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Surf Coast Shire Council Special Council Meeting

Tuesday, 14 November 2023 at 5pm

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CEO ROBYN SEYMOUR: Alright. Welcome, everyone, to our Council Meeting. I'm Robyn Seymour. I'm the Chief Executive of Surf Coast Shire and it's my pleasure to welcome you here this evening. First, I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Wadawurrung Country and Surf Coast Local Government spans the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people, the Gulidjan and the Gadubanud people of the Maar Nation. I would like to acknowledge that here in Torquay at our main Council office, we're gathered on Wadawurrung Country. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging. The Wadawurrung people have nurtured and protected these lands and waterways for thousands of generations and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to live, work and play in this amazing part of the world. We also wish to acknowledge any traditional owners of the lands on which each person is attending and acknowledge any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who may be viewing this meeting tonight.

The purpose of this meeting is to determine the Mayoral term and to elect a new Mayor and Deputy Mayor. So, in accordance with section 25 of the Local Government Act, I will be chairing this meeting until such time as a Mayor is elected. It is a pleasure to welcome members of the Surf Coast Shire staff and community members into the chambers tonight. This meeting is also being livestreamed, so a big welcome to those tuning in online and, of course, welcome to our Councillors, Councillor Allen and Councillor Barker, who are attending online, although it looks like we just lost Councillor Barker. Hopefully he will rejoin shortly.

Live captioning will accompany the livestream and the Council chambers is fitted with a hearing loop which transmits directly to hearing aids. We hope that this assists those who may have hearing difficulties.

So the process for tonight. Council meetings operate according to the adopted Governance Rules, which include the following procedures. For the first item, which will determine the term of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, our standing meeting procedures will apply. The second and third items on our agenda are to enable Councillors to elect a Mayor and a Deputy Mayor. As I noted earlier, I'll chair the meeting until the Mayor has been elected. When we get to that part of the agenda, I'll go over the procedures associated with the election. But to start with, the pledge. Councillor Pattison, are you happy to recite the pledge? Allow me to assist. There you go.

COUNCILLOR PATTISON: I'm definitely happy, CEO, to do that. So as Councillors, we carry out our responsibilities with diligence and integrity and make fair decisions of lasting value for the wellbeing of our community and environment. I could have done it without reading it actually.

CEO ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Councillor Pattison. We have one apology tonight. Councillor Wellington is an apology tonight. Can I please have a mover and a seconder. A mover? Councillor Bodsworth. And seconder? Councillor Schonfelder. All those in

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favour? Thank you, Councillor Hodge. All those in favour? Thank you very much to Councillor Allen. And I see Councillor Barker is joining us again.

In relation to declarations of conflicts of interest, Councillors, I note that Regulation 7 of the Local Government Act, Governance and Integrity Regulations of 2020, provides for a number of exemptions in relation to declarations of conflicts of interest. One of these exemptions relates to the election of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor. Because tonight's meeting is being held for the purpose of electing a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, in accordance with sections 25 to 27 of the Local Government Act 2020, there is no need for any declarations of conflicts of interest to be made.

So item 2.1: the term of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The purpose of this report is for Council to determine by resolution the term of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. As the next Council election is less than 12 months away, we have a recommendation before us to set the term of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor as the remainder of the Council term. Does anyone wish to move this motion?

CR HODGE: Happy to move.

CEO ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Seconded, Councillor Pattison. Thanks very much. All in favour? Thank you very much. That motion is passed. Councillor Barker still seems to be having trouble connecting.

Alright. Item 2.2 on the agenda tonight is the election of the Mayor. The purpose of this report is to elect the Surf Coast Shire Council Mayor to be the period resolved by Council, so until the end of the Council term. Councillors, in accordance with our Governance Rules, I will be asking for nominations rather than for a motion. Therefore, there'll be no provision tonight for a debate. Each nomination will need to be seconded. You may nominate yourself or another Councillor. If only one nomination is received, I will declare that candidate elected. If more than one nomination is received, I will call for a vote where the Councillor with the absolute majority of votes - so five votes - will be declared elected. I would like to call for nominations for the office of Mayor. Are there any?

CR HODGE: I would like to nominate Liz Pattison for Mayor.

CEO ROBYN SEYMOUR: Thank you, Councillor Hodge. Councillor Stapleton. Are there any other nominations for the office of Mayor? As there are no other nominations, it is my pleasure to declare Councillor Pattison... (Applause)...as the newly elected Mayor. I now invite you to assume the Chair for the remainder of the meeting and you may make a short address to outline your priorities for the year ahead. Thanks very much, Mayor Pattison.

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MAYOR PATTISON: Thank you, Ms Seymour, and thank you. I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue to represent our community at the Surf Coast Shire as Mayor for the next 12 months. I thank my fellow Councillors for their support and confidence in re-electing me as their Mayor. It has been an honour leading this Council and I'm looking forward to the year ahead.

There are many things to be proud of in the last 12 months and for the year ahead. One of them - I think it's really important that we make local government accessible to everyone in our community, and to do this, we've taken some of our Council meetings into the community. This year we've done them at Winchelsea, Lorne, and this month, in November, we'll have one of our Council meetings in Aireys Inlet.

Council is also committed to reconciliation and walking and listening to First Nations people. This is really important, especially after recent events with the Referendum, and the Pilk Purrin truth-telling event, which was initiated and run by Wadawurrung, and supported by Council and our community, is a really important example of this. It was an honour to be part of this and it reflects the strong and respectful relationship we have with Wadawurrung.

I am committed to enabling our community to do more. A great example is the Bob Pettitt bike park redevelopment. This project was initiated by a local team and resulted in a locally designed and built bike park jumps in Jan Juc. That's a great example. Then if we look across to our community development Action Plans, the Shire, and led by the community, have developed Community Action Plans for Moriac and Winchelsea this year and the Anglesea community Action Plan will commence in early 2024. These Community Plans encourage community to reimagine what is important and special about their community.

Another thing that is really important is environmental leadership, and to name a few things, the Surf Coast Shire recovers 73% of resources from our kerbside bins and we're working through actions to protect the Karaaf wetlands. We're also installing solar and batteries across our facilities and we're a carbon-neutral organisation. There are so many ways that our Shire is an environmental leader. I could go on and on but they're just a couple that I've pulled out.

And I couldn't finish without speaking about pools. The Winchelsea pool redevelopment is underway and due for completion for next summer and in August we endorsed the detailed design for the Surf Coast Health and Aquatic Centre. In 2024 we will award the construction contract and I can't wait for a swim in the pool a little bit after that. This has been a dream for many in our community for such a long time.

I continue to enjoy working with and hearing from our community, in particular through my monthly Meet Your Mayor sessions. If you haven't had a chance to come and have

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a chat to me, please do so this coming year. They're advertised in my column in 'The Surf Coast Times' and on social media the week prior and we'll try to mix it up a bit and maybe do some in the evenings for those that can't make the daytime coffee catch-ups.

As a mum of four young boys, I'm also committed to my family and their needs. It's wonderful to have supportive Councillors who are happy to share in the fun opportunities of opening ceremonies, ribbon cutting and public speaking over the year. As a result, I think we've been able to strike a balance, a good balance. With the help of my supportive family, I am confident that I will continue to get the balance right, and thanks to my husband and some of my boys who are hiding up the back here tonight. It's lovely to have you in the chambers. (Applause).

As your Mayor, I am committed to good governance and I want to collaborate and engage with you. There are many challenges ahead, be it responding to climate change, addressing our housing needs or just generally supporting each other to thrive. I want to enable our community to be part of the solution and come along on the journey for a healthy and connected community here on the Surf Coast. I look forward to continuing to represent you as your Mayor for the next 12 months. Thank you. (Applause).

And now that that's done, we get to move onto the next fun item of the night, which is electing our Deputy Mayor. So the purpose of this report is to elect the Surf Coast Shire Council Deputy Mayor for the remainder of our Council term. Councillors, in accordance with our Governance Rules, I'll be asking for nominations rather than a motion. Therefore, there will be no provision for debate. Each nomination will need to be seconded. You may nominate yourself or another Councillor. If only one nomination is received, I will declare that candidate elected. I would like to call for nominations for the office of Deputy Mayor. Councillor Schonfelder.

CR SCHONFELDER: Mayor Pattison, I would like to congratulate you on your election and I would like to nominate Councillor Bodsworth, please.

MAYOR PATTISON: Thank you, and do we have a seconder? Councillor Gazzard, thank you. Are there any further nominations for the office of Deputy Mayor? No. So as there has only been one nomination received, I declare that Councillor Bodsworth has been duly elected as Deputy Mayor of the Surf Coast Shire Council for the '23/24 year. (Applause).

Councillor Bodsworth, as the newly elected Deputy Mayor, would you like to make a short address?

CR BODSWORTH: It will be pretty short. Thanks very much to Councillors for their support. I've really enjoyed the Deputy Mayor role over the past year and I'm very

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much looking forward to carrying it on for the coming year. I could echo a lot of what the Mayor has just said but I won't. I think that we've performed well as a Council. I'm very focused on ensuring that we continue to perform well, that we stay focused on our agendas, that we stay very focused on our communities and that we're true and we represent in good faith what our communities are striving for, and I'm very proud of the organisation, the leadership of the organisation and the staff for the role that they play in helping us to achieve all those things on behalf of our communities who the organisation, the staff, are very closely tied to and committed to. So I'm proud to be part of the leadership of the organisation and I'm looking forward to tackling a few things.

There's a few things I'll touch on that I'm particularly interested in - active transport. We've heard recently about our challenges resourcing active transport to get walking and cycling and non-car-based mobility to where we want it to be. We've heard that very clearly from communities. We've heard it from our youth census. It's been an important part of our Council plan and I'm very committed to doing what I can to help drive that conversation within the Council and see where we can get to with active transport over the remainder of our term. I'm very committed to waste. I like our 73% diversion from landfill but I'm heading for 80. And I know the staff are on board with that and I know that the community is on board with that and we need to work with them to get greater buy-in to particularly sorting their waste stream to get to that 80% diversion from landfill.

I'll leave it at that but I thank you for your support and I'm committed to supporting you as my colleagues. I really value being on the Council with you all and let's make it a good year ahead. (Applause).

MAYOR PATTISON: Thank you, Councillor Bodsworth. Well, it's a short meeting but a good meeting. So that actually brings our meeting to a close. So thank you to those online and thank you to those that have come in to see the meeting. We now declare the meeting closed at 5.15. Thank you very much. Goodnight, everybody. See you.