

From the Mayor's Desk:

Mice, water, jobs and roads covered in consultations



In mid-February, the General Manager and I met with Ms Christine White, Board member, and Mr Andrew Mulligan, General Manager of the Local Land Services.

Various topics of mutual interest were discussed, especially

the current infestation of mice throughout the local government area and beyond.

We also met with Ms Emma Bradbury, Chief Executive Officer of the Murray Darling Association, and Councillor Craig Davies, Mayor of Narromine Shire Council, to discuss the benefits of becoming a member of the Association. Information provided demonstrated the potential benefits to be gained with Council adding its voice regarding coal seam gas extraction and maintaining adequate flows of the river system feeding the Macquarie Marshes. I am pleased to say my colleagues supported my motion for us to become a 'member council' of the Murray Darling Association.

The RDA Orana Inland Growth Summit was held in Dubbo on 26 February. Councillor Deans, the General Manager and Manager Economic Development and Growth were able to attend on behalf of our Council. It was concerning to note that throughout the region there is a general shortage of employees and potential employees to fill various job vacancies. RDA staff are investigating potential solutions to this challenging situation and we will keep our businesses informed of any positive outcomes.

Finally, I can say with some confidence that progress is being made on the Tooraweenah Road upgrade. This has been a long and exhaustive exercise due to the amount of funding involved and various approvals that needed to be obtained for all stages of the work. It is paramount that our three tiers of government be 'in sync', and it appears this will now be the case with regular meetings of Federal, State and Local Government representatives scheduled monthly.

I encourage you all to read some of the outcomes of the March meeting which are highlighted in this newsletter.

Should anyone wish to contact me to discuss issues or concerns, please phone 0427 887 666.

Ahmad Karanouh
Mayor

'Cuisine on Castlereagh' enlivens main street



'Cuisine on Castlereagh' proved a success in attracting a crowd to Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, thanks to funding under the Summer Fund – Festival of Place program and a contribution from Coonamble Shire Council. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment initiated the program to bring people back into local centres to counter the negative economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Council acts on community's priorities

Council continues to work through the priority projects identified by the community and elected Councillors in late 2019.

Sustainably renewing and maintaining the local roads network has been given a boost with the appointment of a Roads Committee, with membership drawn from Council and the wider community.

The community and Councillors prioritised a number of economic and tourism development projects. Of the 10 priorities identified, the adoption of the Coonamble Shire Masterplan, appointment of a permanent Manager of Economic Development and Growth, and upgrade to the facilities at Warrena Weir have been accomplished.

The Coonamble Shire Masterplan guides further projects, including the development of the new Visitor Information Centre in Smith Park, Coonamble.

Its construction is scheduled for completion mid-year, to be followed by a one- to two-month fit-out, installation of displays, civil works and landscaping.

Development of the Coonamble Riverside

Holiday Park continues with a new lessee and new manager determine a program of works.

The Macdonald Park Masterplan, encompassing the park, tennis courts, skate park and swimming pool and surrounds has also been drafted.

Poles for new lighting at Coonamble Sports Ground are scheduled to be installed within the coming months, and this will be followed by a period of testing.

Working around the football season, some spot top-dressing and levelling will be done, before removal of the old cricket pitch and levelling of the surface next Spring.

A new concrete cricket pitch with synthetic turf surface will be installed, and further levelling and turfing carried out in the area known as the 'javelin field'.

Internally, Council continues to be challenged to attract and retain qualified and experienced people to fill identified job vacancies—an issue shared throughout the western part of the State.

Roadwork priorities occupying crews

Roadwork on local and regional roads continues to be a priority with Council as its crews seek to balance funding and resource constraints with the list of road repairs required after rain events.

Coonamble Local Government Area has responsibility for about 1,168km of unsealed local and regional roads, and about 370km of sealed local and regional roads outside the urban road networks in Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone.

Council sets a substantial annual budget for road repair. However, how far this goes depends on the number of rain events recorded and the extent of damage to roads from vehicles using them at such times, and the time crews have to repair the roads before the next rain event.

Current road work is listed in *The Coonamble Times* in Council's 'Weekly Connect' column.

Donations allocated to local groups

Council resolved at its March meeting to provide financial assistance to six community organisations under its donations policy.

Coonamble Children's Services will receive \$9,572; Gulargambone Tennis Club will receive \$7,000; Coonamble F.I.T. \$5,000; St Barnabas' Anglican Parish of Coonamble \$4,500; Coonamble Rugby League Football Club \$4,000; and Coonamble Community Radio \$2,500.

NRMA charging up

NRMA representatives have met with Council staff to discuss potential sites for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations in Coonamble.

The preferred site for charging stations is Skillman's Lane car park, with installation likely to occur before the end of this year.

The NRMA has installed more than 44 fast chargers for electric vehicles across regional NSW along most major highways, including the Hume, Newell, Sturt and Oxley Highways, as well as the Mitchell, Pacific, Olympic and Great Western Highways.

Emergency contacts:

Water & Sewerage 0428 217 420

Other Emergencies 0458 271 881

Ranger 0427 255 881

Website for all details:

www.coonambleshire.nsw.gov.au

Council deploys defibrillators



Council is installing potentially life-saving defibrillators for use by the general public in Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone. Pictured are Mayor Al Karanouh (right), showing off the unit installed outside the Five Star Supermarket in Bourbah Street, Gulargambone, to fellow Councillors (L-R) Robert Thomas, Pat Cullen and Bill Fisher.

Nominations called to form Youth Council

Coonamble Shire Council is re-establishing a Youth Council, with nominations for membership open until 31 March.

The Youth Council will meet monthly and act as a forum where members can voice the interests and concerns of young people throughout the local government area.

It will give members the opportunity to make positive change for their peers in Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone, and to participate in the organisation of celebrations of National Youth Week and other important dates throughout the year.

The time commitment required will be about 1.5 hours a month, along with some strategic thinking at home and attendance at some of the events organised. Ideally, nominees should be available for this first term of service of the Youth Council, through to June 2022.

The Youth Council will consist of up to 12 members and the draft terms of reference

outlines that four members, including one office bearer, will make up a quorum. Should the number of nominations the Nominations Committee receive be equal or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated shall be deemed to have been elected, after confirmation of suitability.

Nominations are open to all high school-aged people, whether or not they are currently attending school or have completed their schooling. Diversity is encouraged.

The Nomination Form, draft Terms of Reference for the Youth Council, and Youth Council Guideline are available on Council's website (search for 'Youth Council 2021' on the homepage).

Nominations can be submitted to Council's Administration Building at 80 Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, or at any of our libraries, the Coonamble High School or Gulargambone Central School front offices.

Quarry business model under review

Council discussed the long-term future of the Mt Magometon Quarry at its March meeting. Council considered a preliminary report regarding the remaining resource at Mt Magometon Quarry.

It now awaits more comprehensive information to allow a decision to be made on how to develop and implement a business model which will best serve future operations up to

the end of the quarry's production life. The current quarry has been operational since 1964 and has an estimated life span of another 30 years.

Council also decided to investigate the identification of suitable land to develop another quarry to ensure the availability of affordable and adequate road construction materials for Council's roads network into the future.

Decisions pending for three funding opportunities

Council is awaiting decisions on three funding opportunities submitted earlier in the year. A \$880,000 proposal has been put forward to refresh Castlereagh Street shop facades and to provide more lighting and seating in Coonamble's main street.

A \$150,000 proposal was made under the Driver Reviver Site Upgrade program to up-

grade the entrances and car park at Smith Park and provide Driver Reviver services from the VIC.

A third opportunity allows Council to recover costs of up to \$10,000 associated with the skateboard workshop and pool party that were highlights of Council's January Holiday Fun program.