

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Last Wednesday, 11 March 2020, Council held its ordinary meeting at Gulargambone and I would like to thank the Memorial Hall Committee for providing morning tea for us - as always it was delicious!

Before reporting on outcomes from the meeting I would like to congratulate all groups and individuals who were involved in organizing another very successful *Welcome to Coonamble* Dinner at the Golf Club on Saturday evening 29 February. The new residents were keen to get to know the locals who gave them first-hand answers to their questions. This event has become a bit of a tradition here in Coonamble - with some of the new arrivals saying they have not experienced this sort of welcome anywhere else and were very impressed with Coonamble's special style of hospitality!

In promotion of the Country Racing Championships which were held on Sunday 15 March I was involved in a film commercial. A representative from Racing NSW was in Coonamble with a film crew and I had the opportunity to promote our area. Congratulations to all concerned - it was a wonderful weekend. The influx of visitors boosted not only our economy, but also our spirits with their very positive comments. The racing was great and I'll bet a lot of first-time visitors will return to Coonamble in October to experience our Gold Cup!

Councillors held their pre-meeting session prior to the ordinary meeting commencing. I'm pleased to be able to report to our residents some of the outcomes.

Supermarket and Public Amenities Update

I do realize that this has been an ongoing issue, however Council is now negotiating to buy a suitable option to erect the public amenities in Castlereagh Street. Hopefully we can get this sorted in the short term so that work can start. Unfortunately it appears, at this stage, that a supermarket in the main street will not go ahead, Council having been advised that the proponents are not proceeding due to personal reasons. I will keep our residents updated on progress of the public amenities.

Representatives on Council's Roads Committee

A further three expressions of interest to participate on Council's Roads Committee were endorsed at the meeting. Finally Council has four local landowners who have put their hands up to be part of this extremely important Committee. The four appointed delegates are Allan Deans, Don Schieb, Paul Fisher, Paul Underwood and Alana McHugh. I'd like to thank these people for agreeing to give their time to provide an advisory role to Council. Their tenure will expire in September 2020 when the next general election of local government occurs.

Second Round of Council's Financial Assistance Funding

Applications for funding under the second round of Council's Financial Assistance Policy closed on 21 February. The Donations Committee met prior to Council's March Meeting and provided recommendations for consideration. The following is a determination of the requests received:

1. Marthaguy Picnic Race Club - \$2,500
Free community luncheon at the Marthaguy Picnic Races.
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2. Quambone Polocrosse Club Inc - \$1,500
Assist with expenses in conducting the annual carnival in Quambone.
3. Quambone Resources Committee - \$550
Fund accommodation for a member in Sydney to attend the 2020 Charity Brunch event.
4. Coonamble Community Radio Inc - \$5,000
Towards cost of moving transmitter and maintenance of radio station.
5. Coonamble Women's Shed Inc - \$150
Morning /afternoon tea for a social get-together and 'yarn up'.
6. Gulargambone Bowling Club Ltd - \$2,000
Maintain and beautify greens and grounds.
7. Coonamble Show Society - \$5,000
Community entertainment at the 2020 annual show.
8. Let's Dance Carinda Tribute Committee - \$3,000
Sponsor an additional band at the Festival.

Requests from the Coonamble Rotary Club (to conduct a free fun day in November) and the Campbelltown Art Centre (for increased sponsorship) were pre-approved from the 2020/2021 Donations Budget. The next round of funding will be open in late May / early June.

Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement

Council noted progress with the development of its Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP and A Act), and was pleased to have received two (2) submissions. Taking comments in the submissions into account, Council will prepare a final LSPS which will be presented to Council on 13 May 2020 – the final document will then be submitted to the Department. This document will bring together and build on the planning work found in Council's other plans, studies and strategies and will be used to update key components of these plans to present a consistent strategic direction for Coonamble Shire.

General Revaluation – Coonamble Shire

Council was presented with information on the outcome of the recent revaluation of land within the Shire. This exercise is carried out by the Valuer General who supplies land values to Council for use in calculation and levying of rates and the process occurs every three (3) years. The new land values will become effective in the 2020/21 financial year – Council has been advised by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). For the 2020-21 financial year Council has been advised that it will be able to increase the revenue collected from rates by a maximum of 2.6%.

It is interesting that, in summary, the unimproved capital value of land within Coonamble Shire has increased from \$1,026,781,256 as at 1 July 2016 to \$1,388,929,370 as at 1 July 2019. Overall this represents an increase of 35.3% over the past three years and I suggest that if any of our ratepayers are not happy with the new land values they write to the Valuer General requesting a review of the

valuation. It is important to note that Council cannot change the land values supplied by the Valuer General.

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
