



Community Update

Reference: 101; 102; 103/6
Report Author: Interim Administrator

On Monday I had the opportunity to join a number of local residents to voice objection of Wingecarribee Shire Council to the Hume Coal and Berrima Rail Project. The submission made it very clear that I was putting the formal position of formerly elected body. On behalf of the Council and its community I appealed to the Commission to endorse the recommendation of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to reject the application in view of its obvious impacts and to bring the marathon to an end for all parties.

During the presentations I was asked if Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) reflected the positions put forward in the submission. I can confirm that the LSPS does reflect this position and a copy of our LSPS has now been forwarded to the Commission. There are clear statements on the position of coal mining, the protection of precincts, the protection of water and groundwater, and economic opportunities in the Shire.

Under the terms of the General Manager's contract with Council a performance agreement setting out agreed criteria has now been negotiated with Ms Miscamble and for transparency and to assist with understanding of respective roles and responsibilities is tabled.

In the view of the suspension of the Council, elections, a comprehensive induction program and initial agreed performance criteria, the first review will be in July 2022. The contract provides for Councillor involvement and for the next two years the review is to be facilitated by Ms Kath Roach and is to also include either Ms Christine Hawkins or Ms Kellie Hayes who assisted in the recruitment.

When undertaking visits around the Shire I had the pleasure of meeting the good folks who live on and around Wombeyan Caves Road at the Wollondilly Rural Fire Services Shed. We discussed a lot of matters, including Transport for NSW recurrent funding on the road and resident concerns about alleged leakage of funding. As a result, arrangements were made for Finch Consultants to undertake an audit of expended funds on the road for the past three years. I now table the report which in short shows that all grant funds have been expended plus additional monies from Council's General Fund.

What the report does not show, and which is not possible for me to further investigate, is if the community got value for its money or whether it was well spent. I am in no doubt that the General Manager as she reviews the culture and work practices of the organisation will address this general concern of residents.

AGENDA FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

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I have previously expressed the opinion that to improve residents interaction and transparency with Council, the Traffic Committee needs to be more open in its operations. A revised terms of reference were adopted at its meeting on 24 June, the minutes of which are listed on this agenda. I must say that I found the minutes of the meeting to be scant and I could not readily see what matters were dealt with in closed session and why. I spent considerable time on the weekend searching Council's website for the agenda. Unfortunately, the agenda was not publicly available, and this has been rectified by the General Manager.

I have now asked the General Manager if there is any good reason why meetings of the Committee should not be webcast and that the matter is to be taken up with the appropriate State Government Minister.

From talking to residents there seems to be a number of reports that have either been commissioned by Council or its former Executive that have never seen the public light of day. This course of action simply breeds suspicion and I continue to work hard to restore trust in the Council. Accordingly I have asked the General Manager to review the following service delivery reviews with a view to their public release:

- Children's Services
- Waste Management
- Community Wellbeing
- Southern Regional Livestock Exchange
- Aquatic Services

The Economic Development Roundtable was held on 25 June and facilitated by Mr Warwick Shanks, partner KPMG, and I now table his report for the information of residents.

As a result of the Roundtable, Mr Shanks has made a number of substantive recommendations which I understand were generally supported by those in attendance and will build upon the reports of the Small Business Commissioner and Ernst Consulting.

Importantly, one of the recommendations is the development of an agreed long-term vision for the area incorporating what the community will look like and how economic development will assist in achieving this vision.

I have repeatedly said that Council lacks strategic direction and together with the General Managers proposed new structure and the Housing Strategy, both on this agenda, the foundations are laid for the Council to take back the control of the future land use planning of the Shire.

I have asked the General Manager, as a matter of urgency, to report to the Council on the outcomes of the Roundtable and the other planning matters to provide a pathway for

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strong community involvement. It is to be hoped that the days of planning on the run or at the whim of a Councillor notice of motion are over.

Finally, notice is given that there will be an Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 28 July. This will be the final meeting before the commencement of the caretaker period and will provide the opportunity for me to release a number of reports that I believe will take the Council forward.

It is my intention, at this stage, to only have one meeting in August and any matter listed will of course not only respect the Council's statutory obligations of the caretaker period but also the legal spirit of same. At this meeting I will also release my final report to the Minister under 5438N of the Local Government Act that will include recommendations that in my view will improve the proper and effective functioning of the Council.

Viv May PSM

Interim Administrator