearing knife scars, Ah Ping's journey is a testament to the challenges faced by Asian immigrants in Australia in the early 1900s. At that time,

immigrants had to register with local authorities and report any changes in address or employment—a reminder of the era's strict regulations.

Today's owners of Murchison House Station, along with other ex-residents of the station, recall stories of Ah Ping and other Chinese cooks who played a crucial role in station life. These cooks not only prepared meals for shearers and roustabouts but also tended to productive vegetable gardens, providing fresh produce to the homestead kitchen. Their contributions were highly valued, making them important figures in the station's vibrant community.

Despite the stories, there are no definitive records confirming whether Chinaman's Rock was named specifically for Ah Ping or another Chinese cook. What is clear, however, is the lasting legacy of Chinese immigrants in Kalbarri's history. Their resilience, hard work, and cultural influence helped shape the region's social fabric, and their story is woven into the landscape—inviting us to remember and honour those who called this place home, far from their homeland.

References:

- Asian Immigrants to Western Australia 1829–1901: The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians, Volume V, compiled by Anne Atkinson.

If you have any questions, please contact your Community Development Officer in your area.

Northampton - Andrea Teakle 0476 532 000

Kalbarri - Cresta Viellaris 0400 476 952

CONCERN OVER FIRE SAFETY

High levels of vegetation growth over the winter and spring periods this year have resulted in many properties containing much higher levels of fuel loading than normal. This could easily lead to more intense threats to the safety of people and structures in the district in the event of a fire.

When inspecting properties for compliance with the Shire's 2025/2026 Annual Firebreak and Fuel Hazard Reduction Notice, Shire Rangers have identified a significant level of non-compliance. Prior to the end of November, Shire Rangers worked to educate landowners and ensure compliance with the Annual Notice Requirements. Where landowners fail to act, and from now, orders and fines will be issued.

Residents and Landowners are urged to take immediate action to ensure compliance with the Annual notice and reduce fuel loads on their properties.

NEW CHIEF BUSH FIRE OFFICER AND DEPUTY APPOINTED

The Shire is pleased to welcome Tatiana Vafiades as the Shire of Northampton's new Chief Bush Fire Control Officer. The appointment of Tatiana, a member of the Yallabatharra Bushfire Brigade, was unanimously supported by Council following her nomination by the Shire's Bush Fire Advisory Committee. Shire Ranger – Brock Lucev has also been appointed as a Fire Control Officer.

2025/26 ANNUAL FIRE BREAK AND FUEL REDUCTION NOTICE

The Shire's Annual Firebreak and Fuel Reduction Notice 2025/26 identified mitigation works for the fire season were due to be implemented by 15 October 2025.

The requirements which apply to all private property within the Shire are required to be maintained until up until the end of February 2026.

TOWNSTE AND RESIDENTIAL LOTS
ALL LOTS UNDER 0.4ha Flammable materials shall be mowed/slashed /mulched to a height between 50mm and 100mm and maintained for the fire season, with the exception of live standing trees and selected shrubs. Retention of selected shrubs that are located more than 3 metres from an adjacent building is encouraged to reduce soil instability.
ALL LOTS OVER 0.4ha Graded/ploughed/hoed or Chemical applied firebreak at a width of at least 3.0 metres
RURAL – RESIDENTIAL AREAS
Graded/ploughed/hoed or Chemical applied firebreak at a width of at least 3.0 metres. All buildings must have a minimum of 20 metres clearance of all flammable material.
RURAL AREAS
Graded/ploughed/hoed or chemical applied firebreaks installed within 20 metres inside and along the whole of external boundaries – All buildings must have a minimum of 20 metres clearance of all flammable material

Failure to comply with the above requirements is an offence under the Bush Fires Act 1954. Inspections by Shire Rangers to ensure compliance with the notice requirements have commenced.

COUNCIL AUTHORISES FIRE BREAK INSPECTIONS BY AIR

The Shire's Annual Firebreak and Fuel Reduction Notice 2025/26 identified mitigation works for the fire season were due to be implemented by 15 October 2025.

Enforcement of the fire mitigation requirements prescribed in the annual notice is extremely important to minimize the threat of fire to the community. Due to the size and nature of many rural land holdings with limited road access, the ability to inspect some properties is difficult and time consuming. This has resulted in many properties not being inspected for multiple years, and it appears some landowners may have become complacent in complying with the Annual Notice.

At its meeting held on 20 November 2025, Council resolved to amend its adopted budget to allocate funding for the use of a commercial aircraft operator to assist in inspecting firebreaks within the rural area. The flight is due to take place in the last week of November.

Should property owners be found to be non-compliant with the annual notice, it is highly likely that fines will be issued.

UNAUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT

Development, building or other construction work within the Shire is considered unauthorised if:

1. You have NOT received appropriate planning approval from Council for the building work (if applicable).
2. You haven't received a building permit for the work.
3. Your building or planning permit has expired (they expire after two years, extensions are available).

Examples of works requiring prior approval include site works, new development or land uses.

In addition to the Shire potentially taking legal action for unauthorised works, the implications can be substantial for landowners as unauthorised works can result in insurance claims being denied by insurance companies.

Member of the public are encouraged to contact Shire Officers in Planning, Building and Environmental Health to confirm if prior approvals are in fact required prior to completing any proposed works on their property.

SWIMMING POOL BARRIERS

In Western Australia, private swimming pools and spas with water that is more than 300mm deep must have a compliant barrier installed and maintained. This is to prevent the drowning deaths and injury to children.

With the warmer weather fast approaching, landowners are urged to check that their safety barriers are still effective and compliant. More information on the barrier requirements is available via the following website.

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/publications/rules-pools-and-spas>

The Shire's new Principal Building Surveyor – Mr Jon Trotter will soon begin inspections to ensure compliant barriers are in place. To book an inspection please contact the Shire.

WORKPLACE SAFETY SNAPSHOT – 2024

Fatigue – A Quiet Risk as We Head into the Busy Christmas Season

With Christmas just around the corner, life tends to get a bit hectic. Longer days, extra events, late nights, and plenty of driving can all add up — and fatigue becomes a real risk both at work and on the roads.

Fatigue isn't just feeling tired; it affects your concentration, reaction time, decision-making and coordination. Whether you're behind the wheel, using machinery, or dealing with the general holiday rush, recognising fatigue early can prevent serious incidents.

What employers and workers should keep in mind:
If you're worried a worker may be fatigued, don't direct them to carry out high-risk work.

- Think about how fatigue could increase other risks — like operating machinery, handling hazardous substances or even tasks requiring close focus.
- Try to reduce fatigue-related errors: schedule safety-critical tasks earlier in the shift and provide tools or systems that help prevent mistakes.
- Put safeguards in place in case fatigue does occur — such as vehicles with safety features or equipment fitted with automatic shut-off mechanisms.
- Support workers who are feeling worn out by offering ways to step back from challenging interactions or customers when needed.

On the road:

Holiday traffic ramps up quickly this time of year. If you're heading off on a long drive, plan breaks, share the driving where you can, and avoid travelling when

you'd usually be asleep. A quick rest stop now is far better than trying to push through.

Fatigue is preventable, and a few simple steps can make the difference between getting home safely or taking unnecessary risks. Look after yourself and each other — especially as we head into the festive season.

PENALTY FOR IGNORING ROAD CLOSURES IN WA JUMPS TO \$10,000

Western Australians are being warned to take road closure signs seriously, as the penalty for accessing closed roads or interfering with "Road Closed" signs has been increased to \$10,000. The change, announced by Main Roads WA, comes in response to ongoing safety concerns during extreme weather events such as fires, floods, cyclones, and severe storms. These hazards often force authorities to close or restrict roads to protect motorists and emergency crews.

Under Section 16A of the Main Roads Act 1930, it is now an offence to:

- Drive on a road that has been officially closed.
- Interfere with road closure signs without proper authority.

Both offences carry a maximum fine of \$10,000

SEEKING FORGIVENESS -VS- PRIOR APPROVAL

Historically landowners and contractors have from time to time undertaken work on private property without first obtaining the required approvals from the Local Authority. Required approvals can include, but are not limited to:

- Development (Planning) Approval;
- A Building or Demolition Permit; and
- Effluent Disposal and other Environmental Health Approvals.

Examples of works requiring prior approval include site works, new development or land uses.

By adopting the approach of seeking forgiveness rather than obtaining the required prior approvals, both the landowner and their contractor have the potential for modified penalties to be issued by the Shire or legal action to be taken against them.

This recent months a landowner placed a modular building on their property with no approvals. In this case, a modified penalty was issued under the Planning and Development Act 2005 and legal action is being taken under the Building Act 2000. It is likely that the court will impose a substantial penalty for proceeding without the prior Building Permit.

REMAINING COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2025

18 December 2025 – Northampton

COUNCILLORS

Cr Liz Sudlow, President – 0427 362 025
Cr Tim Hay, Deputy President – 0488 212 566

Cr Roslyn Suckling – 0429 200 143

Cr Chad Smith – 0428 932 476

Cr Des Pike – 0417 919 814

Cr Richard Burges – 0417 912 901

Cr Karl Suckling – 0427 839 274

SHIRE ADDRESS

Northampton Office

Hampton Road, Northampton

PO Box 61 Northampton WA 6535

Phone: 9934 1202 Opening Hours: Mon - Fri
8.00am - 4.30pm (DOT closes at 3.30pm)

Kalbarri Office

70 Grey St, Kalbarri

Phone: 9937 1097

Opening Hours: Mon - Fri 8.30am - 4.30pm
(closed for lunch 12.30pm - 1pm)

Shire Offices and Depots Closure

- **24 December 2025 until 2 January 2026 (inclusive).**
- **Re-opening 5 January 2026.**

WEBSITE

www.northampton.wa.gov.au

