

## **FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK**

I hope everyone enjoyed the Easter break – the weather was nice and four days off makes it worthwhile to get away and relax, perhaps do a bit of fishing! However, it's back to normal now with our meeting being held last Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April - not a big agenda so we were able to finish prior to lunch.

It was unusual to not have anyone booked to address Council – either during public question time or arranged delegations. I want to remind residents that Council Meetings are open to the public and interested persons are always welcome – the only time the public is excluded is if Council has to go into Closed Session to consider matters that meet the criteria.

During the period since the March meeting I have had a pretty quiet time – everything seemed to slow down prior to Easter. However, on 16 March I did attend the OROC Board Meeting – Joint Organisations are still the topic of choice. As I've previously reported, this Council resolved to not join a J.O. – it's the right decision at this point in time I'm quite sure.

On 5 April I attended the *Boots and Pearls* Luncheon for Seniors held at the Bowling Club – what a success it was – our Seniors enjoyed the meal and the entertainment. Seniors from Gulargambone and Quambone were brought to and from the function by bus. I must congratulate our Director of Community Services, Ms Robyn Ryan and her staff for their efforts – it was a nice touch also that members of our staff carried out waitressing duties and looked after our wonderful seniors. I'm sure it'll have to be an annual event now!!!

### ***Sponsorships***

Council again was generous with its financial assistance, committing \$2,500 to the Campbelltown Arts Centre for sponsorship of the *Sculpture Award* which is held in conjunction with the Festival of Fisher's Ghost. Council also agreed to sponsor a race at the October long weekend greyhound racing carnival and committed \$1,000 to the Coonamble Greyhound Racing Club.

### ***Where's the Horse Trough?***

I was pleased to see on the agenda a letter from two of our longtime residents, Mervyn Canham and Doug White, about the horse trough which was moved from the Castlereagh Street roundabout prior to the planting of the tree replacing the Peace Tree. They don't want to lose that part of our history and asked whether Council planned to bring the trough back to the main street. I agree wholeheartedly with them that the trough is very much part of Coonamble's history and confirm that when the garden is restored the trough will again take its place in the roundabout.

### ***Crown Land Reform***

Council has been advised that when this new legislation commences in 2018 it will introduce significant changes to the way councils manage Crown lands under their control. Under the new Act dedicated or reserved Crown lands will be "vested" in councils to manage the land as if it were public land under the *Local Government Act 1993*. Most of this land is expected to be classified as "community land" under

the Local Government Act – which means that councils will be required to develop it and have plans of management in place.

Although the new Act reduced the number of Acts councils have to comply with regarding management of Crown land, it has increased the burden and associated compliance for councils. Of course, this means more legislative obligations and, certainly, more expense!! At this stage the State Government has indicated that financial assistance will be available to offset some of the initial implementation costs, but ongoing costs will be the responsibility of Council – another incident of cost-shifting by the State Government!!!

### ***Community Newsletter***

I am very pleased with the efforts being made by Council staff in having a monthly newsletter mailed out to every household in the Shire. *Community Connect* is published immediately after each Council meeting so that all our residents are kept informed of all things Council. A lot of work goes into publishing the newsletter and I congratulate staff on getting it out to the community the day after each meeting. Congratulations – well done!

### ***Council By-Election – Saturday 5 May***

We have three candidates seeking election at the By-Election to be held on Saturday 5 May. Voting is compulsory - so mark the date in your diary or if you won't be here on the day, you can make arrangements to pre-poll. For further information please contact the NSW Electoral Commission – telephone 1300 135 736 or at [www.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.elections.nsw.gov.au)

Should anyone wish to contact me to discuss issues or concerns, please phone 0427 905 626 - I'm always available and willing to act on behalf of our residents.

**Michael Webb**  
Mayor