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Lyngbya + seagrass

NEWS

Public voice environmental concerns at Shire meeting

By CHRIS HINGSTON

ENVIRONMENTAL concerns dominated last week's Broome Shire annual electors meeting, with queries from the public ranging from a call for a local carbon audit to the need to draft a plan to manage the toxic algal bloom in Roebuck Bay.

Five motions in total were moved by members of the public at the meeting, which included the reception of the Broome Shire's annual report for the financial year ending June 2009.

Environs Kimberley director Martin Pritchard moved three motions, one following on from a

question by Pat Lowe calling on the Shire to undertake a carbon audit to help develop plans to reduce local emissions.

He also successfully floated motions for the Shire to form a working group to help eradicate local weeds and another urging the Shire to request the State Government for more public meetings on the social impacts of the proposed gas development at James Price Point.

Former Shire councillor Chris Maher also formed two motions. The first called for each Shire councillor's vote to be recorded in council minutes, while the second asked the Shire to develop a strate-

gy to reduce the number of cars driving on areas of Cable Beach where the Off-road Vehicles Act applies.

Broome Shire president Graeme Campbell also fielded questions about the lack of Christmas lights in Chinatown, the status of the Broome Civic Centre refurbishment and the algae Lyngbya majuscula's effect on local seagrass.

Despite an interjection by a member of the public causing Cr Campbell to briefly suspend the meeting, the Shire president said he was pleased with the outcome of the annual event.

He said he was not surprised by

the number of environmental issues put forward.

"Emphasis on matters like this have certainly been increasing due to the James Price Point LNG hub decision," he said.

"There is a group of people who are concerned about the environment ... and (they) have every right to pursue the issues they believe in."

He said the Shire had appointed an environmental officer last year.

"Developing an environment strategy and policy is part of that person's role," he said.

Motions formed at the electors meeting would go before council in the February council meeting.