

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Another month has passed – Council held its August meeting on Wednesday, 11th. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8th September at Quambone. Council policy is that the September meeting be held at Quambone and the March venue is Gulargambone. This gives residents in both those centres an opportunity to bring issues directly to a meeting.

Mayoral Minute

I put forward a Mayoral Minute, which was passed unanimously, that in conjunction with the redevelopment of Coonamble Showground, the new Poultry Pavilion be named *The Barry Jackson Memorial Poultry Pavilion*. This, of course, will be subject to concurrence from Hazel and Family. Barry worked tirelessly to promote the poultry section of our Show – he was a very keen and successful exhibitor who travelled many miles to participate in poultry shows.

Beautification of Main Street CBD

It is acknowledged that several years ago Council spent significant funds in beautifying the CBD. This Council thinks it's time for another update to make the area into a modern, aesthetically pleasing and inviting "oasis" particularly for tourists. Council representatives have met with a landscape designer and Council is now writing to the Coonamble Streets Ahead Committee and the Coonamble Chamber of Commerce inviting their representatives to come on board with ideas. The project will not be huge financially, but it is hoped it will be a very successful "lift".

Proposed Closure of District Court at Coonamble

Council has received advice that there is a proposal to close Coonamble District Court. We will be writing to the Chief Judge of the District Court to ask why this proposal is in the pipeline. Council will then make representations to both the Attorney General and the Local Member pointing out the negative impact this action would have on the town.

Proposed Restructure of NSW Hospital System

The Premier of NSW has advised that a discussion paper has been released which outlines a proposed restructure of the NSW hospital system. Under the plan 17 new Local Health Networks (LHN) would be established across NSW replacing the eight Area Health Services currently in place. If these LHNs proceed in their present form Coonamble will be located in the Central West which covers an enormous part of the State, extending to the Queensland border.

It would seem the push is to have Orange Hospital a Class 5, with Dubbo Class 3 which does not have access to oncology or renal services. This would result in patients being sent to Bathurst for treatment. Council is preparing submissions, individually and in conjunction with the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC), objecting to this and vigorously supporting Dubbo Hospital as the “hub” for the Central West LHN.

I encourage the community to become involved by writing to both our local members :

- Federal Member for Parkes: Mr Mark Coulton; and
- State Member for Barwon: Mr Kevin Humphries.

Copies of the discussion paper are available from the Department’s website at www.health.nsw.gov.au

Murray Darling Basin

Council decided to become a member of the Murray Darling Association Inc because it is believed that some negative impact to rural landowners will accrue upon implementation of the draft Plan which will be placed on public exhibition shortly. As a member of the Association Council will be able to put in place robust and appropriate strategies for dealing with the draft Plan so it can be thoroughly examined and meaningful submissions made.

Coonamble Arts Alive – Sculpture Project

Council has been approached by members of Arts Alive advising of its Sculpture project and seeking permission to place these sculptures at appropriate locations throughout the town and on various approaches. Arts Alive wants to use Council land, with the first stage being at the Showground. The sculptures will be made of scrap material like that used in Waste2Art. Council requested that a more detailed submission, together with costings, be provided to the September meeting when a decision will be made.

Presentation by Students from Years 7 & 8

Six students from the Coonamble High School Years 7 & 8 composed and presented individual expositions to Council’s meeting on what Coonamble will be like in the Year 2050. Each student outlined his/her predictions and why they believed such changes would occur. We should be very proud of our forward thinking young people who did a great job. They were very convincing as each one put his/her case to Council – we’ll have to start budgeting now for all these great changes! Congratulations to Mariam Karanouh, Jake Buckley, Olivia Stratton, Olivia Robinson, Leona Harris and Leah Campbell. I also commend the High School teachers involved in what is a new approach to learning.

Country Energy

Three members of Country Energy, Mr Peter Halliwell (Regional General Manager), Mr Ben Williams (Area Manager) and Ms Helen Rhodes (Manager – Community Relations) attended the meeting to bring Council up to date on recent works, planned works, price increases and current issues. It was pointed out that over the next five years nearly \$6 billion will be spent on upgrading the aging system, constructing and refurbishing existing sub-transmission lines, building new and refurbishing existing zone substations, along with the installation of up to 2750 reclosers to improve network safety and reliability.

Council was informed that the demand on electricity has increased dramatically and consumers are entitled to an effective, efficient and safe electricity network. Mr Halliwell said Country Energy is planning a second power line between Dubbo and Gilgandra which will give Coonamble a back up supply in the event of lighting strike or any other incident that may damage lines. At this stage Country Energy is not planning to upgrade the capacity in mains to Coonamble.

Ms Rhodes said it is important that customers understand where they are using energy and referred to “energy meters” which register this information. In the near future the Coonamble Library will receive five Power-Mate Energy Meters which can be borrowed and used by customers in their homes to identify items using the most electricity. Council is pleased to be participating in this scheme and hopes that it can save consumers money on their electricity accounts. When these units are available from the Library advice will be included in Council’s weekly column.

If anyone has an issue they wish to discuss I am available anytime to meet with them – telephone 0407 221002. Remember the September meeting will be held in the Memorial Hall at Quambone.

TIM HORAN

Mayor