

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

As we're all aware, the By-Election to fill the vacancy on Council caused by the death of Cr Tom Cullen OAM resulted in the election of Robert "Octo" Thomas – congratulations to "Octo" whose first meeting as a Councillor will be June 13th.

At the May meeting Council was presented with the draft Operational Plan and Budget for 2018-2019. At the end of the day, we brought down a "balanced budget" for the next financial year, after trimming \$2.3 million from the draft submitted.

The draft operational plan, budget and fees and charges are now on public exhibition and I encourage all our residents to take the time to view the documents. They are on Council's website www.council@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au; the Coonamble & Gulargambone libraries; the Gulargambone Rural Transaction Centre, the Shire Office and the Quambone store. Written submissions will be received by Council up until close of business on Wednesday 6 June 2018. The Operational Plan and Budget for 2018-2019 will then be adopted at the Council meeting to be held on 13 June, along with any submissions received. Council looks forward to YOUR feedback – have a say on how your ratepayer dollars are spent!!!

Submissions for Grants

I congratulate staff on the preparation and submission of applications for grant funds from various funding bodies for many projects that will benefit all our communities. Council has been most fortunate in having the opportunity to secure additional funds - without this assistance we would have no possible chance to do the projects identified. So here's hoping our applications are successful – I'll certainly keep residents posted on outcomes.

Sponsorships / Donations

Requests for financial assistance from Council continue to come to every meeting – May certainly was no exception! The Coonamble Lady Golfers are hosting the Far West Rose Bowl Tournament on 14 & 15 July – they sought sponsorship of \$4,000 to purchase trophies, as well as provide entertainment and meals over the two days. Council was generous in its decision to contribute \$2,500 towards the event.

The Wanderers Tennis Club is intending to resurface its courts and, based on quotes already received, expecting the work to cost in the vicinity of \$100,000 to resurface the synthetic courts and a further estimated \$30,000 for surface preparations and laser levelling, as well as added costs for removal and replacement of fencing. The Club will be seeking grant funding of \$100,000 and is seeking a contribution of \$50,000 from Council. Taking into account several issues concerning the stability of the Club and whether it will be an "on-going" concern, Council declined to provide any support. However we have just been informed of sporting grants available throughout the Barwon Electorate and the Club will be encouraged to make further applications for grant funding.

Council also considered a request for assistance in an amount of \$1,700 to purchase guernseys and sponsors shirts for a Gulargambone team to take part in a rugby knockout competition. Council agreed to provide \$500 support.

On behalf of the artist, Gulargambone Community Enterprises Co-operative Limited, requested that Council consider purchasing the wire ram sculpture which has been placed adjacent to the bullock team in Gulargambone – the asking price is \$1,200 – however Council declined to purchase the sculpture.

Coonamble Team Penning Club, which conducted a successful event over the weekend prior to the meeting, also requested Council to consider refunding the charge paid to hire the showground. Council has made some tough decisions recently about letting this facility free of charge, noting the significant funds spent to keep the area to an acceptable standard. It is also interesting to note that when the Pavilion was built, Council resolved not to waive charges for any organization – that's why a much cheaper rate was set for use by not-for-profit organisations. Again, Council did not agree to make a donation of the fees already paid.

Coonamble Rodeo Association

Mr Steven Butler, the Secretary of the Rodeo Association, addressed Council during Public Question Time. He thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to attend and put the Association's position forward. Mr Butler said that the annual rodeo and Campdraft is a premier event and unique as no other ABCRA events of this kind are held over the June long weekend. He also said that while it may look like the Association is in a solid financial position, that can very quickly change – if, for example, the event had to be cancelled – wet weather / outbreak of Hendra virus or other unforeseen circumstances - the Association's reserves would be significantly reduced overnight.

He thanked Council for its past support over many years and congratulated management and staff on the presentation of the showground. Council, at the last meeting, declined to provide financial support for this year's event and Mr. Butler approached Councillors – a rescission motion was presented to the meeting to rescind that decision, together with a notice of motion to provide some assistance. Eventually, after much debate, Council agreed to support the event in an amount of \$4,000 for this year.

This decision led Council to resolve that a meeting be held with representatives of the Showground User Groups to discuss requirements for additional showers / toilets and a report on costings will be presented at the June meeting. Fellow Councillors have agreed this is the most frugal way forward to have additional facilities constructed at the ground.

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