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Peter Vlatko

General Manager's Report

June 2017

I am pleased that Council has been focused on developing a balanced budget for the 2017/2018 financial year. However, there is significant pressure on the budgets in following years and Council has agreed as a matter of urgency to focus on reviewing our service levels, analysing service provision, structures and options for the 2018/2019 and ongoing budgets. The proposed ten year financial plan is not acceptable in its current form and this review will determine what action needs to be taken to bring the budget back to surplus. Council will be seeking community input during this process so I encourage you to participate and have your say.

Some of the key features of the 2017/2018 budget are:

- A balanced budget with no cuts to service provision.
- An increase in total rates of just 1.5% (the rate cap determined by the NSW Government). This does not cover the increase in day to day expenses.
- \$53m in total expenditure, including \$16.6m in capital works.
- Roads expenditure of \$16.3m.

A summary of the major capital expenditure within this budget includes:

- \$8m in water infrastructure, including the commencement of a new water treatment plant, upgrade of the water pipe network and other infrastructure.
- \$1.7m in upgrades to the sewer treatment plant.
- Youthie roof \$300,000, pool renewal works \$125,000, playgrounds \$200,000 and medical centre extensions \$300,000.
- Bike path renewals \$50,000, disability access works \$20,000, renewing council buildings \$430,000 and Lewis St carpark \$150,000.

This is a conservative budget and we hope to be awarded grants that will allow further capital works projects to be undertaken.

Peter Vlatko
General Manager

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan Information on Plant/Weed Biosecurity Weed "X" - *Grownium likecrazy*

Why is the legislation changing?

Weeds, and the risk they pose to agriculture, industry, the environment and human health cannot be managed effectively unless we all share responsibility for identification and control. The Biosecurity Act establishes a number of biosecurity duties that a person has which provides a framework for sharing biosecurity risk management between government, industry and the community. The new legislation provides greater flexibility to respond to, manage and control all weed species. This more flexible, outcomes-focused approach will overcome the deficiencies of the current Noxious Weeds Act by providing a range of tools and powers that support risk based decision making about weed infestations and decrease the time it takes to respond to problematic weeds. For the minority of people who do the wrong thing, the Biosecurity Act also includes stronger enforcement tools.

How will I know which weed species are priorities after 1 July?

Each region in NSW has a Regional Weed Committee and each committee has developed a Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan. The Western Regional plan is available on the Western Local Land Services website (western.lls.nsw.gov.au). Appendix 1 of each Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan identifies the priority weeds for control at a regional scale.

Will the local control authority weed officer's role change?

Local control authorities (usually local councils and county councils) will still be responsible for conducting inspections; providing education, training and resources for both the public and staff and; enforcing the Biosecurity Act. Local control authority weed officers will be appointed as authorised officers under the Biosecurity Act so that they can continue to exercise the functions of an authorised officer.

What does general biosecurity duty mean?

Simply, the general biosecurity duty means that all public and private land owners or managers and all other people who deal with weed species (biosecurity matters) must use the most appropriate approach to prevent, eliminate or minimise the negative impact (biosecurity risk) of those weeds. The general biosecurity duty provides flexibility for how biosecurity risks are managed and means everyone is doing what is reasonable for them to do to prevent, eliminate or minimise biosecurity risks.

What is the relationship between the Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans and the NSW Biosecurity Act?

Regional implementation of the new Act for weeds will be supported through Regional Strategic Weed Management Plans. Whereas the Act covers all biosecurity risks (e.g. pest animals, plant diseases etc), the Plans focus on managing weed biosecurity. The plans support the regional implementation of the NSW Biosecurity Act 2015 by articulating community expectations in relation to effective weed management and by facilitating a consistent and coordinated approach to weed management across entire regions. The plans relate to all lands and waters (excluding marine).

The New NSW Biosecurity Act 2015

This is a State Government Initiative.

For more information, go to

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity or

www.weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au

Scenario 1: A weed NOT LISTED in the Priority Weed List in Appendix 1 of the

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan [RSWMP]

- 1 Authorised Officer conducts routine inspection and identifies dense stands of Weed X which presents a clear Biosecurity risk and/or impact.
- 2 Authorised Officer discusses problem with the owner of the property explaining the biosecurity impact or risk to the community. Expected control outcomes and management options are discussed and the landowner is referred to Best Practice Guidelines if available.
- 3 Authorised Officer inspects a month later and landowner has not addressed the required outcomes. Biosecurity direction issued requiring specific actions. Failure to comply with a Biosecurity Direction is an offence.
- 4 Further inspection shows work still not done. Authorised Officer has work undertaken by a local contractor and costs are recovered from the owner. Penalty notice may be issued.

Scenario 2: A weed LISTED in the Priority Weed List in Appendix 1 of the

Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan [RSWMP]

- 1 Outcomes and recommended measures to meet the General Biosecurity Duty listed in Appendix 1 of the regional Strategic Weed Management Plan.
- 2 Expected control outcomes promoted through regional stakeholders and community education.
- 3 Authorised Officer identifies dense stands of Weed X along boundary fence of a property.
- 4 Authorised Officer discussed problem with the owner of the property and ensures the landowner understands the accepted measures for Weed X under the General Biosecurity Duty. Management options are discussed which may include referral to Best Practice Guidelines if available. Authorised Officer may negotiate a Biosecurity undertaking.
- 5 Authorised Officer inspects a month later and landowner has not implemented recommendations. Biosecurity direction issues – failure to comply with is an offence.
- 6 Further inspection shows work still not done. Authorised officer has work undertaken by a local contractor and costs are recovered from the owner. Penalty notice may be issued.



Cobar Shire Council NEWSLETTER

Emergency Services Levy

The NSW Government will defer the introduction of the Fire and Emergency Services Levy (FESL) and will move immediately to reintroduce the insurance-based Emergency Services Levy.

What's happening with the FESL?

The introduction of the Fire and Emergency Services Levy (FESL) will be deferred. The existing Emergency Services Levy will remain on insurance policies.

What does this mean for me?

There will be no change to your current situation. The existing ESL will remain on insurance policies and you will continue to fund the fire and emergency services agencies via this Levy.

What's the timing?

The FESL was due to be implemented on rates notices issued from July this year. It will now not appear on rates notices and the Emergency Services Levy will continue to be charged as part of your insurance policies.

Why the change?

The Government wants to ensure that property owners – especially small and medium businesses – do not face an unreasonable burden funding our fire and emergency services.

Is there a danger I'll be charged twice?

No. Councils will not levy the Fire and Emergency Services Levy and the arrangements for paying the current insurance based Emergency Services Levy will continue.

Where can I get further information?

As information is made available it will be published on fesl.nsw.gov.au.

Library Arcade

The project to enclose the library arcade (the space in the middle of the arcade, but not the walkway) has been delayed, however it is hoped to be finished soon. Services have been installed, initial plastering has been completed and the meeting room has almost been completed. The office space behind the optometrists has been converted to a public meeting room and the arcade space will be made into a craft room – adding more space and greater uses for the library. Additional compactus area has been made inside the library to allow the safe and secure storage of the local history collection. It is expected that the project will be completed in September.

Drummond Park

Costings and final designs are currently being prepared for stage two of the playground upgrade. It's being designed as an adventure style playground, which is expensive so we are trying hard to get the biggest impact our budget will allow. It will have a mining theme and will open up into the park. You will have already noticed that new trees have been planted. These are designed to replace the large gum trees which will have to be removed as they've become a hazard due to the potential of dropping limbs. Mature age trees have been selected to replace them outside of the playground limits, which will also serve to provide shade for parked cars. Keep an eye out for more information once designs are available.

Have you seen the new picture boards at the playground? Don't they look great? Well done to our children's services and schools who created those to add something special to our playground.

New Tourism Facebook Page and Website

Council has launched a new Destination Cobar facebook page. This has replaced the Festival of the Miners Ghost page which will be incorporated into the tourism site. It will include lots of information on local events, attractions and much more. In addition, Council is currently developing a tourism focused website to maximise our ability to attract tourists to our wonderful Shire. It will include more information, more pictures and more ways to sell Cobar to potential tourists. Do you have an event coming up? Make sure you get it into the new What's On section of Council's webpage and the weekly email blasts. Get your name on the database to receive the email blast so you know what is on each week. Check it out by searching for Destination Cobar on facebook.

Capture the Feeling

"Capture the Feeling" the great new competition that encourages locals to highlight the many reasons we all love Cobar is now open and live. Take a photo, send in a caption, or create your own funky video, whatever your interest, get involved and help promote the wonderful opportunities and features of our great Shire. Entry forms available at Council, the library and online at www.cobar.nsw.gov.au



Cobar Shire Council NEWSLETTER

Water Treatment Plant Update

At their 8 June Council meeting, Council awarded the contract to design and construct a new water treatment plant to Laurie Curran Water Pty Ltd. Works are due to commence immediately in terms of the design of the project with construction works expected to begin around September 2017 and will take 18 months to be completed, with commissioning expected in February 2019.

School Holiday Activities

Stuck wondering what to do these school holidays? Get on down to the Youthie for the StormCo visit, which is always hugely popular in the July school holidays. Always wanted to go to the drive-in to see a movie? Well this is your chance. A pop-up drive in cinema will be created in Cobar on Saturday 8 July. Coosh will be operating for the school holidays, the library has art and crafts activities and the Youthie has a schedule of activities. Check out more on facebook and Council's What's On.

Crafternoons

Council has organised a series of art and craft workshops to operate out of the Youthie and library over the next couple of months on the weekends. The aim of the project is to get as many people as possible from the community involved. You don't have to be 'arty' to come along, we all have a creative side that needs to get out every now and then! We'd love you to participate and get involved. There's a full range of workshops, from water colours, to charcoal drawing, jewellery making, block printing, slow stitching, stencil art and much more. All workshops are free as they are funded by Regional Arts NSW.

Youthie Upgrades

Have you been to the Youthie of late? A new accessible toilet and baby change room facility has been constructed, along with a storage area for the wheelchair basketball chairs, which will ensure their safe storage. Go along for morning tea at the café and have a look around. Coming soon – a new roof on the building to make it water-tight.

Grain Road

Council has been awarded \$1 million dollars under the Fixing Country Roads program to undertake formation and sealing works on the Grain Road. Council has also agreed to contribute \$200,000 towards the project, which is designed to have 7 km of works completed in 2017/2018.

Truck Wash Bay

Council has been successful in securing \$475,000 of funding, (a combination of State, Federal and Council grants) to design and construct a new truck wash bay. The new project will be designed to meet all regulatory obligations, it will take several years to complete and Council is currently investigating the most suitable location.

Parks and Gardens Updates

The parks and gardens team has been flat out creating new gardens, planting trees and beautifying our town. This work will continue over the next few months. Trees are being progressively planted along the main street to create shade and improve the image of Cobar.

Raw water has been installed to Dalton Park to improve the efficiency of maintaining the park, and Council is seeking grant funding to undertake an upgrade to the playground, including installation of a toilet. Works are dependent on the success of the grant.

