

From the Mayor's Desk

August 2021

With the number of positive COVID-19 cases in Dubbo, it seems the only possibility we might now have to protect our communities is for those of us comfortable with the idea of vaccination to organise for our jab as soon as possible and for us all to comply with the Stay At Home orders while they are in effect.

It seems that the people of Coonamble LGA are taking leadership in the West, with 40% of us having had at least one jab and 20% being fully vaccinated.

Both clinics in Coonamble have 600 doses of the Pfizer vaccine available, as well as AstraZeneca. Please make a booking today.

If we can have 70-80% of the community vaccinated as soon as possible, this will greatly reduce the potential number of deaths of our loved ones, any strain on our local health care system and get us out of lockdown sooner rather than later.

In other news, I have pleasure in reporting to Council my activities in the role of Mayor since the July 2021 meeting of Council.

Delayed elections

The General Manager and I took part in the Office of Local Government webinar to discuss the postponement of the Local Government elections.

As part of the decision-making process, the Government was not prepared to take the chance that there would be no further outbreaks in regional areas between now and 4 September 2021, which would put Council elections in those areas at risk. This now seems to be the case for us.

Infrastructure contributions reforms

The NSW Government introduced the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Infrastructure Contributions) Bill 2021 into Parliament on 22 June.

Implementation of the reforms will have far reaching financial implications for councils across NSW that are yet unknown, and there is concern that many councils may be worse off under the reforms.

While our Council is not immediately affected, these reforms may force some councils to delay or completely remove projects from their expenditure plans with a detrimental impact not only on community wellbeing and participation in civic life, but also on job creation.

Councils across NSW are also objecting to the Government's decision to tie reform of the rate peg to reductions in infrastructure contributions in order to cater for population growth.

Reform of the rate peg is required independent of changes to contributions. This presents a concerning cost shift from developers onto Local Government and ratepayers.

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

Ahmad Karanouh
Mayor