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Major makeover begins

\$18,000 facelift for Wentworth Town Hall

HISTORIC Wentworth Town Hall, a fixture of the town since the 1880s, is undergoing a radical transformation in the form of a major facelift.

Preparatory work for a repaint of the jaded exterior of the Hall is well advanced while some preliminary painting has started, particularly around the window and door trims.

The Shire's Infrastructure and Assets Director, Peter Turner, told Councillors the facelift would cost about \$18,000 and see the building transformed.

"The Wentworth Town Hall was built in the 1880's as a red brick Victorian style structure, similar in appearance to the Gaol and churches of the town.

"It was substantially altered about the 1930s in art-deco style including the addition of the side rooms, stage and front foyer and ticket box areas.

"The majority of the hall was then rendered.

"At present the rear wall, windows on the western side and ventilators to the roof are the only exterior evidence of the earlier building.

"Council's heritage adviser, Garry Stanley, suggested that the existing colour scheme did not contribute to the character of the town and he suggested two possible colour schemes to link the building with key structures in Darling Street and elsewhere in the town, particularly the Council Chambers and Council offices.

"Mr Stanley recommended the darker colour of the two detailed colour schemes

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Say hello to our newest citizen

Buronga's Mandy Coronica-Reid took out Australian citizenship during the latest monthly meeting of Council. Ms Coronica-Reid took the oath of allegiance from Wentworth Mayor, Margaret Thomson, during a break in the meeting. Our newest citizen came from Britain with her family 39 years ago. Ms Coronica-Reid, left, is pictured with Mayor Thomson, who presented her with a citizenship certificate, a native plant and two commemorative badges.

Historic hall gets a major makeover

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and that is what we have gone for.

“The external walls will be dark cream, trimmed ivory beige, the windows frames Indian red, window sashes ivory beige and the doors Indian red with detail picked out in ivory beige.

“The words ‘Town Hall’ on the front will be picked out in Indian red while the rear brick wall and roof will not be painted.

“The ivory beige and dark cream are the same colours used on the restoration of The Red Café building.”

Mr Turner said Mr Stanley had also suggested that the heritage precinct concrete and red brick footpath be installed outside the front of the hall to enhance the setting of the building.

“Funds could be redirected from the remaining 2005/2006 budget should Council resolve to improve the front of the building.”

Mr Turner said the facelift was not being done before time.

“A recent inspection of the Hall revealed that the exterior was in urgent need of repair and additional restoration works have included the restoration of cracked walls, damaged and missing brickwork, a damaged chimney, damaged timber work and dry rot to some timber trims.

“I expect the work to be completed about mid-June,” Mr Turner said in answer to a question from Councillors.

While Councillors generally agreed that the Hall was in need of the work now being undertaken, Cr Brian Wakefield was concerned Council might have put the proverbial cart before the horse.

“We are at present undertaking an audit of all our halls. Maybe we should have waited a bit before committing to this work,” he said.

However, Cr Sue Nichols disagreed. A long time advocate of the hall’s refurbishment, she said it could not be completed soon enough.



Wentworth Grande Resort principals Luke Weuffen and Scott Bullock are strong supporters of the upcoming Festival of the Flood.

Strong business support for upcoming flood festival

TWO of Wentworth’s leading businesses have put their hands in their proverbial pockets to support the upcoming Festival of the Flood commemoration of the infamous 1956 floods.

The Grande Resort has taken naming rights to the Festival, while the Wentworth Services Sporting Club has lent its name to the now-traditional Sunday morning Mainstreet Muster of Ferguson tractors as part of the popular Great Wentworth Tractor Rally.

The Rally will be the feature event of the Festival on the weekend of July 22 and 23.

The Festival organising committee is thrilled by the commitment of both the Grande Resort and the Services Club.

“This is a great boost to our efforts to make this event a weekend to remember,” Festival of the Flood 1956 – 2006 Organising committee chairman, Cr Warren Ward, said.

“It is fantastic to have Wentworth businesses supporting what is shaping up to be a community event equal to the popular annual Show.

“There is a real buzz about the ‘Festival of the Flood’ and ‘The Great Wentworth Tractor Rally’. People are making enquiries from as far away as Tasmania and we have already been told some of the tractor enthusiasts will be making the

trek a real five-day adventure, travelling from south of Ouyen via the Sunset Country to Wentworth.

“Such enthusiasm and commitment has inspired the organisers and made us even more determined to put on a great weekend.”

Wentworth Grande Resort directors Luke Weuffen and Scott Bullock said they recognised very early the value of being associated with the ‘Festival of the Flood’.

“The floods are probably the single biggest challenge this community faced in living memory. There are so many people who were here and either took part in, or witnessed, the work that went into saving Wentworth,” the pair said.

“We are proud to lend our name and support to an event that is, in essence, a celebration of this town’s community spirit.”

Meanwhile, Wentworth Services Sporting Club general manager, Colin Alvey, said the Club had a long history of supporting Wentworth Shire communities and organisations.

“The Club sees its support as acknowledgment of the town’s past and an investment in its future. It will help us re-live the past in a meaningful way, acknowledging the fighting spirit that brought so many people together to battle

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Council seeks funding to tackle crime issues

THE SHIRE has formed a partnership with Mallee Family Care to apply for funds under the former Crime Prevention Plan, now known as a Community Safety Compact.

The partnership has applied for a total of \$49,100 through the Attorney General's Department to run two programs aimed at reducing juvenile involvement in crime and tackling some of the underlying social issues that contribute to this behaviour.

The first is known as 'Our Journey to Respect' and targets young male Indigenous youth between the ages of 12 & 17 who have committed, or are at risk of committing, violent offences.

The overall aim of the program is to reduce the incidence of violence. It seeks to facilitate participant's movement from relationships based on power and control towards relationships based on respect.

The second program is called 'Moopra Noongu's' (Young Women) and the focus will be young women between the ages of 12 & 17 who are at risk of perpetrating or are victims of criminal, violent or anti-social behaviour.

While both programs will be widely inclusive, historically young people in the MFC client group in the Wentworth LGA have predominantly been Indigenous.

Program sessions will address issues of assertiveness, anger management, conflict resolution, communication skills, self-esteem, personal development and empowerment, health and hygiene, physical, mental and emotional well-being and self discovery moving towards a balanced positive frame of mind.

Practical strategies and life skills will be utilised to engage these participants and accomplish these goals. Age appropriate interest incorporating practical strategies and activities will be used to accomplish these desired outcomes.

It has been shown that balanced, respectful, secure individuals are less likely to need to engage in anti-social or criminal behaviour to gain self worth and stature amongst their peers thus moving them towards a more positive and constructive response to their life situation.

Community pow-wow

COUNCIL recently organised a meeting of Dareton community groups with new Barrier LAC commander, Superintendent Michael Goodwin, to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Those invited to attend include representatives from Dareton Neighbourhood Watch, the Dareton Coomealla Namatjira Community Action Team, Home Care Services NSW, Dareton Primary Health, Mallee Family Care, the Community Working Party and the Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club plus Council and the Police.

The meeting was the first of what is envisaged could become a regular forum aimed at opening the lines of communication between Police and the wider community.

Those who attended all agreed it was a valuable exercise and came away with a much better understanding of the challenges facing them all as they work to better their community.

The initial group work component will be followed by an invitation to participants to join with other adolescents in a mixed gender support group that meets regularly.

Meanwhile, Council has taken the first steps towards establishing a Community Safety Action Group to oversee the implementation of the initiatives contained within the Community Safety Compact.

Council resolved at its April meeting to establish a community-based committee to oversee the implementation of

Community Safety Compact initiatives nominating Councillors Macri, Wakefield and Wheeldon as its representatives.

That decision was the catalyst for a meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 1, from 2pm in the Council Chambers.

Those invited to attend include representatives from NSW Police, Premier's Department, Attorney General's Department, Dareton Neighbourhood Watch, the Dareton Coomealla Namatjira Community Action Team, Home Care Services NSW, Dareton Primary Health, Mallee Family Care, the Community Working Party, the Wentworth Residents and Ratepayers Association, the Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation and Council's Department of Development and Environment.

The membership of the committee is not 'set in concrete' and may well be enlarged after the initial forum to effectively give voice to all sectors of the community.

Several of the groups invited to field a representative took part in the recent review process for an updated version of the Compact to be released in draft form in coming weeks.

The meeting is expected to be the first of a series aimed at implementing initiatives and addressing issues raised in the Community Safety Compact.

Council is expected to take a role as a member of the committee, but the vision is for a 'whole-of-community' approach to a range of community safety issues whereby all groups will take an active role in implementing strategies.

Dareton residents "fed up"

THE law-abiding citizens of Dareton are fed up with the number of break-ins and the incidences of petty street crime in the town.

According to Cr Peter Crisp, the populace was "exhausted" and "everyone concerned about Dareton and its future has had enough".

"When you think of all the social work resources that have been poured

into Dareton over the years you have to ask what has been achieved," he said.

"You have hungry kids breaking into a house to steal the Milo tin or a few dollars to buy food.

"It is time there was some accountability amongst those Government agencies and organisations that profess to be doing so much in the community."

Richard is sweatbox entry No.1 for 2006

WENTWORTH'S Richard Lambe has been trying to enter the Sunbeam Foods Sweatbox Art & Furniture Competition for the past three years.

"I have meaning to give it a go," he said "But I just never seemed to get around to it. Other commitments just kept getting in the way," he said.

But 2006 has been different. The annual grape harvest was over early so he was able to take a few weeks holiday and this year his was entry Number 1.

He certainly hasn't wasted his time off, spending the equivalent of at least a week and a half in working hours amongst the tools and machinery in his modest backyard shed preparing his Competition entries.

He works with wood as a hobby, taking after his paternal grandfather, a toolmaker by trade and also a dab hand in the backyard shed.

Richard proudly uses equipment built by his grandfather including a lathe and a sander. It's good, solid stuff, made to stand the test of time and a tribute to the skills his grandfather accrued during a lifetime of using his hands.

That 'handiness' gene has obviously filtered through to Richard and he often makes items for the house or his shed.

He works on sturdy, homemade benches constructed from water pipe and old doors and plucks his various bits and piece from handmade shelves and drawers, fashioned almost exclusively from items many of us would throw away. An example is the plastic 20-litre containers he has cut in half to form drawers.

We can't give too much away at this stage, but the work now nearing completion is a stunning tribute to Richard's imagination and his skill with his array of tools. It is sure to attract plenty of attention when the Competition exhibition in the Wentworth Town Hall opens to the public on Saturday morning, July 1.

"I have really enjoyed working with the sweatbox timber... or at least I have since I learned how to pull the boxes apart without splitting the wood."

Key dates for the Competition are:

- Entries close June 14
- Official opening: 11am Saturday, July 1.
- Exhibition dates: Saturday, July 1 through to Sunday, July 9.



Richard at home in his backyard shed, creating another piece for the Wentworth Arts' Sunbeam Foods Sweatbox Art and Furniture Competition.

Hitler's Daughter bound for Wentworth

IN a real coup for the Wentworth Shire, a stage play based on Jackie French's best selling novel 'Hitler's Daughter' is set to visit.

'Hitler's Daughter' begins on an early morning somewhere in the Australian countryside. Four children wait for the school bus and decide to play a simple game of story telling. As they shelter in the bus stop from a raging storm, Anna creates this intriguing story. With a large birthmark across her face, we discover Heidi - the disfigured daughter of Adolf

Hitler. Caught in the turmoil of war, she is shamefully hidden away by her father, one of the most dreaded men in history.

This adaptation by the acclaimed Monkey Baa Theatre for Young People poses powerful questions and examines moral issues in relation to society's fears and prejudices in a fresh, compelling light.

'Hitler's Daughter' comes to far west NSW this June as part of the 2006

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Medical practice services interrupted

THE Wentworth Shire Medical Practice, with clinics at Wentworth and Dareton, will be closed from Monday, May 29, to Friday, June 2, inclusive.

During that period patients with a medical emergency are asked to contact the Wentworth Hospital on 5027 2345.

Those with prescriptions due to be renewed during that week are advised to make an appointment as soon as possible.

Practice manager, Jan Campbell, apologised for any inconvenience the closure will cause patients, explaining both Dr Claire Thys and Dr Ali Alhandi have commitments taking them out of the Shire that week.

“Normal practice services and operating hours will resume the following Monday morning, June 5,” Mrs Campbell said.

Baby health review

BURONGA'S Friel Street baby health care centre will be the subject of Council review in coming weeks.

At the request of Cr Sue Nichols, staff will prepare a report on the centre with a view to ascertaining if its services would not be better off housed elsewhere.

Cr Nichols has asked that Council consider alternative sites, like the Midway Centre, a venue she claims would be closer to the majority of people using the services of the centre.

“It is the growing end of the Shire,” she argues.

Did you know?

THE Wentworth Shire Library Service is an active member of the NSW Legal Information Access Centre.

That means the Shire's libraries at Wentworth, Dareton and Buronga all are home to a collection of NSW legal information, aimed mostly at the 'person in the street' and that library staff are trained in the use of these materials. It should be pointed out that the collection is designed to provide legal information, not legal advice.

Residents can ask library staff to direct them to the information to help answer their legal enquiries and also can refer people to other agencies, such as Legal Access NSW and Legal Aid.

Council moves to change tourism culture

COUNCIL has set the wheels in motion to change a culture of apathy and dependency it says is holding back the Shire's tourism sector.

The Shire has decided to take a tough line on businesses and operators who refuse to become members of Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc. but expect to reap the benefits of the resources Council and the tourism group make available to promote the area and its attractions year in, year out.

Councillors at their latest monthly meeting charged General Manager, Michael Boyd, and his staff with formulating a policy based on the resolution that in principle, promotional material placed in the Visitor Information Centre, or any Council facility, be limited to that from financial members of a Tourism Association, not-for-profit organisations or a community event.

The final say on subject would be at the discretion of the General Manager.

The catalyst

The catalyst for this month's action was a question from Cr Sue Nichols at the April meeting.

Cr Nichols asked whether Council had a policy of restricting the placement of promotional materials at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) for businesses within the Shire who were not financial members of Wentworth Tourism Inc.

Mr Boyd told Councillors his enquiries in the past month had revealed about 40 per cent of NSW Councils that responded do have a restriction on the type of promotional material placed in a Council-funded VIC.

“Mildura Tourism has indicated that its has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mildura Rural City Council that precludes non-members from advertising at their VIC but adjoining association members may also seek to have their promotional material displayed,” Mr Boyd said.

“I contend it is in the Council's interest to have these types of businesses involved and supporting Wentworth Tourism to ensure the success of tourism within the Shire and that Council should also encourage these businesses to take responsibility, by working together, for their own financial future, rather than expect the Council, with its own ever-decreasing funding, to do it for them.

Tax deductible

“It is, after all, a tax deductible investment in their own business success.”

Councillor Warren Ward, a former Wentworth Tourism president, agreed.

He said too many businesses in Wentworth and other areas of the Shire “were along for the free ride”.

“Everyone who benefits from tourism needs to get behind Wentworth Regional Tourism and push the industry along.

“The annual fee is \$60 a year, that equates to \$1.20 a week or less than 20 cents a day. That means publicity through the VIC and our website is very cheap.”

“For too many years, too many people have sat back and let Council and the Wentworth Services Sporting Club do all the work.

“It's now time for the tourism operators and beneficiaries to stand up and do something for themselves.”

Cr Ward said active membership had fallen to as low as 4 at times during his time with the organisation.

“There is no way a committee that small can achieve a lot.”

Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King, was another proponent of taking a tougher line on operators.

“Those who pay their membership are subsidising those who do not,” he said.

“If we let things continue along the way they are, and don't take a stand, there will be no incentive for people to join up.

“It's not like the membership fee is a big amount.”

Hitler's Daughter Wentworth bound

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ConnectEd Arts Performing Arts Tour - an initiative that provides regionally-based students with access to theatrical productions by the State's leading performing arts companies.

Wentworth will be one of just three rural communities the play will be visiting. The others are Nyngan and Broken Hill.

West Darling Arts negotiated the visit on behalf of the Shire community.

West Darling Art's regional development officer, James Giddey, is thrilled that the production is coming to Wentworth.

"This a great way for students in this area to really get to grips with the text. They will see the written word that they have been studying come to life," Mr Giddey said. "It will add a valuable, new dimension to their learning."

Wentworth Shire Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, a strong supporter of community arts and events, also welcomed the production's visit.

"It has been some time since we last had live theatre performed in Wentworth and I am really pleased that this production will serve at least three, complementary purposes. It will assist our young people to better understand a text they are studying, give parents an insight into what their children are learning at school and also be a great piece of live theatre for all other residents."

Hitler's Daughter will be performed just once for the public on Monday, June 5, from 7pm in the refurbished Wentworth Town Hall.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for concession and available at the Wentworth Visitor Information Centre, Darling Street, Wentworth or telephone 5027 3624.



Memorial Rooms construction loan to be paid in full

CAREFUL budgeting will allow Council to pay out the \$285,110 it owes on behalf of the community for the Wentworth Memorial Restrooms Complex.

Council took out a \$500,000 loan in 2001 to fund the construction of the complex that has become the hub of the community, housing the Visitor Information Centre and the Red Cross Shop as well as being home to the CWA and numerous other community groups.

Director Corporate and Community, Terri Maguire, told Councillors this month the Shire had two choices:

- Retire the loan and avoid the significantly higher interest rates applicable in today's market, or
- Roll the loan over for a further five to ten years

"Funds are available from the 2004/2005 surplus to retire the loan," Ms Maguire said.

"If Council chooses to pay out the loan in full, the impact will make an additional \$67,000 available for Capital Works that have been eliminated from the 2006/2007 budget because we could not afford to do them.

"Based on the original expected retirement date of the loan in 2011, more than \$67,000 will be made available for other projects annually until 2011 that would otherwise be paid out as loan payments."

The majority of Councillors were keen to pay off the debt, but Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, balked at spending the Council's hard-won surplus all at once.

"I was under the impression we had decided to keep the surplus as a reserve to use in cases when we had to match grants dollar for dollar, as is often the case.

"To spend this now would see as in the same position we have been for some time... with no discretionary reserves up our sleeves."

While her fellow Councillors could see the Mayor's point, the majority voted to pay out the loan, attracted by the money freed up each year that would have otherwise gone towards repayments.

Festival support

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a common enemy - the flood," Mr Alvey said.

"We believe the event will have the ability to create a similar community bonding effect as residents and visitors come together once again to mark this important historic moment in time."

Wentworth will play host to a number of events under the Festival banner, including 'The Great Wentworth Tractor Rally' as well as 'Wentworth Wretro Wheels', a mainstreet get-together for vintage, veteran and classic cars and motorcycles; 'The Art of a Flood' exhibition in the Memorial Rooms and 'The Flood in Focus', a photographic and historic retrospective in the Town Hall courtesy of the Wentworth Historical Society.

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**For matters concerning stray stock
telephone
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