



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

18th July 2006

GM6

FOCUS GROUPS

FILE: 727 AVB

{Folio No. *}

SUMMARY:

To report to Council on progress to date regarding the development of a Focus Group Strategy.



DESCRIPTION:

One of my outputs for the 2005 / 06 year was to develop a strategy and procedure for the formation of Focus Groups as an additional method of consulting with the community by the 30th June. The draft Strategy [Appendix C, Part 1, Part 2, Part 3](#) is submitted for Council's information. Staff procedures to implement an adopted strategy have also been prepared.

Council has an extensive corporate image and consultation strategy which is being continually improved to provide the highest level of communication to its residents as possible. For example, in 2005 / 06 where any strategy was advertised we introduced the holding of a mandatory public meeting as part of the consultation process. The establishment of Focus Groups is an extension of this process.

Council's current procedure in respect of plans and strategies is to develop the plan or strategy, submit the draft to Council for its consideration and then place the draft plan or strategy on exhibition and call for community input. From a community perspective Council only consults after the decisions have been made. The community feel disenfranchised as they have not had the opportunity to provide ideas.

The Focus Group Strategy will allow residents with divergent views to meet under the guidance of an independent facilitator and put forward ideas relating to the content of any future plan or strategy, or in other words, will give residents the opportunity to have input prior to the preparation of any plan or strategy. The same Focus

Group would review any draft plan or strategy before it is referred to a workshop attended by interested members of the community. There would be a different Focus Group membership for each plan and strategy to be prepared.

Prior to Council considering the strategy the draft Focus Group Strategy should be placed on exhibition for community input.

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- *Environmental*

Nil

- *Social*

A Focus Group Strategy would provide the community with a mechanism to have input into the preparation of plans and strategies prior to their preparation.

- *Economic (Financial)*

There is a small cost to facilitate and hold Focus Group meetings that needs to be included in the budget.

- *Policy or Statutory*

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- *General Manager's Review*

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RECOMMENDATION:

That Council places the draft Focus Group Strategy on exhibition and call for community input.

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A V Burgess
GENERAL MANAGER