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The Gawler Institute and Town Hall buildings More complicated, more expensive but well worth the endeavour

The restoration and redevelopment of the Institute and the Town Hall buildings, now nearly 50% completed, is critical to the economic, social and cultural life of the Town of Gawler, according to Gawler's Mayor, Karen Redman.

"Sadly, the legal requirement to maintain our heritage buildings, as compelled by the Heritage Places Act, was ignored by previous administrations. But this Council understands that, despite inevitable complications and unforeseen extra costs, the restoration and redevelopment of these significant buildings is about continuing the steady growth in business confidence in Gawler while ensuring that our history and built heritage are left in good order for future generations," Mayor Redman said.

Speaking after the closed Council meeting on Tuesday night where a report outlining unforeseen increased costs involved in this project was presented and examined, Mayor Redman made the point that in seven years since this project was first proposed nearly every report had been discussed in public however in this instance it had determined to discuss this important report in confidence.

"Council is committed to openness and transparency but we were advised by staff that commercial-in-confidence constraints, sensitive negotiations and the importance of leaving our options open made the closed meeting essential," Mayor Redman said. Mayor Redman said that the restoration and redevelopment of the State Heritage listed Gawler Institute and the Town Hall buildings was never going to be easy or inexpensive given over 30 years of neglect.

As the redevelopment advanced, it became clear that significant but unforeseen remediation works were required particularly with regard to the heritage stonework, drainage and waterproofing of these historic civic buildings.

"After Council was advised of the increased costs, cost reduction opportunities and the potential for variations in project scope were examined. While being extremely mindful of costs, Council was adamant that the project continue, that the integrity of these important heritage buildings be preserved and there be a rigorous examination as to what extent these increase costs should have been foreseen by the relevant contractors," she said.

Mayor Redman said that the remediation works required are generally consistent with the restoration of 19th century heritage buildings.

Gawler



“Termite damage, water damage, salt damp, dry rot, asbestos and previously undocumented works are challenges certainly - but not insurmountable challenges. We will address all of the problems in a logical, measured and efficient manner,” she added. “Critically, our financial indicators tell us that there is capacity within our long term financial plan to manage these issues now, taking into account and within the context of all the other responsibilities of a growth Council.”

“When completed, these buildings will grace our town. They will speak to all of us about our past, our present and, more importantly, the Town of Gawler’s bright and positive future, and a commitment to the next generation” Mayor Redman concluded.

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