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For immediate release

Community safety remains a priority as Shire expands needle disposal services



The Shire of Broome has been successful in securing a \$187,430 grant from the Mental Health Commission to aid with the disposal of needles and syringes in local areas.

The grant agreement will run from December 16, 2024 for a 12-month period and will include installation of needle disposal bins in strategic locations around Broome and employment of an additional community clean-up crew staff member.

The staff member will perform regular checks of disposal bins, empty the bins at least twice per week and safely remove discarded needles from public spaces around Broome.

The additional Shire of Broome community clean-up crew staff member will likely commence as early as December 2024.

The Shire of Broome has advocated for many years to address the issue of needles found in public areas, emphasising the risk posed to staff and the community.

The Shire is committed to addressing this important community issue, and officers have been actively working with Kimberley Community Alcohol and Drug Services (KCADS) and Western Australian Country Health Service (WACHS) to find harm reduction strategies and address public safety concerns.

“The safety of everyone in our Shire remains our top priority - we hear and understand the concerns of our community members on this issue. Any assistance from the state government to improve management of needle litter, whilst addressing ways to prevent or reduce it, is welcomed,” said Shire President Chris Mitchell.

In October 2024, the Minister for Health Amber-Jade Sanderson responded to growing community concerns and committed to:

- Commencing a Needle Exchange Program in Broome (replacing the existing Needle and Syringe Program currently in place)
- Providing funding to the Shire to increase needle disposal units around the Broome townsite and additional staff to pick up discarded needles

Minister Sanderson said the Needle and Syringe Exchange Program (NSEP) would aim to reduce drug-related harm in the community and the rate of discarded drug use paraphernalia.

“We have worked to address community concern and will support the Shire with more resources to enable the safe disposal of needles and prevent the risks of injuries.

"We continue to provide resources on the ground in Broome to prevent and reduce harms from alcohol and other drug use, including a range of treatment and support programs and early intervention efforts,” said Minister Sanderson.

The Shire is awaiting further information from the State Government regarding the opening and scope of service for the Needle and Syringe Exchange Program (NSEP).

Read the full State Government media statement here:

<https://www.wa.gov.au/government/media-statements/Cook%20Labor%20Government/More-patrols-to-clean-up-needles-in-Broome-20241112>

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Images in JPEG format are available upon request.