



## 'Gero Feel' - Report

*The Gero feel is a combination of the sunny warm climate, beaches, sunsets, sports, friendly community, relaxed lifestyle and small town feel.*

### Background

In the Community Directions and Key Themes 2010 document endorsed by Council in April 2011, one of the Key Themes was Identity – maintaining the 'Gero Feel' but also adopting new ideas. This Key Theme was a summary statement representative of comments that came out of the community engagement in 2010 relating to the aspects of Geraldton that the community really enjoy and value and want to retain as the City region expands.

In order to determine what the 'Gero Feel' is the City of Greater Geraldton ran a competition calling for entries to describe what the 'Gero Feel' means to local residents. The community was asked to submit stories, poems, drawings/paintings and photographs that depict the Geraldton feel. Submissions were collected over May and June 2011.

There were 168 entries submitted by the community, 48 drawings, 13 photos, 30 poems and 77 stories. In addition to the competition information was collected from the world cafes and the Enquiry by Design forum. The information from these forums was similar to the responses from the competition however the information from the Enquiry by Design included a broader range of responses and touched on elements that were missed in the competition, examples of this can be seen below under the results section.

### Results

The entries that were received showed a diversity of thoughts and images that the Geraldton community sees as representative of the vibrant region in which they live. The 'Gero Feel' can not be defined by a single phrase as it is a combination of memories, experiences and elements that are significant to an individual. Instead the information was collated and broken down into several different themes that featured strongly in the entries, these included:

- Sunny warm climate
- Sunsets
- Beaches
- Sports
- Small town feel
- Friendly community

- Relaxed lifestyle

These themes conjure up an image of what it is like to live in Greater Geraldton, they provide a sense of place, an identity and highlight what the community value. So now when people refer to the 'Gero Feel' and how they do not want development or growth to comprise that feel the City and the community know what its is they are trying to retain.

Whilst it is important to capture the essence of Geraldton in the themes highlighted above to give a broad sense of the 'Gero Feel' it is still worth noting the words and phrases used by the community to describe the 'Gero Feel' these include;

Calm, crayfishing, fishing, camping, fun, pulling in big fish, swimming, surfing, running, friendly, exciting, nice, growing, awesome, shopping, playing, relaxing, enjoying time with the family, sports, colourful, the sounds of waves, eating, windy, quiet, wave running, booming, beautiful, catching great big waves, beaches, wildflowers, wonderous, pontoons, lighthouse, water park, yellow submarine, sea life, diverse community, fifty cent swing, welcoming, ease of a small town city, great outdoor living, it is home, foreshore and Abrolhos Islands.

#### *Enquiry by Design Forum*

At the Enquiry by Design Forum the 250 (approximately) participants were asked to list what they value most about living in Greater Geraldton. The majority of responses correlate with the responses from the competition however there were a number of responses that differed including and changing economic environment, diversity and multiculturalism and heritage buildings. Below is a list of the full summary of responses.

- Good Climate
- Healthy and relaxed outdoor lifestyle
- Accessibility and proximity of services
- Natural environment (beaches, wildflowers)
- Wide range of outdoor and water sports and sports facilities
- Sense of community
- Ease of a small size city
- A changing economic environment with opportunities for all
- Diversity and multicultural and living with opportunities for all
- Valuable heritage for example Greenough museum, Hawes buildings, Aboriginal heritage and Bill Sewell Centre.
- Proximity to Perth

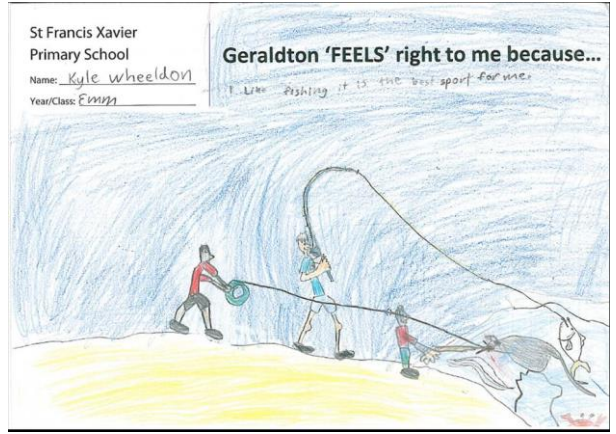
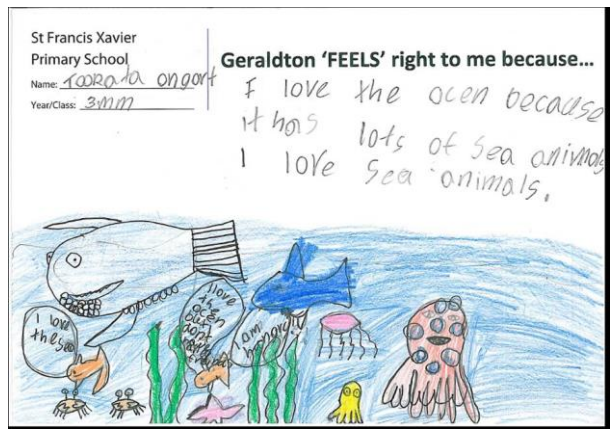
Participants were also asked to list the 'signature elements' that will forever define, shape and capture the essence of Greater Geraldton. There were a number of responses that were not strongly reflected by the community through the competition these included, the Moresby Ranges, Greenough and Chapman Rivers, the Port and Fisherman's wharf, significant Indigenous sites, the Greenough flats and heritage buildings. Below is a list of the full summary of responses.

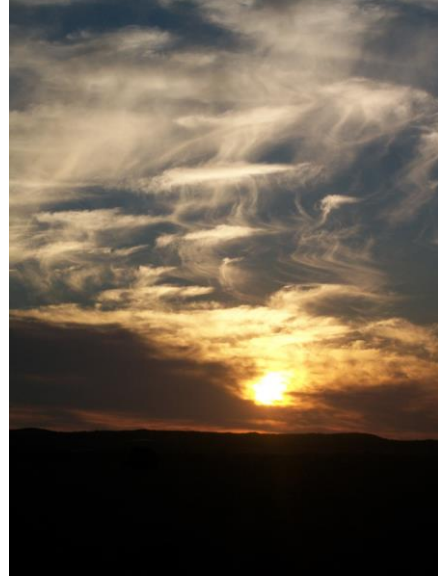
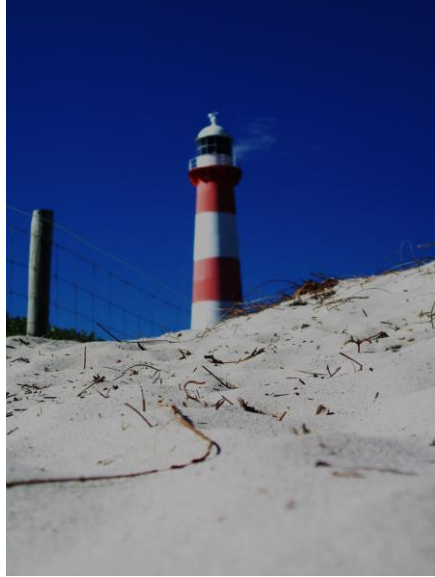
- The lighthouse is an iconic and important landmark structure. It tells what the town is - a port city.

- Moresby Ranges are an important natural landscape which provides beauty in a harsh environment.
- The foreshore is the heart of the town, its good for kids, provides diverse recreation, social interaction, healthy lifestyle, sense of freedom and is a place people can connect with environment
- Greenough River and Chapman River are significant because of the wildlife, wildflowers and opportunities to interact with nature.
- The Port and Fisherman's wharf is a working port which is part of City life, wealth, employment and history.
- Significant cultural and Indigenous sites need to be protected.
- Greenough flats are iconic because of the leaning trees and unique historical, agricultural landscape.
- Abrolhos Islands provides a mix of cultural, economic benefits and heritage.
- Heritage buildings for example the Cathedral, railway station, art deco buildings and Greenough Hamlet.
- Sporting facilities have shaped Geraldton's identity and lifestyle in terms of the strong sports culture.
- The bush land generally and Moresby Ranges in particular. They are an important natural landscape which provides beauty in a harsh environment. Allows time in a very different environment to the coastal environment.

### Examples of 'Gero Feel' Competition Entries







## Promoting the Gero Feel

The City used the information provided by the community to develop a series of postcards and bookmarks that capture the images and words used by local residents to promote the 'Gero Feel'. The City will be using these images and materials to promote the information in a creative and simple format using mediums that have a practical use. The bookmarks and postcards have been placed at key locations across the City and are being used in welcome and information packs as well as gifts for visitors to the Civic Centre and participants in community engagement activities and are part of the gifts new citizens receive at the swearing in ceremony.



## The Gero Feel Designs

The Friendliness of the locals...

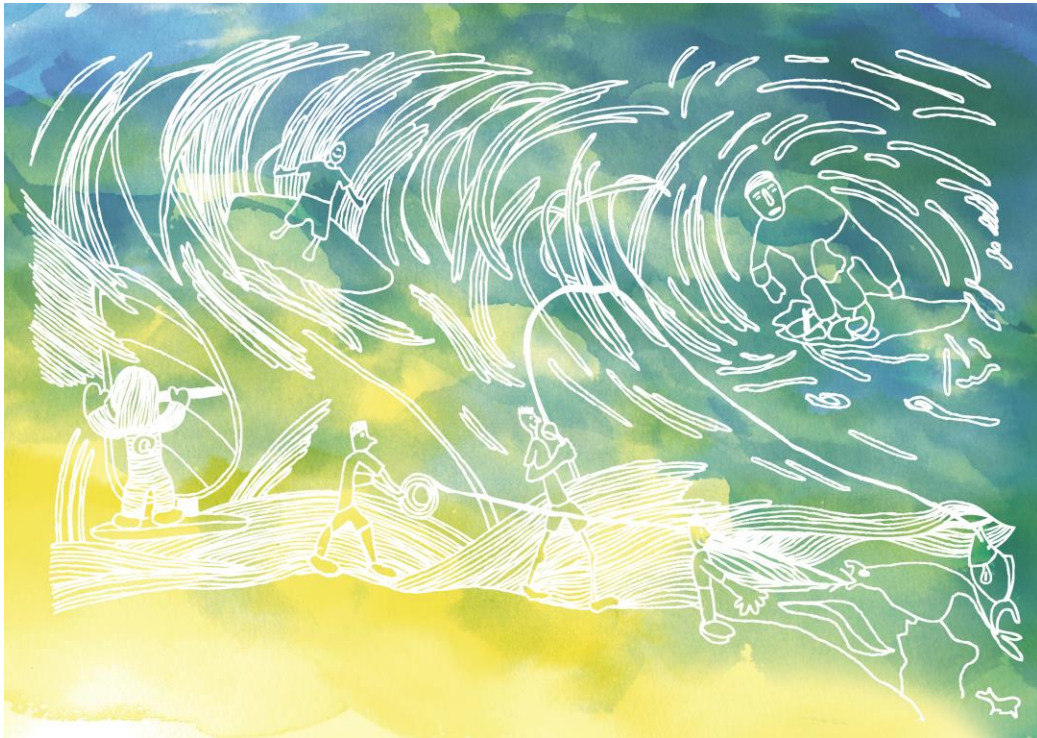


Small town feel...





The Sports...



The Sunset...





The Beach...



The Climate...

