

**RESPONSE TO PETITION - DEMOLITION OF BANKS RESERVE PAVILION**

**TRIM Ref:** D21/120097

**Attachments:** Nil

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council:**

- 1. NOTES the update on the Banks Reserve Pavilion rationalisation project;**
- 2. NOTES that the demolition of the pavilion is a project that is scheduled to occur in 2021; and**
- 3. NOTES that the provision of a community meeting space will be considered as part of the detailed design of the proposed Banks Reserve Plaza.**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

To provide Council with an update in response to the petition received from Leon Pericles on 1 July by 2021.

**BACKGROUND:**

Banks Reserve Master Plan was adopted by Council on 5 March 2019 and included an action to demolish the Banks Reserve Pavilion.

On 1 July 2021, Leon Pericles submitted a petition to the City with 446 signatures stating as follows:

*"The Banks Reserve Pavilion, which sits in a rare and unique position on the one of the most beautiful walks on the swan river, is slated for demolition by the City of Vincent Council. We are appealing to the community to support our demand that it NOT be demolished but instead be given new life to support the health and wellbeing of our community.*

*We urgently need to make a call to stop the demolition. It would be devastating to remove a beautiful and functional community space. The cost to replace such a space means we will never see a new community building built and the opportunity for revitalisation will be lost.*

*This building has been successfully used for years: for example as a children's preschool for many years earning the council more than enough income to pay for any upkeep. The council could easily find tenants and uses for this versatile building. Community support is so great that we have already compiled a very long list of respected professionals that will donate their time and expertise to launching the space with free classes, seminars and workshops.*

*Just a few of the VIPs who have committed to giving their time in support of building this community hub: Artist Leon Pericles, Film Producer Celia Tate, TV Presenter Calinda Anderson, Former Head of Music at UWA Mark Coughlan, Former CEO of Perth Zoo John De Jose, Businessman Steven Drake-Brockman, former Politician Peter Foss, Artist Kylie Rath, Bookshop Owner Robert Muir, the list goes on and will only grow..."*

The full text with updates is available at [change.org](https://change.org). The petition has been generated through the change.org electronic platform and it appears that it commenced prior to the community meeting that took place on the 1 May 2021.

Demolition of the Banks Reserve Pavilion was scheduled for 20 July 2021. Acknowledging the receipt of the petition, Administration has delayed demolition to allow for this petition to be presented to and considered at an Ordinary Council Meeting.

**DETAILS:**

The demolition of Banks Reserve Pavilion was a project approved as part of the City's 2020/21 works and preparations were made last financial year for the building to be demolished and replaced with green open space.

The Master Plan outlines the intention to construct a "partially covered plaza space that allows a flexible range of activity and functions that can be utilised by the wider community" to replace the pavilion.

That work will continue in 2021/22 with the City undertaking the work required to make an application under the Aboriginal Heritage Act in order to get consent to construct a plaza. The intention is to convert this area to public open space while this work is carried out, consent is sought and budget secured.

Demolition of the pavilion was originally scheduled to take place in the first six months of 2021 but public interest in the demolition resulted in the works being postponed and an open community meeting being held on site on the 1 May 2021. That meeting was attended by the Mayor, Deputy Member, Elected Members and City staff. The meeting also coincided with a pop up community engagement event on the City's draft *Asset Management and Sustainability Strategy* which was held to coincide at the same location.

Subsequent to the meeting, further work was carried to investigate options for maintaining a community building in some form on the site.

Retention and upgrade of the existing building was not re-considered as a feasible long term option.

The pavilion is located in a riverbank flood zone and the likelihood of having a Development or Building Application approved for major improvements or changes is low.

The first scenario considered was to defer the demolition and retain the pavilion in its current state for a period of time. This review demonstrated, for example, that in order to retain the pavilion for a further four years the City would incur lifecycle costs of approximately \$210,000 (not including any allowance for waste collection, utility charges or capital renewal). In this scenario, the remaining asbestos would be left in the building and the City would not install air conditioning.

The second scenario considered was partial demolition of the building and retention of the community hall. This option involved the demolition of the existing toilets and kitchen, retaining the hall and constructing a single universal access toilet and a small kitchenette within the footprint of the existing hall. The cost of the demolition and building works for this option was estimated to be \$91,000. In this scenario asbestos would not initially be removed from the hall and air conditioning would not be installed. Annual lifecycle costs were calculated at \$36,000 per annum (cleaning, maintenance and capital renewal) although this figure does not include any allowance for waste collection and utility charges as these depend on building utilisation and are difficult to estimate. The scenario contemplates future removal of the asbestos to coincide with roof sheeting renewal at an estimated additional cost of \$30,000. Officers also strongly recommended that a palisade fence was installed (similar to the current fence that provides protection to the building) at an additional cost of \$13,250.

The third scenario considered was the inclusion of a meeting space in the future Plaza area which is currently a high level concept and subject to further detailed design work. This final design could include an indoor meeting space, which could be opened up to the Plaza for indoor/outdoor community gatherings, hire and recreational use.

Administration continues to support the removal of the pavilion and creation of more public open space as part of the implementation of the Banks Reserve Masterplan due to the identified issues with the location; historical under-utilisation of the facility; dated infrastructure; and the potential costs involved in full or partial retention in the short and long term for no clear benefit.

Administration will continue to explore an indoor/outdoor meeting place within the plaza design in further consultation with the community.

The upcoming works at Banks Reserve also closely align with the City's draft Asset Management and Sustainability Strategy (AMSS), which addresses the City's need to deal with ageing and underused buildings in a way that is sustainable, affordable and fit for purpose. The draft AMSS can be viewed at [imagine.vincent.wa.gov.au](http://imagine.vincent.wa.gov.au)

**CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:**

The development of the Banks Reserve Masterplan involved an extensive public consultation process prior to its adoption by Council. In preparation for demolition of the pavilion a public notice was originally placed on the building and more recently a public notice in relation to the demolition that was to take place on the 20 July was advertised in the local press.

There will be further community engagement as part of the detailed design process for the proposed Banks Reserve Plaza.

**LEGAL/POLICY:**

The demolition of the Banks Reserve pavilion is contained in the adopted Banks Reserve Masterplan and supported by the City's draft Asset Management and Sustainability Strategy.

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Low/Medium: It is low risk for Council to proceed with the implementation of the Banks Reserve Masterplan. There is a medium risk of community concern about the removal of the building prior to finalisation of the design for the plaza.

**STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Thriving Places

*Our physical assets are efficiently and effectively managed and maintained.*

Innovative and Accountable

*Our resources and assets are planned and managed in an efficient and sustainable manner.*

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:**

This proposal and the future plaza proposal would result in the creation of additional green spaces, planting and tree canopy, in line with the sustainability outcomes of the *City's Sustainable Environment Strategy 2019-2024*:

- Urban tree canopy is protected and enhances to increase habitat and biodiversity; and
- Loss of urban vegetation and tree canopy is reduced and the planting of additional trees and shrubs is increased.

**PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS:**

By demolishing the pavilion and increasing planting and green spaces, this proposal contributes to the following priority health outcomes of the *City's Public Health Plan 2020-2025*:

- Increase the number of trees and green spaces to support the health and wellbeing of our community; and
- Deliver active and passive parks, playgrounds and additional public open spaces for all ages and abilities to enjoy.

**FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:**

The financial implications of potential scenarios for retention of the Pavilion (full and part) are contained in the report.