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Grooving to Naidoc

Indigenous culture is being celebrated this week with Naidoc events held throughout the City of Canning. Canning council held a special event at the Canning town hall on July 6 with dot painting, dance and didgeridoo playing. There was also bush tucker tasting including quandong jam, kangaroo stew and emu sausages. The event acknowl-

edged the original people of Australia and recognised the important role Aboriginal people played in the community. Schools also got into the spirit with Sevenoaks senior college holding an activity day on June 30. Students took part in didgeridoo workshops and enjoyed a traditional performance. Visit www.naidoc.org.au.

Naidoc performers Josh Kelly, Troy Kelly, Time Kelly, Terence Kelly and Kenny Griggs. Photograph — Matt Devlin.

Rate rise has punch

By HAMISH HASTIE

WA Treasurer and Member for Riverton Mike Nahan says 'heads should roll' over rate rises and the state of City of Canning's finances after the city passed its 2015-16 budget last week.

The budget included an 8.49 per cent increase in the general rate in the dollar from 0.037 to 0.04 and a 9.9 per cent increase in the minimum rate from \$621 to \$683, still one of the lowest minimum rates in Perth.

In comparison, the City of Melville and City of Gosnells recorded a 3.75 per cent and 2.99 per

cent rise respectively.

In the past three years general rates in Canning rose by 22 per cent while in the past four years minimum rates had increased by 39 per cent.

Canning also reduced its operating expenditure from \$118 million last financial year to \$115 million, a reduction of 2.2 per cent.

Canning commissioner Steven Cole said it was a sensible budget with a view of the restoration of the city's finances towards financial sustainability.

Dr Nahan savaged the rate rises and said the city should not have

needed to increase rates as high as it had. "In light of modest rate rises in neighbouring councils, Canning ratepayers would have been expecting similar sized rate increases, not the 8.49 per cent the city has announced," he said.

He blamed poor management of the city's finances over the past five years, which included ballooning employment costs.

"City of Canning is the optimal size and was one of the best run councils in the state and had the lowest rates and it should have the lowest rate given the mixture of its rateable base," he said.

"But over the last number of

years it's just been poorly run at the cost of the ratepayers.

"They increased their costs substantially during the debate about the reform, I suspect they did that because they didn't think they would have to be held accountable for it."

"They (City of Canning) weren't sustainable...they were inefficient, (the inefficiency was) not forced on them by the state government or Gosnells or anything like that but because of their own mismanagement.

"Heads should roll, that's open for the commissioners.

"I'm not criticising the three

commissioners. He (Steven Cole) has only been there for a short period of time. I understand he's putting in a whole range of processes and at least he's being transparent."

Canning commissioner Steven Cole said the city was still one of the lowest rating councils in the metro area by some 10 per cent or more relative to comparable proximate local authorities.

He said the city was now moving constructively towards meeting the key benchmarks, in particular the operating surplus ratio and the asset sustainability ratio.

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