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Search

- **Our City**
- **Residents**
- **Our Community**
- **Business & Development**
- **Contact Us**
- [Home](#)
- [Latest News](#)
- [Mayor's Column](#)

- **Our City**
  - About Us
  - Council
  - Governance
  - News & Publications
    - **City News**
    - COVID-19
    - Public Notices
    - Publications
  - Employment Opportunities

# Departure of John Walker

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I write this week's Mayoral column with a heavy heart, with today being the last day that John Walker is the Chief Executive Officer of the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Because of our hard border, he has brought forward his departure from election day October 16 to today.

The best thing I have done since becoming your mayor was to be a part of the selection committee that appointed him to the top job and in the five-and-a-half years since he has not let me down.

Shortly after John started here, a Councillor from his former shire told me "You've got a good one there and you will find he is fiercely loyal." That prediction has proven correct and loyalty is a human trait I most admire.

There are a handful of people – mostly faceless Facebook warriors – who are glad to see the back of him. None of these mean-spirited people would have had anything to do with him

because every person who has had to deal with John say to me on a regular basis “He’s the best CEO we’ve ever had.”

I don’t look at Facebook, but staff tell me of some of the personal attacks against him so for the first time in my life, I’m ashamed of my home town. Then I have a reality check and realise most of these attackers are not locals, they are blow-ins from elsewhere who have done nothing for our community and never will.

The community groups, sporting clubs, business leaders and individuals who have dealt with John Walker are always impressed with how he always finds a way to help them and make our town a better place to live.

He will leave behind a rich legacy that will benefit us all for decades to come.

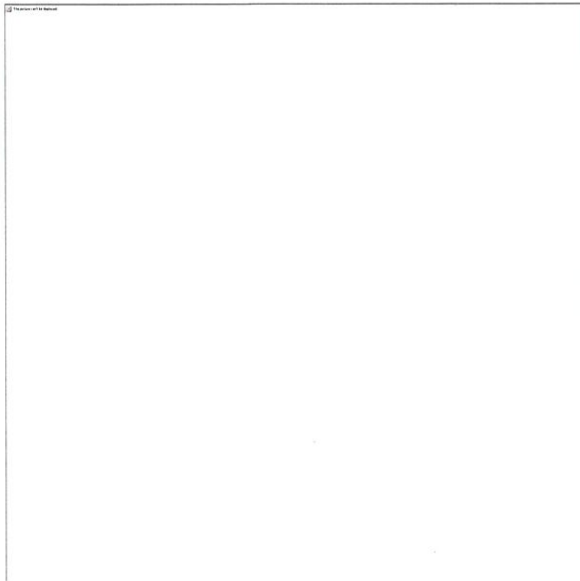
Just look at the streets (I never get tired of being stopped by visitors saying Kalgoorlie-Boulder is tidy and beautiful) and the parks and roundabouts and while he has improved those areas, it’s in attracting new industry and wealth generation for the Council that he will be remembered.

For 35 years the State Government’s Mungari industrial park has remained vacant, yet John Walker realised there were plenty of opportunities to attract new industry and he acquired Lot 500 at West Kalgoorlie, and today Lynas is building a \$500m rare earths plant. At the same time he has entered into a deal to sell water to the project, providing an annual profit to the ratepayers of \$1.8million.

A mark of the person he is has been demonstrated by him taking four weeks leave, and now finishing three weeks early because of the closed border. This has cost him over \$40,000. During his leave he continued to work and has offered to help staff in coming weeks.

I’m sad because my home town has lost a good person and I have lost a friend, though I know his heart will still hold a bit of Kalgoorlie-Boulder in it and those who care will remember him.

[Back to All News](#)



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- PO Box 2042, Boulder, WA 6432
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- For City emergencies during after-hours, please phone 9021 9600 and follow the prompts

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The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder acknowledges all the Traditional Custodians of this land and recognises its elders past, present and emerging.

**[Back to top](#)**