

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Council's September Meetings were held last week on Wednesday 9th – with the Extra-ordinary Meeting being held immediately prior to the Ordinary Meeting. The purpose of the Extra-ordinary Meeting was to elect the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, representatives to various Council/Outside Committees and to fix meeting dates for the ensuing 12 months.

The very first item of business was the procedures to be undertaken for election of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. As has been the practice in the past, Council resolved to use the ordinary ballot method in both cases. The General Manager was nominated to act as Returning Officer.

I am very honoured to have been re-elected, unopposed, by my fellow Councillors for this final year which will culminate with the Local Government General Elections on 4 September 2021. I thank my colleagues for their confidence and support and look forward to leading Council through the forthcoming year and achieving many of the goals which have been set. I would also like to congratulate Councillor Wheelhouse on being elected unopposed to the role of Deputy Mayor.

Council is still observing the social distancing regulation and is mindful of other precautions to be addressed in trying to combat the spread of COVID-19. Again, I congratulate our community for continuing to be vigilant in adhering to restrictions and other limitations imposed by Government during this period of uncertainty. There are no guarantees that COVID-19 won't find its way to our Shire so we must continue to observe the regulations and precautions which have been introduced.

During the month, the General Manager, the Manager Economic Development and Growth and I met with the owners and manager of the Coonamble Abattoir. The good news is that the owners are committed to getting the facility operational again, with the possibility of 15 employment positions becoming available. After such a long hiatus, this would be a great boost to our local economy and may even increase activity at the local saleyards. As progress updates are received, I will relay them to the community to ensure transparency and collaboration in supporting this development.

Councillor Churchill supported my motion that Council secures three (3) additional defibrillators; one to be located in the main street, near the pharmacy; one in a prominent location in Gulargambone and the other at either the hotel or the store in Quambone. There are already units located at both the Coonamble Pool and Coonamble Sportsground.

I'll now provide a brief summary of outcomes from the Meeting to keep our residents abreast of Council decisions.

Inaugural Meeting of the Re-formed Roads Committee

In September last year Council resolved to appoint community representatives to be part of this committee in conjunction with elected Council representatives and relevant staff. The four ratepayer representatives are Paul Fisher, Paul Underwood, Don Schieb and Alanna McHugh. These nominees will provide a mechanism for more community involvement and will have valued input into strategies to investigate and potentially deliver a more effective and efficient local roads network into the future.

The meeting provided a question/answer session for the four ratepayer members and enabled familiarisation with the Terms of Reference and Council's Code of Conduct. Five actions were identified and staff is currently working on progressing these and providing further information to the next meeting of the Committee.

Riverside Caravan Park

Expressions of interest are currently being invited for the lease of the Caravan Park. Council is hopeful that the park will be promoted and recognised as an accommodation option of choice and a key local tourism base. The successful applicant will be responsible for presentation and maintenance of the park and its facilities to a high level. To comply, applicants need to present efficient practices in staffing, financial management, safety, security, equipment and infrastructure maintenance, environment, customer service and marketing. Expressions of interest close on Friday 25 September.

Meeting of Local Traffic Committee

The outcomes of the Traffic Committee meeting held on 5 August 2020 were presented to Council. The idea of a 40km zone for Coonamble was well received by Transport for NSW (TfNSW), with the recommendation that it commence in the vicinity of the intersection with Pages Terrace, however on inspection it was ascertained that it should commence just west of the Mobil Service Station. It will proceed along the Castlereagh Highway, over the bridge and finish in the proximity of the Namoi Street intersection.

The 40km zone will include Castlereagh Street, between the National Australia Bank and the roundabout, also Aberford Street between the Post Office and Namoi Street. The 40km zone is being considered to reduce risks in relation to traffic movement and congestion, particularly adjacent to the two supermarkets on the Highway. During the process to establish the 40km zone, TfNSW will undertake community consultation.

Christmas Street Party - Coonamble

In conjunction with other stakeholders it has been agreed that this year's Christmas Street Party be held on Saturday 12 December. The date has been set to allow planning for the Buy Local Campaign to proceed. Expressions of interest have been called for management of the event as neither Council nor the Streets Ahead Committee has the capacity to manage the 2020 event. Concern was raised that restrictions limiting numbers attending events may still be in place and it was agreed that planning continue, with other feasible alternatives also being investigated.

Public Amenities – Coonamble CBD

The Technical Panel has been investigating service locations and connections and design development is underway. Members of the Panel have met on site and discussed location, screening options, accessibility and development of the surrounding landscape. It has been agreed that the building would be covered in a pre-printed photo film rather than painted once on site. Concept designs for a commissioned artwork have been invited and a shortlist of recommendations will be presented to Council for consideration and determination.

Roadworks

A response is being awaited to Council's application to upgrade the intersection of Warren Road and the Castlereagh Highway under the National Heavy Vehicle Safety Productivity Program to a value of \$820,000. Funds have been committed to

upgrade sections of the Warren Road in collaboration with Warren Shire Council, however, the scope of works has been changed and is awaiting confirmation. We are also waiting on a response from Transport for NSW regarding the development phase of the Tooraweenah Road project to undertake environmental and geotechnical investigations, survey and design.

Council's next meeting will be held on 14 October at the Quambone Memorial Hall – which is Council's usual practice in keeping with having one meeting per year in Quambone and Gulargambone.

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