

## FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

As I write this column I can't believe that we've passed the half-way mark of 2018 – Council's July meeting was held last week on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>. After a very full agenda for June it was good to see a smaller business paper, with not so many pressing items to address. Such is not the case for Council's management team and staff who are now working through all end of financial year procedures and requirements.

During Public Question Time, Council welcomed Ms Karen Flakelar on behalf of a group of ladies working hard to establish a *Women's Shed* in Coonamble. Council is 100% supportive of this proposal having had feedback from other areas where the like facilities are up and running with great success. Council's Director Community Services is working with the ladies and has undertaken considerable investigation to put together a proposal for Council to consider. The group is also endeavouring to source grant funds should the opportunity arise. To support the establishment of a Coonamble Women's Shed as a 12 month pilot project - Council resolved to provide \$120/week towards the rent of appropriate premises, together with \$2,000 towards operational costs – a total contribution of \$8,240.

It was good to have a 'catch up' with Mrs Annie Haling who made a presentation to Council as a thank you gesture for its financial and in kind support of the *Pave the Way to Gular* Art Festival held earlier in the year. The presentation was a canvas collage consisting of various locations in Gulargambone completed during the festival - it will be on display in one of Council's offices in the Administration Centre. Mrs Haling spoke of the success of the festival and the carry on effect it is having as tourist visit to inspect the works. On behalf of Council, I thanked Mrs Haling and congratulated her on the outcome of the event. Well done Gular!!

Mrs Anne Kennedy was also present to address Council, informing it of an important Health Forum to be held in Narrabri in August. Councillors were personally invited to attend this important meeting which will be an open forum. Mrs Kennedy said the conference will be preceded by a Pilliga Gasfields Tour on Tuesday 14 August. She referred to the high profile speakers engaged for the meeting, Dr Helen Redmond, Dr Geralyn McCarron, Mrs Shay Dougall, Dr Methuen Morgan and Professor Melissa Haswell – who will answer questions from the public. I informed Mrs Kennedy that Council would be represented at this forum – final arrangements regarding numbers will be made closer to the date.

One of our long serving employees has decided to 'call it a day', retiring after 39 years' service. At the meeting we said goodbye and thank you to Brian Fernando who is leaving his job as a plant operator with us later in the month. I would like to personally thank Brian for his long service and wish him a fulfilling retirement. Brian accompanied Council to lunch and I'm told he'll be farewelled by his colleagues at a special function in a week or so – he will also receive a \$500 voucher to spend at a local business. Just a final few words - Brian, you'll soon be wondering however you made time to come to work – so much to do - good luck and enjoy your well-earned retirement!

Since the last meeting I've met up with Mayors and Councillors from surrounding areas regarding Council's resolution to become part of the Far West Joint Organisation. Our residents are aware of how long this Council has agonised over the best way forward since the introduction of Joint Organisations – I truly believe that far more benefits will flow to our Shire if we are accepted into the Far West JO – with these areas we have a far stronger community of interest and natural

demographics than if we were included in the Central West and Orana planning region mapped by the State Government.

Just last Thursday evening I was informed that the Far West (North) JO was actually proclaimed with the Shires of Bourke, Cobar and Walgett being members, however it was also conveyed to me that our request to join was being considered and we will be given an outcome shortly. To keep the momentum, we passed the pre-requisite resolution at the meeting to be proclaimed a member – so it's still 'a waiting game', a 'work in progress' – whichever way you want to look at it! Hopefully next time I report to our residents I will be able to say that we have been accepted as a member. I'll keep you informed.

Now a brief outline regarding some issues raised at the meeting and the outcomes.

### ***Stronger Country Communities Fund – Round 2 Applications***

I've mentioned previously that Council submitted 11 applications under this round of funding – it's pleasing to be able to inform residents that all of the projects will proceed to the next stage of assessment. Council was also informed that the first assessment of the projects identified some issues with eligible projects which Council may like to resolve ahead of developing the funding deeds for approved projects. The Department of Regional Infrastructure & Networks will be contacting management shortly. We feel this advice from the NSW Premier and Cabinet is a positive and now anxiously wait for a final announcement which is expected in August / September.

### ***Sponsorship – Hayden Page***

Hayden, Coonamble born and bred, has advised Council he's recently been selected to represent Australia at the first ever *Last Man Stands* (LMS) Cricket World Series in England. The series will be held in August 2018 and Hayden is seeking sponsorship from Council. He went into detail to explain that LMS is a globally-run eight-a-side T20 cricket competition which has over 7000 registered teams across 19 countries. It's the widest reaching amateur cricket league in the world and brings together players from all states of Australia (excluding NT) and the world. Hayden also informed us that the estimated viewing audience for live stream matches is set to be over 600,000 and over 1,000,000 views of the game replay on social media.

He was seeking assistance of \$5,000 however Council decided on a Tier 1 Major Sponsorship of \$2,000. This will include our logo on his Player Card which will be prominent during the series – Hayden will also verbally thank Coonamble Shire Council when conducting media commitments. Congratulations Hayden – it's a long way from your home town – good luck!

### ***Funding Opportunity – Resources for Regions***

The General Manager presented a report on this funding opportunity which is for mining-related communities across regional NSW to submit expressions of interest for projects that will benefit their areas. The report indicated that Council's quarry is a mine and damage caused to the Tooraweenah Road as a consequence of heavy vehicle movements could be an eligible project. Council is very mindful that competition for this funding will be strong from shires like Cobar, Bogan and perhaps Walgett. However it was decided that Council 'throw its hat in the ring' and we agreed to submit an application for \$1m for reconstruction on the sealed section of Tooraweenah Road, from town to the Mt Magometon Quarry, citing social disadvantage and making a co-contribution of \$100,000 – this amount will come

from the sealed roads reserve. This would be a great opportunity to get work done on the Tooraweenah Road – we'll await the outcome and I'll keep residents posted.

### ***Wheel Stops – Coonamble Business District***

Over the past weeks Council has noted that many of the wheel stops in the Castlereagh Street business precinct have been damaged and work will shortly be programmed to repair them. It is intended also to repaint the line markings at the same time. Although this matter was not mentioned at the July meeting, I want to inform residents in advance that the work is planned. It would appear that significant damage is caused to the wheel stops when 4WD vehicles are backed over them – Please take care when parking in heavier vehicles and also drivers are asked to park correctly within the lines, so as not to encroach on adjacent spaces.

### ***Tender for Mains Replacement***

Tenders were invited for supply of materials and replacement of water mains at selected locations in Coonamble and Gulargambone. Council decided to tender this work based on lack of staffing numbers to complete day-to-day operational duties, as well as responding to emergencies such as water main breakages. Council resolved to award the contract to Interflow in a total amount of \$202,785.24. It is expected that the work will take 24 weeks to complete and the two sections for work to be undertaken are Coonamble (Castlereagh Street, from Tooloon Street to Macquarie Street) and Gulargambone (Munnell Street, from Muraiman Street to the racecourse).

### ***Sponsorship – Coonamble Challenge and Campdraft***

Another request for financial assistance was from the Coonamble Challenge and Campdraft – which will hold its event again in 2019. For this year's event held in March, Council provided \$2,000 – which is a Gold Sponsorship Package and resolved to do the same for next year's event. As I've said time and time again, Council is continually being requested to financially support a myriad of organisations and events and does the very best it can within a limited budget.

### ***General Manager's Annual Performance Review***

Each 12 months, in accordance with the General Manager's Contract of Employment, a performance assessment is undertaken and this year it was carried out following the June meeting. The review process was facilitated by Mr Mark Anderson, Manager of Local Government NSW Management Solutions. Mr Anderson's report was presented to the July meeting when Council resolved that based on the outcome of the review being assessed as "more than satisfactory", the General Manager was awarded an increase in his remuneration of 2.5%.

### ***State Emergency Service Facility***

For some time now Council has been looking at ways to upgrade the State Emergency Service facility in Coonamble. One option was that it be included in a new shared facility at the NSW Rural Fire Service headquarters on the Walgett Road. However, at the meeting Council was presented with a draft master Plan outlining the new shared facility – unfortunately it was \$70,000 over the budget of \$420. Other issues have also arisen during the investigation process and one that was identified recently is the delay of up to 18 months for the commencement of construction of the shared facility.

Council has committed \$200,000 from internal reserves to fund the development of a new SES building in Coonamble and application has been submitted for grant funds of \$150,000. Councillors resolved that the best solution now is to proceed

with renovations and upgrading of the current SES building and no longer entertain the idea of constructing a shared facility.

***New LED Community Notice Board***

I am pleased to report that the new Community Notice Board has finally been installed. It is located within the sportsground at the corner of King Street and is a LED lighting sign to advertise "***What's On in Coonamble District***". I remind all community groups that events and activities can be advertised – all you have to do is provide information in writing from your club, group, organization about any event planned within the Shire by calling into the Office and making a customer request or by email to [council@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au) Be quick – first in, best dressed – so get those community events and activities organized and up in lights for everyone to see!!

Prior to closing, I want to personally thank Cr John Walker and Council's Director of Community Services, Ms Robyn Ryan, who met the train when it arrived in Coonamble on Sunday and welcomed approximately 170 visitors who dined at the Bowling Club and had a look around prior to boarding the train around 3.00 p.m. for the return trip to Dubbo.

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