

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Council held its monthly meeting for October at Quambone on Wednesday 14th. In keeping with Council policy one meeting annually is held at both Quambone and Gulargambone. This gives locals the opportunity to attend the meeting to address Council, without the need to travel into Coonamble. My thanks to the Quambone P&C whose members provided morning tea and lunch. Council is pleased to contribute to the Committee by way of a catering fee.

I have touched briefly on some of the issues dealt with at the meeting which I hope will be of interest to readers.

Primitive Camping Area

At a recent meeting held at Quambone to discuss the future direction of the community, this matter was raised. Council staff have been instructed to proceed with works necessary to bring the facility to the standard required for this classification. Council understands that this area is frequently used by travellers.

Proposed Public Holiday – 2012 Coonamble Show

Each year Council is required to advise the NSW Department of Industrial Relations by November of its intention for gazettal of public holidays for the forthcoming year. The only public holiday for which Council applies is that for the second day of the annual show.

Council has requested input from the Coonamble Chamber of Commerce as to whether it should apply for gazettal of a public holiday for next year's show. Submissions from any businesses within the Shire should be submitted in writing to Council by 31 October, 2011, as the matter will be determined at the November meeting.

School to Work Program

Council adopted a policy that will allow it to work closely with the Coonamble High School in providing opportunities to prepare students to enter the workforce. In conjunction with the High School, Council has identified several projects that will be of community benefit and give students skills that will be useful in their future careers.

It is anticipated that some traineeships will become available shortly after the completion of this year's Higher School Certificate. The policy adopted by Council demonstrates its commitment to assisting young people in developing their work experience skills in a workplace environment.

Community Strategic Planning

Council continues to develop its Strategic Plan and staff have been to various functions within the community collecting data required to determine the strategic direction for the next ten years. As previously mentioned, this should be the community's plan, not necessarily that of elected members.

During November community workshops will be held at Gulargambone and Quambone, seeking input for this process. Survey forms will also be mailed out to residents – please take the time to put forward your ideas and return the completed form to Council.

Council staff will continue to attend events to listen to the community's ideas for the future. I encourage everyone to have input into the future of Coonamble Shire.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT FUNDING

Council has recently received notification of grant funding of \$469,571 for the investigation and design of a new levee for the town and repair the high river bank behind the Coonamble library which was damaged during recent floods. There are substantial environmental and structural issues which must be addressed to the satisfaction of the Department of Environment and Heritage prior to funding being released.

This is the start of a program expected to cost in the vicinity of \$9M when completed. Council is hopeful that substantial grant funding will be made available from other levels of Government to assist as Council's resources are insufficient to attempt such a massive project.

COMPANION ANIMALS

There have recently been several instances reported to Council of dog attacks within the Shire and residents are again reminded of their responsibilities in the keeping of companion animals within urban areas.

Strict guidelines do apply for aggressive dogs and, under the Companion Animals Act, Council has no discretion in the application of penalties for dangerous dogs.

ROADWORKS

I am very pleased to have received positive comments regarding recent works on shire roads. Residents are again reminded that flood damage restoration must take precedence over routine maintenance, otherwise funds allocated by the RTA will have to be returned if works remain outstanding.

I would also like to point out that Council is given a schedule of works for flood damage and funding is provided specifically for those works determined by the RTA.

Council each year adopts a plan of maintenance for roadworks that provides best efficiency and effectiveness for its road network and, from time to time, circumstances may arise that require review of the program. I realize that this must cause frustration to some ratepayers when works need to be postponed. Council's priority is to ensure access to all rural properties.

If anyone has an issue they wish to discuss I am available anytime to meet with them – telephone 0488 425 312

TIM HORAN
Mayor