

**MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COONAMBLE SHIRE
COUNCIL HELD IN THE SHIRE CHAMBER, COONAMBLE ON FRIDAY, 21ST
MAY, 2010 COMMENCING AT 9.01 A.M.**

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PRESENT: Cr Tim Horan, Mayor, in the Chair, with Crs. J. Canham, T. Cullen, M. Webb, B. O'Brien, D. Schieb and A. Karanouh.
Also present were the General Manager, Mr. John Griffiths, the Director of Corporate Services, Mr. Warren, the Manager – Services, Mrs Atkins and Mrs Moorhouse, together with Manager – Roads, Mr. Mark Harland.
Observers: Mr Anthony Place (NSW RFS) & Mr Kevin Keady.

BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

- 1. Local Roads Maintenance**
- 2. Modernising Local Government – Discussion Paper**

The Mayor referred to the two matters for discussion on the agenda and referred to the importance of Councillors' input to each. Cr Horan said it is apparent that change is imminent in the local government sphere and Council should have its intentions for the future set out so they can be conveyed at the workshops to be held in August.

The General Manager said the matter was raised at the Shires Conference last year and the discussion paper has been prepared in conjunction with the LGSA and the Department of Local Government. Mr Griffiths said that the Mayor and himself need Council guidance so that this Council's thoughts for the future can be clearly voiced at the workshops in August.

1. LOCAL ROADS MAINTENANCE

At this juncture, the Mayor invited Council's Manager – Roads, Mr. Harland, to address the meeting on the issues currently being raised regarding the perceived bad state of Council's local roads network.

The General Manager informed the meeting that Council's roadmaking methods have not changed. He said that Council must take into account the extremely wet conditions experienced in late 2009/early 2010 and referred to the huge amount of flood damage caused. Mr. Griffiths said that Council has concentrated on accesses being available and roads maintained to a trafficable standard.

Cr. Cullen said in his opinion Council's local roads network has not been "up to scratch" for some five to six years. He said that roads need to be made so that water will run off, referring to the Billeroy Road which was 'put down' some 3 years ago and is still in excellent condition even after the 25mm rain and flooding. Cr Cullen said that the roads are too low and current maintenance methods are just a waste of time and money.

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Mr. Harland said there is a greater emphasis on recycling and explained that material is sourced from the table drain which tends to leave 'a tail' on the first grade, however when worked for the second time the problem is overcome. He said that this is still Council's focus for maintaining the local roads network.

The General Manager said he has been told that following rain 2½ kilometres/day can be achieved with natural moisture, however when a water cart has to be used the cost is approximately three times more for much less distance.

Cr Schieb referred to the bad state of the Wingadee Road, saying that grass has been graded into the wheel tracks, with hardly any dirt and said where recent grading has been carried out the road (about 6kms – 7kms) is extremely rough. He referred to private work carried out in the vicinity by a contractor where 40mm gravel was used over 2½ kms at a cost of \$3,000. Cr. Schieb wondered why the same result could not be achieved by Council.

The General Manager said that 40mm rock fill was used on one occasion to his knowledge and Council received two claims for damaged tyres. The surface had to be covered to ensure that tyres were not damaged by the product.

Cr Canham said that we have had the wettest season in approximately 25 years, however he did acknowledge that the number of complaints being received by this council is not acceptable.

Cr Schieb asked whether there are any problems being experienced with Council's graders at the present time. The Manager – Roads said the new graders are completely different from those previously used. He said initially it was thought they were underpowered, however when Westrac provided training on operating the machines, the power and efficiency issues have been addressed.

Cr O'Brien said that she recently received advice that the Carinda Road is in excellent condition, which validates what Cr. Cullen has said about Council's road making standards. Cr. Cullen said that our grader operators should be instructed to "dome up" the road proper. Another suggestion was made concerning contract work, however, the Manager – Roads said contractors are instructed by Council and specifications are identical as those applied by Council's workforce.

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Cr. Schieb referred to trials where stabilization has been used. The Manager – Roads said he has had experience with stabilization through his work with the RTA/Highway. He pointed out that for different types of clay there are a range of additives – get it right and the result is good, wrong combinations can be disastrous in both terms of time and economy.

Mr Harland said that stabilising is an approach Council should and will be looking at in its endeavours to maintain the local roads network. Cr Schieb asked how causeways/floodways are built – the Manager – Roads said he was not aware of the initial construction of those referred to, however often 40mm rock fill is used, but not on every occasion. The Manager said that there is an amount of clay retained in the 40mm product.

Cr O'Brien referred to spraying road sides some four to six weeks prior to roadworks. The Manager – Roads said this method was trialled by the RTA on the Highway without complete success, however the RTA instructed spraying to again be carried out this year in an attempt to deal with the prolific growth - its main target is couch grass which grows through the seal. The Manager said he sees merit in spraying, however it will not be easy to coordinate and, in his opinion, two sprays are required to completely kill off the grass enough to make the exercise worthwhile.

The Mayor requested that the Manager 'take on board' the suggestions and comments that have been put forward. Cr Karanouh wondered whether it would be prudent to hire contractors to enable jobs to be completed in a quicker timeframe. The General Manager said the cost of employing contractors is far more than having the work done by Council's workforce. He also referred to the fact that contractors must be supervised because design standards must be met.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Harland for attending the meeting and suggested that Council be briefed later when the Manager has had the opportunity to work within his new role. Mr. Harland left the meeting at 9.45 a.m.

Council adjourned for a short break and resumed at 10.00 a.m.

2. MODERNISING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT – DISCUSSION PAPER

The Mayor handed over to the General Manager to proceed through the key questions for feedback provided for each section of the discussion paper. Mr. Griffiths said he hoped councillors took the opportunity to go through the discussion paper so they would be in a position to provide feedback and suggestions on this Council's intentions.

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Cr. Cullen said Council should be defending its position in that it does not support amalgamation. Cr Karanouh said we should approach the issues with an open mind and make decisions that will benefit our Shire. In response to a question, the General Manager said the current proposal is being driven by the LGSA and the Department of Local Government. It was noted that both parties have stated there will be no forced amalgamations.

Mayor Horan said this Council should not support any amalgamation proposal – he said Coonamble is set financially and it would be a case of taking on others debts. He referred to the amount of extra services local government has and continues to be forced into taking over, citing health, crime prevention, rail upgrades and the list goes on.

At this juncture, 11.20 a.m., the meeting adjourned for morning tea and resumed at 11.36 a.m. Council's A/Director of Engineering Services did not return to the meeting following the morning tea adjournment.

The General Manager had prepared a presentation, which included the key questions for feedback from each section of the Discussion Paper and went through each section with councillors. Mr. Griffiths advised that he had included his thoughts in point form and invited Councillors to provide their input, by suggestions, deletions/changes/additions to what he had provided. The completed document, with Councillors' suggestions, is attached to these minutes as **ANNEXURE A**.

Mr. Griffiths said Council should have a strategy in dealing with this issue and wondered whether it should be taken to the community now, whether this Council should contact adjoining councils to get their views or wait until after the workshop to be held in August. Cr. O'Brien said she felt it was too soon to go to the community.

Mr. Kevin Keady was asked his opinion and stated that he did not think there was too much to worry about at this point in time, he did, however, mention that in past years Coonamble Shire Council tried to keep contract labour to one-third. He pointed out that Council personnel support the economy by sending children to local schools, shopping locally and the like and if contractors became the way of the future, many families would be forced to leave. The Mayor said this discussion paper was looking at the way of local government 30 years in the future.

Cr Cullen asked if Council wishes to meet with Gilgandra/Warren/Walgett to discuss a combined strategy to take to the LGSA and the Department – suggesting that a joint approach to not supporting amalgamations may carry more weight.

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8407 RESOLVED on the motion of Crs. Cullen and Karanouh that the General Manager arrange a meeting between representatives of Gilgandra, Warren and Walgett Councils to discuss the report, advising them that Coonamble has done the review and getting the other Councils' feelings/intentions and then submit a combined defence against amalgamations.

UNLISTED URGENT MATTER

The Mayor, Cr. Horan, informed Council that an urgent issue has arisen and must be addressed as there will not be another Council meeting prior to the deadline for a response on this matter.

8408 RESOLVED on the motion of Crs. Horan and Karanouh that the following matter be classified 'urgent business' and dealt with at the meeting.

PROPOSED QUESTION TO FORUM PANEL – 2010 SHIRES CONFERENCE

The General Manager informed the meeting that he has received an email from LGSA advising that an important part of the program for the 2010 conference is the forum panel scheduled for 2 June. Mr. Griffiths said the panel will consist of:

- Hon Barbara Perry MP – Minister for Local Government
- Hon Tony Kelly MLC – Minister for Planning
- Mr Chris Hartcher MP - (Legislative Assembly)
- Ms Gladys Berejiklian MP – (Legislative Assembly)

He said all councils have been invited to submit a question they would like answered by a member/members of the panel. Mr. Griffiths said he has discussed with the Mayor the opportunity to raise the following issue with the Minister for Planning and now seeks approval and/or suggestions from Council:

Question: Will your Department review its 'one size fits all' philosophy to allow for differing circumstances when determining how additional rural residential land can be made available, particularly in areas suffering population decline?

8409 RESOLVED on the motion of Crs. Webb and O'Brien that if Council is chosen as one who gets an opportunity to ask members of the Forum Panel a question, the foregoing be asked of the Hon Tony Kelly MLC, as Minister for Planning.

This concluded the business and the meeting closed at 1.10 p.m.

These Pages (Page 1/4473 to 5/4477) were confirmed on the 9th day of June 2010 and are a full and accurate record of proceedings of the extraordinary meeting of Coonamble Shire Council held on 21 May 2010.

MAYOR

This is **Page 5/4477** of minutes of extraordinary meeting of Coonamble Shire Council held on 21st May, 2010