

From the Mayor's Desk:

Weekend festivities attracted visitors



I have pleasure in reporting to Council my activities in the role of Mayor since the May 2021 Meeting.

Pave the Way to Gular Arts Festival: The organising committee did a great job preparing Gulargambone and

promoting this weekend of activity, with a large crowd visiting the town and enjoying the festivities.

Coonamble Rodeo and Campdraft: Coonamble hosted again a great weekend of rodeo and campdrafting, with many travellers and competitors enjoying the event and, even though it was cold, there was a good crowd. The committee was happy with the competitor numbers this year, following the event being cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Council supported both of these activities financially and with staff support.

Country Mayors Association: On Friday, 28 May, I attended the Country Mayors Association meeting held in Sydney. This was an opportunity for Coonamble Local Government Area to be represented and for me to return with the outcomes and recommendations from the meeting.

An item on the agenda was the payment of the Emergency Services Levy into the future, after a significant but unexpected increase in the levy this year.

Since the meeting, all councils have received a letter from the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Shelley Hancock, advising that the NSW Government is providing a one-off payment to fully fund the increase in the Emergency Services Levy to councils for the next Financial Year, ensuring that councils only pay the same amount as they did in the pre-COVID-19 Financial Year of 2019-20.

This is welcome news in the short term but does not solve the longer term problem that will need to be addressed by legislative amendments.

Australian Local Government Association – National General Assembly: Cr Fisher and I will travel to Canberra later this month to attend this year's National General Assembly. Should anyone wish to contact me to discuss any concerns, please phone 0427 887 666.

Ahmad Karanouh
Mayor

Glimpse of promotional images

Council is preparing an updated Visitor Information Guide to coincide with the opening of the new Visitor Information Centre later this year.

The photographer commissioned to capture images for the new guide took advantage of the activity over the June long weekend.

Coonamble Local Government Area is heavily reliant on agricultural production for its economic health. Tourism is recognised

as an area that could be developed to diversify the economic base of the area and improve the community's resilience in times of drought.

Figures show that a day-trip visitor spends \$165 when visiting Coonamble, while those who stay longer (averaging three nights per stay) spend \$268.

Some of the images Council can use to showcase the area are shared below.



Updated policies adopted

Council adopted seven new or modified policies at its June meeting.

These newly adopted policies—as with all policies of Council—are available to the public online through Council's website.

The policies are made public in line with the globally recognised 'eight elements of good governance', which include openness and transparency, rule of law, participation and accountability.

The full list of newly adopted policies is:

- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy.
- Social Media Policy.
- Mobile Food Vending Vehicle Policy and Procedure.
- Work, Health and Safety Policy (now incorporating ISO certification guidance).
- Risk Management Policy.
- Environment and Quality Policy.
- Multicultural Policy and Multicultural Services Plan.

A draft Contaminated Land Management Policy is currently on public exhibition until 16 July. It can be found on the homepage of Council's website.

Artesian bath update

Consultants engaged to develop the Coonamble Artesian Bath concept design reported on their progress to the June meeting of Council.

Supporting reports—including the results of the community survey—can be read in the Business Paper and the separate Annexures paper on Council's website.

The economist engaged in the development of the business case expects the project to boost the viability of Coonamble's food and beverage providers.

Initial analysis—that has yet to be finalised—suggests a staged development, whose first stage would potentially include a variety of accommodation options, treatment rooms and the bathing experience.

In these early concepts, bathing would be offered in a main bathing area for up to 25 people. A second stage may include more accommodation.

The next steps in the process are the finalisation of the concept plan and the construction cost estimate, then financial modelling for the first 10 years of operation.

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

Grant projects chosen

Coonamble Sports Ground will be the focus of Council's two submissions to the Stronger Country Communities Fund this year, being construction of a set of women's changerooms and a walking loop around the entire block.

The allocation to the Coonamble Local Government Area in Round 4 of the Stronger Country Communities Fund is \$777,083.

One of the conditions of the funding this year is that at least half must be spent on projects that encourage the participation of women in sport or recreation.

Consultation with sporting groups, and a community survey in May 2021, identified dedicated women's changerooms at the sports ground as desirable facilities. Early

cost estimates indicate this project would fulfil the funding condition.

Community consultation during the preparation of the Coonamble Shire Masterplan, and the same community survey of May 2021, also prioritised a walking loop around the sports ground as a key community facility. With associated seating and the planting of shade trees, this will take up the remainder of the funding.

Sporting groups highlighted the need to also upgrade the canteen, amenities and current men's changerooms. Council will apply for funding under other competitive grant opportunities to complete these requested works.

NAIDOC Community Fun Day planned

Council is supporting the NAIDOC 2021 Coonamble Community Fun Day on Wednesday, 7 July, and encourages community members of all backgrounds to take part in the activities.

The theme of NAIDOC 2021 is 'Heal Country'—calling for all to continue to seek greater protections for lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage.

The day's activities in Coonamble start at 9.45am with a smoking ceremony and flag raising at the Local Aboriginal Lands Council office at 16 Castlereagh Street, Coonamble, just past the old RSL building.

A march will move off from the Lands Council office to the Coonamble Sports Ground from 10.45am, where there will be Aboriginal dance with Josh Toole, Aboriginal art with Hayden Wood, traditional Aboriginal games, a planting activity, basket weaving, an elder's tent and entertainment from Castlereagh Connection.

A presentation of Junior NAIDOC Awards will take place at 12.45pm.

Everyone is asked to bring a chair or picnic

rug to share the barbecue lunch from noon. Free morning and afternoon tea will also be provided.

This is a smoke-free and drug- and alcohol-free event. Those attending must also register under the COVID-safe plan in place for the event.



**HEAL
COUNTRY!**
4-11 JULY 2021

New approaches drafted to engage community

Community members will have more relevant opportunities to give input into Council decisions under its newly prepared Community Engagement Policy.

Council has developed the draft Community Engagement Policy to define better the range of potential activities to involve the people in the decisions around projects, policies, issues, services and plans that affect them.

The Community Engagement Policy builds on the previous Community Consultation Policy.

Where 'consultation' seeks public feedback on proposals, Council recognises that it is only one form of 'engagement' that has the broader aim of involving people in decision-making that affects their lives.

Council appreciates that engagement covers a range of activities from simply informing the public of decisions made, through to consulting the public when input, feedback or

advice is needed, and even instances of active participation of specific stakeholder groups or the community in determining what needs to be done and developing solutions that are incorporated into the final Council decision.

The new policy aims to ensure Council provides opportunities for participation by people of diverse backgrounds and that it promotes opportunities for people to participate in decisions that affect them.

It also aims to ensure local governance is open and transparent and results in high quality service to the community.

The policy is currently in draft form and open to public comment until 16 July. It is available as a hard copy at Council's Administration Office and at the libraries in Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone.

The draft is also available online on the homepage of Council's website.

The next Ordinary Meeting of Coonamble Shire Council will be held on Wednesday, 14 July 2021