

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Council's last meeting was held on Wednesday 8 April under extremely different conditions. How the Coronavirus has changed the way we do things is nearly too hard to comprehend – but, by the same token, it's amazing just how we can alter our way of life, compromising and adapting, so we can carry on.

The expertise of Council's IT Support Officer, Amdad, has kept us going in these very challenging times. He ensured my colleagues and I were technologically set up and we conducted our meeting 'remotely'. I'm thinking that this will be the way we have our meetings for some time to come. It was, of course, a first for Council and I'm pleased to say, all went extremely well. Thank you, Amdad.

I want to also thank the General Manager and Directors for their co-operation and effort in addressing issues since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis – some decisions have not been easy. We all have a responsibility to protect one another and this will continue for as long as it takes.

Council has staff working from home while others are working behind closed doors to continue servicing the community in these unprecedented times. I urge everyone to keep safe by social distancing, self-isolation where possible and being aware of our individual responsibilities in these uncertain times. Let our local government area lead the way, keeping Covid-19 at bay!

Coonamble Shire Masterplan

It was great to have representatives of our consultant, sala4D, Shah and Celia, present to the meeting Stage 2 of our Masterplan. It's very exciting to see our plans moving forward!

The draft documents will now be placed on public exhibition for community feedback and will be available for viewing on Council's website, as well as the Gulargambone Rural Transaction Centre, Quambone Store and a copy displayed in the former Mac's Dry Cleaners window. If you are unable to view the documents at these locations and want a copy posted, please contact Council on council@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au and one will be sent to you. Submissions will be welcomed until Tuesday 12 May 2020, allowing sufficient time for feedback to be considered and amendments made to the final plan, which will be presented for adoption at Council's June Meeting.

The consultants have developed the draft plan and brand guidelines following the initial community consultation. I urge the community to again review and comment on what we are proposing by making a conscious effort to view these documents. The final masterplan will guide our future in numerous ways. Council is of the opinion that strategic planning development will allow significant projects to be identified over the long term and funding sourced without undue delays.

Councillors were able to ask questions during the presentation and it was good to hear that the consultants are happy with how the masterplan is progressing. They identified key projects in all three urban centres – details of these are included in the draft documents. With respect to plans for Coonamble, they were presented at the meeting in two sections - north and south. Councillors discussed several components of the masterplan and we are all very eager to hear further community

feedback. Comments and constructive criticism received will be taken on board and incorporated into elements of the final plans which will be adopted later in the year.

Cancellation of the 2020 Coonamble Show

On the agenda for the meeting was an item recommending that, due to the cancellation of the Coonamble Show, Council make application to have the gazetted public holiday for the second day cancelled by the Minister.

However, prior to the meeting, Council was notified by the Department of Premier and Cabinet that the public holiday for the Shire of Coonamble on Wednesday 27 May 2020 had been revoked. Accordingly, there will not be a public holiday and we all look forward to a bigger and better show in 2021.

Discussion Paper – Superannuation for Councillors

The Office of Local Government (OLG) has drawn attention to the *Councillor Superannuation Discussion Paper* which has been issued to Councils, with the request that local communities also be made aware of it and asked for their feedback on whether Councillors should receive superannuation payments.

Currently councils do not have to make superannuation contributions in relation to fees paid and the reason for this is that councillors are elected to a ‘civic office’ and not deemed to be employees of councils. Concerns have been raised that ineligibility of councillors to receive superannuation is inequitable and may be a deterrent to more women and younger people making themselves available for election to their local councils.

Council noted that, based on the current fees paid, the introduction of a superannuation payment to Councillors would equate to an additional \$9,022 expenditure in the current financial year. Council resolved to retain the status quo – which means that Council is not obliged to make superannuation guarantee payments to its councillors and mayor. This will be reflected in the submission to the Office of Local Government.

It is important for the community to provide feedback to OLG – the closing date for submissions is c.o.b. Friday 8 May 2020 and the Discussion Paper is available for viewing on the Office of Local Government website <http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au> Please be proactive and have your say!

ANZAC DAY

ANZAC Day is one very important day that has been cancelled this year because of COVID-19 and I had a meeting with RSL personnel to find out what could be done to remember those whose lives were lost in War. As a way to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice, I am asking the community to stand in front of their homes on ANZAC Day at 6.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. We can all play this small part to honour those who served and to acknowledge those who still serve. *Lest We Forget.*

Should anyone wish to contact me to discuss issues or concerns, please phone **0427 887 666** – I look forward to representing all our residents and encourage your phone calls.

Ahmad Karanouh

Mayor
