

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

The year is certainly slipping by – Council held its August meeting on Wednesday 12th in the Council Chamber. Social distancing is still being enforced and, with those restrictions, 13 people are permitted in the Chamber at the one time which, of course, includes councillors and staff.

Although we are feeling a bit of normality creeping back into our routines, a lot of meetings, presentations, seminars and workshops are still being conducted remotely. We were warned that a second round of the virus would take hold and, indeed, it has - so we are urged to stay vigilant, take necessary precautions and look out for each other. Our community is to be congratulated on its diligence in complying with methods imposed to help stop the spread of the virus. I say thank you and keep up the good work!

The major topic this meeting was again the public toilets in the main street. This issue was the subject of a very detailed report which included the community response – both for and against the 79 Castlereagh Street location. The matter was again debated at length and it was determined that Skillman's Lane car park be the preferred location evidenced by the number of individual letters from the community which totalled 224 in favour of this location.

Council will now contact the funding body advising the outcome and requesting approval of the project variation to meet funding requirements. Original letters of support and opposition received by the General Manager will be forwarded to verify numbers quoted in the report to the meeting. It is pleasing to note that discussions with the funding body throughout the process have been positive and we are looking forward to a favourable response regarding the variation.

When approval is finalised, the next step of the development will be to commission a design of Skillman's Lane car park to ensure placement of the amenities to work in with future development of the area. Council needs to consider the infrastructure already available and the need to provide sufficient room for delivery vehicles to manoeuvre in a safe and efficient manner.

At the appropriate time Council will be inviting a community-led public art project, calling for creative contribution to artwork on the amenities building and its surrounds. The suggestions and ideas put forward will be referred back to Council prior to a decision being made.

I'll now provide a brief summary of outcomes from the meeting to keep our residents abreast of happenings.

Local Roads & Community Infrastructure Program

I reported in June 2020 that Council was allocated an amount of \$929,818 under the Federal Government's \$500 million Local Roads & Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program. The aim of the program is to support local councils in delivering priority local road and community infrastructure projects. At the June meeting Council agreed to earmark \$60,000 of this funding for toilets at Quambone, with the balance being allocated to the local roads network, however it was also agreed to fund Council's contribution to the Aerodrome upgrade from this source.

Council agreed that the funds be spent on the following roads and infrastructure:

1.	Toilet Block – Quambone	\$ 60,000
2.	Aerodrome Upgrade	\$218,000
3.	Back Gular Road – resheeting	\$150,818
4.	Rural roads network – additional maintenance	\$400,000
5.	Wingadee Road – resheeting	\$100,000

With respect to Item 4 – this funding is for the further improvement of roads that have been damaged as a result of flood damage; i.e. to reinstate those roads to a condition over and above what they were before the flood event, in order to make them better resistant to future flooding.

Compulsory Acquisition of Land – Bore Baths

It has been indicated from the beginning that this process would be long and involved. Staff is continuing to progress the compulsory acquisition of a portion of Lot 212 DP754199 (Coonamble Racecourse and Recreation Reserve), in accordance with requirements. In preparing to adopt a resolution suitable for the purposes of acquisition and lodge an application with the Office of Local Government, searches of the Native Title Register and the Aboriginal Land Claims Register have been requested. A Geospatial Search must accompany the Native Title Register search request for it to proceed.

Each landowner affected by acquisition is entitled to compensation on ‘just terms’, which means that compensation will not be less than the market value of the land. A qualified valuer will assist Council and the Crown Lands agency reach an agreement on compensation payable at the appropriate time.

Councillors moved the required resolution that application now be made to the Minister of Local Government and the Deputy Secretary of the NSW Office of Local Government for approval to acquire a portion of the land by compulsory process under section 186(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

We recognise that this project is one very much favoured by the community as a key tourism opportunity and we are working as quickly as possible to make it become a reality. I will keep our residents posted on developments going forward on this really exciting project.

State Emergency Service Building

I reported some time ago that a new SES building was being planned for Coonamble and this is still the case. However, our grant application for \$200,000 under the NSW Infrastructure Grants Program was not successful – it was hoped that this funding would be forthcoming to be utilised in the construction of the building at 92 Aberford Street.

When Council was initially approached, only a brief history was provided and investigations identified a shortfall in funding of approximately \$140,000. It was then that Council resolved to submit applications for additional funding and until this funding shortfall is addressed, construction of the new building in Coonamble cannot proceed.

At the August meeting Council resolved to formally approach the NSW State Emergency Service with a view to securing additional funding and should this be unsuccessful, council will submit an application under the ClubGrants Category 3 Infrastructure Scheme. Hopefully a way forward can be identified to provide the

SES with a much needed updated building from which to provide its services in times of natural disaster, accidents and other emergencies.

Coonamble Riverside Caravan Park

I'm sure we all agree that the Caravan Park is beginning to look great following the recent refurbishment. At the meeting, a report was tabled regarding the quotations received for the design and construction of a two-bedroom disability accessible cabin for the park.

This work will be carried out using the \$438,649 allocated under the Drought Stimulus Package for upgrades to the Park. The scope of works utilising this amount are:

- Design and installation of arrival/directional signage
- Construction, installation and fit-out of a two-bedroom disability access cabin
- Construction of a three-bay garage complex and storage shed
- Demolition of decommissioned amenities block
- Construction and installation of a double ensuite unit
- Office fit-out.

The disability accessible cabin is an integral part of the proposed redevelopment of the park and will most definitely be an asset to our amenity.

Council agreed to award the work to AKW Carpentry and Concreting, conditional upon satisfactory additional information being supplied within a given timeframe, otherwise the work will be awarded to the second most suitable contractor. In deciding this way, Council is looking to award the job to a local business.

Tender – Construction of DN300 Sewer Rising Main

Council engaged Reginal Procurement to call an open Single Source tender on its behalf for the construction of a DN300 Sewer Rising Main – the estimated cost of the project is \$650,000 and will be funded from Externally Restricted Reserves – Sewerage Services.

Fourteen (14) tenders were received and an evaluation process was conducted on 14 July 2020 in accordance with the Local Government Tendering Guidelines. Council is required to maintain its sewage treatment plant and sewerage rising mains in accordance with requirements of the POEO Act and this work will meet those conditions and standards. In making a determination, Council resolved to award the tender to Trazlbat Pty Ltd which was ranked No 1 in the evaluation process.

Should anyone wish to contact me to discuss issues or concerns, please phone **0427 887 666** – I look forward to representing all our residents and encourage your phone calls.

Ahmad Karanouh
Mayor
