



Volume 10, Number 7, July 2006

# Festival fantastic

## Wentworth comes alive to remember the '56 flood



The Fergies flood Darling Street on Sunday morning.

### What a weekend!

For those of you there, you will know exactly what we are talking about.

For those who could not make it for whatever reason, all we can do is try to impart some of the excitement and spectacle of the Wentworth Grande Resort Festival of the Flood 1956 – 2006 and the Massey Ferguson Great Wentworth Tractor Rally in words and pictures.

First things first. The official count of grey TE20 Fergies. The official TE20 Fergie count was 232 in the rally itself (from a total of 281 tractors taking part) and another 66 on static display at the Wentworth Showgrounds. That means a total of 298 TE20 Ferguson's took part in the weekend's activities creating a new Australian record!

The organisers of the annual Grey

Fergie Tractor Muster at Bendemeer had claimed a record of 154. With 298, Wentworth must surely now be able to rightly reclaim the grey Fergie capital of Australia mantle!

The total number of (Massey) Ferguson tractors taking part was a whopping 350 joined by another 20 or so representing

**Continued on Page 2**

# Wentworth comes alive for flood event

*Continued from Page 1*

marques including Fordson, Lanz Bulldog, McCormick and Chamberlain.

The Rally started at Buronga about 9am, under grey, but not too threatening, skies and after participants and supporters were welcomed to the Wentworth Shire by Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson.

The Rally starting count was 196, including two V8s, who certainly caused a stir as did the grader, the ex-Army DUKW amphibious vehicle and one of the modern giants of the Massey Ferguson fleet complete with fully appointed and climate controlled cabin.

The modern tractor's cabin's heating and stereo were certainly cause for envy as the stalwart Fergie drivers shivered in the open air of the early morning cool.

The cavalcade of tractors moved out smoothly, making their way via River Road to Dareton where another 30 entrants joined in.

Then it was off to Curlwaa and a stop for an early lunch at the Watmuff Memorial Oval and a meeting with more of the Fergie fraternity for the last leg into Wentworth.

The lunch stop proved to be a popular break from the cold steel seat and a great time to compare machines, swap tales and catch up with friends, old and new.

Then it was time to be off once more and by the time the Rally made it way to Wentworth there were more than 280 tractors in a long line that stretched more than two kilometres.

When the first tractors arrived at the Showgrounds front gate, the rear-most were still in Delta Road! And there was a surprise awaiting participants. The Wentworth Shire had drawn a large grey Fergie on the oval and proceeded to park the incoming tractors to outline its shape.

The idea proved to be a spectacular success, with organisers having arranged for a helicopter to take its official weekend stills photographer and video cameraman for a flight to capture the moment from the air.

It was the proverbial jewel in the crown of the Rally and the resulting photograph is sure to become a sought-after collectors item (See separate story Page 6).

While the Rally had been making its way to Wentworth, the historic river port's mainstreet had played host to the Wentworth Community Bank's Wretro Wheels Show 'n' Shine.

The mainstreet, and also Wharf Road,



*The Fergies make their way into Wentworth for Sunday morning's muster.*

were packed with classic automobiles along with motorcycles and the odd truck.

It was a real crowd pleaser and kept the estimated 2000 people entertained for sometime before the tractors arrived at the Showgrounds.

Other crowd pleasers were the Wentworth Historical Society's 'The Flood in Focus' photographic retrospective in the newly-refurbished art deco town hall that attracted huge crowds all weekend; the Country Energy 'Art of a Flood' exhibition at the Red Café that was equally popular and complemented the fine coffee very nicely and the '1 in 100-Year Drought' photographic exhibition in the town's Memorial rooms complex that provided a neat contrast to the flood exhibition.

All three venues hosted a stream of interested people all weekend.

The art exhibition and the colourful banners that adorned the mainstreet and the Silver City Highway into town were organised by Wentworth Arts. The banners were painted by local primary-aged school children while The Red art was the work of Wentworth artists Steve Hederics, his partner Anne Hederics, and local sculptor Lyn Symes.

The Friday night film night at the Wentworth Services Club was a huge success, with the 1956-era films having to be shown twice to cater for numbers that wanted to see them.

When the tractors arrived at the showgrounds, the focus for Saturday shifted from the town to the showgrounds.

The ranks of the crowd from town swelled to more than an estimated 2500 to welcome the cavalcade as it arrived and the people were soon amongst the assembled tractors for a closer look.

Much of the crowd departed the Showgrounds as the sun set and it began to get cooler, but many a Fergie stalwart stayed for an evening of song and mirth as compere 'Guido' and singer Peter Sheen entertained the hardy Fergie throng.

To ward off the cold, many turned to the official Great Wentworth Tractor Rally 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon and there was much praise for 'a drop of vintage Fergie fuel'.

It was up early again Sunday morning for a hearty cooked breakfast as the tractors appeared through the early morning mist.

Then it was off into Wentworth for the now traditional Sunday morning mainstreet muster, this year sponsored by the Wentworth Services Sporting Club.

More than 300 tractors packed Darling Street between Adelaide and Helena Streets for the official presentation of the Fergie Awards and another, not-to-be-missed, photographic opportunity.

The weather was perfect and the sun

*Continued on Page 6*

## More than rates, roads & rubbish

THE NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group has thanked Council for the role it played in assisting to flood areas of stressed native trees east of Wentworth.

Councillors were told at their latest monthly meeting that various 'Adaptive Environmental Watering Projects' had been undertaken within the region during the past few months to relieve the stress on native timber.

"Some of these include the flooding of the River Red Gums located in the Thegoa Lagoon area (near Wentworth boat ramp) and a stressed Black Box community adjacent to the Old Wentworth Road in an area referred to locally as Three Mile Creek, about four kilometres east of Wentworth.

"Council recognises the importance of these projects and has provided ongoing support to the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group," Director Infrastructure and Assets, Peter Turner, said.

"The MWWG has acknowledged the contributions made by Shire's staff for the following:

- Weed control management and regulator operations at Thegoa Lagoon
- Unblocking of pipe culvert at Three Mile Creek, and
- Road/track access management and other associated works with the flooding of River Red Gums, located between the Murray River and the extension of Cadell Street.

"Council looks forward to continuing the strong collaborative relationship it currently shares with the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group," Mr Turner said.

"It is envisaged that our organisations will continue to work together on projects that are aimed at improving wetland and floodplain environments within the lower Murray-Darling catchment."

Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King, described the partnership between the two organisations as "good stuff".

"It would be good for the community to know we are doing our bit to preserve the local environment that contributes to the enviable lifestyle we enjoy here."

"We do more than just rates, roads and rubbish."

# Councillors give new aerodrome homes the 'OK'

COUNCILLORS have given the green light for Stage 2 of residential development at the Wentworth Aerodrome.

It is a bold step, taken after lengthy consideration with the catalyst being strong interest being shown in the project from outside the district.

In his most recent report to Councillors at the July monthly meeting, Director Infrastructure and Assets, Peter Turner, said that since his April meeting report, further expressions of interest had been received from potential buyers "whom are now awaiting Council's final decision".

"There are four definite buyers interested in purchasing blocks at the Aerodrome Stage 2 subdivision and willing to pay the \$55,000 asking price," Mr Turner said.

"And one of these buyers is interested in purchasing more than one block."

Mr Turner told Council: "There are also several others that have shown extreme interest in the land but cannot make any definite decisions until Council makes a final decision about the method of sale." "These potential buyers have also stated that they are finding the sales process frustrating because Council has not yet made a decision on whether or not to sell off the blocks.

"Buyers who are willing to purchase now have mentioned that if Council decides to sell now, they are almost certain that the remaining blocks of land would be sold off within a year. They contend there has been a lot of inquiry, but that other purchasers are waiting for Council to make a final decision.

"Council needs to consider if the sale of 4 – 5 blocks of land and the apparent interest in other blocks is sufficient to commence the development of the first six blocks."

Keen aviator and Councillor, Cherie Ribarits, agreed it was time to 'bite the bullet' and make a decision, but disagreed that a staged development was the way to go.

"Instead of developing five or six blocks," she said, "We should do the whole lot in one go."

"It will be more cost-effective in the long run," she argued.

"I am sure if we develop all of them and the initial five or six sell quickly it will encourage more buyers."

Cr Brian Wakefield was concerned about the cost of developing all proposed 11-lots in one go, but conceded that Cr Ribarits was probably right and that it would be cheaper in the long-term to progress with all the lots at once.

Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King, also spoke for developing all 11 in one go.

Meanwhile, Cr Bill Wheeldon said he was happy to see the project proceed as quickly as possible, but suggested the \$55,000 asking price for the initial sales should be reviewed regularly and suggested annually.

"The people willing to purchase now should be asked for a 10 percent deposit and we should proceed to acquire titles as soon as possible," he said.

"That way there will be an incentive to get in quickly and we can sell the land off more quickly.

"People should be made aware that if they wait, the cost of the land is sure to increase."

Cr King agreed.

"Those buying now should reap the benefits of getting in early," he said.

"Land prices have been rising steadily in Wentworth since this project was first proposed and I can see no reason why they will not continue to do so in the future. We should not lock ourselves into a price and I agree the price should be reviewed, maybe even more often than annually.

"Maybe we should hold it at \$55,000 for the first three months and then see where we are at."

Moved Crs. King and Wheeldon, Council resolved that: "The whole subdivision (11 lots) be developed and that the initial price be set at \$55,000 per block subject to review.

# 2006 was Richard Lambe's year

RICHARD Lambe's 'A Blockie Sweats' has proven to be the clear winner at this year's Sunbeam Foods Sweatbox Art & Furniture Competition.

The work was the judge's first choice in the Open Sculpture section, taking home the \$1000 prize money, while a tally of votes revealed he had also won the coveted Stephen Jones & Associates' People's Choice Award.

Everyone visiting the exhibition was given the opportunity to vote for their favourite piece and with more than 400 votes cast there was no doubting the public's verdict.

'A Blockie Sweats' was a clear winner with 138 votes ahead of Geoff Legg's 'Coffee Table' (No. 9) and Howard McGaffin's 'Grandfather Clock' (No. 30), both with 49 votes.

In a further tribute to Richard's skill and the invocative nature of his work, 'A Blockie Sweats' was also the first work sold following the Saturday morning, July 1, opening of the exhibition in the just- refurbished Wentworth Town Hall.

Mildura Arts Centre manager and Sweatbox Art & Furniture Competition judging panel chairman, Julian Bowron, bought the work for the Mildura Arts Centre saying it was representative of the importance of the sweatbox to local history and made excellent use of the materials specified by the unique competition's rules.

Wentworth Arts' Cynthia Keenan said the organising committee had been heartened and inspired for 2007 by the public response to this year's exhibition.

"We have had so many positive comments. So many people have told us how much they enjoyed the exhibition and how they will be back again next year.

"Some of the regulars were amazed how it changes every year and commented they were once again staggered by the imagination, innovation and workmanship on show."

More than 1000 people visited the exhibition over nine days and a total of 15 works sold.

Australian dried fruits industry patriarch and self-confessed "grey beard", Edward Lloyd, opened the exhibition on Saturday morning, July 1.

In an entertaining and often touching speech, Mr Lloyd recounted a lifetime spent as a dried fruits grower and the



*ABOVE: Richard Lambe, above left, with competition judge and Mildura Arts Centre manager, Julian Bowron. the MAC has now purchased Richard's work.*

*RIGHT: Geoff Legg's 'Rackshaker' another popular entry.*



iconic nature of the humble sweatbox.

"It is hard to believe there are dried fruit growers now who have never handled a sweatbox," he said.

"Bins are the container for today, but I have many memories of the sweatbox," he said, telling the story that each harvest time he and his brother would await the delivery of the sweatboxes so they could build cubby houses.

"It started as just three boxes as walls with another as a roof, but as the years passed we got more daring and we would build two storey houses with many rooms.

"It would certainly give the Occupational Health and Safety people cause to frown these days," he said.

He also said making furniture from the boxes was not a new art.

"My father told me a story years ago that goes back to after the War (World War One) when people were doing it though at Red Cliffs.

"One grower had a range of much-admired furniture. When asked about the timber it had been fabricated from, he replied 'Ipplwood'."

He was, of course, referring to the 'IPPL' (Irymple Packing Pty Ltd) brand on the sweatboxes he was using.

"Sweatboxes have been part of my life, all of my life."

After officially opening the exhibition, Mr Lloyd handed the microphone over to Sunbeam Foods' Chris Ellis, another of the exhibition judges and representing the naming rights sponsor.

Mr Ellis said his company was proud to be involved with the Sweatbox Art & Furniture Competition for a second year as the major, naming rights sponsor.

Sunbeam sees this competition as something unique and complementing our dried fruits industry involvement," he said.

"I can see us continuing to support this worthy arts event."

# Shire to strongly oppose proposed new 'death tax'

COUNCIL will make a strongly worded submission to the Western Division Group of the Shires Association opposing what one Councillor has labelled "the death tax".

Cr Peter Crisp said that Recommendation 24 of the recent Allan report into Local Government financial sustainability in New South Wales advocating rate deferment on pensioner concession amounted to "a death tax".

"Council will effectively have to wait till someone dies before it can collect the rates owing to it," he said.

Cr Crisp's vocal opposition to the proposal was prompted by a report to Council from Director Corporate and Community, Terri Maguire.

## Decision deferred

COUNCILLORS have voted to delay the adoption of an all-encompassing long-range strategic plan for the Shire to allow more time for Councillors to consider its contents and make submissions.

Prepared on behalf of Council by Focus Consulting, the draft was presented to the latest monthly meeting.

However, after some discussion amongst Councillors, it was resolved that the adoption of the Plan be deferred until the August Council meeting to enable Councillors to make further submissions for inclusion in the final draft for consideration at that meeting.

## Venue change

COUNCIL will conduct its August monthly meeting at the Midway Community Centre.

The move is in line with a resolution adopted at Council's Statutory Meeting on September 21, 2005, to conduct two of its monthly Council meetings each year at alternative venues.

Mayor Margaret Thomson extended an invitation to all residents and ratepayers, but especially those living at the eastern end of the Shire, to attend.

The meeting begins at 9am and will run to about lunchtime.

Ms Maguire told Council that Recommendation 24 read: "NSW Government, like all other State Governments, fully rebate Councils for its policy of pensioner rate concessions, otherwise Councils be given permission to introduce rate deferments for the unfunded component of such concessions. Deferred rates and accrued interest thereon would be charged against a pensioner's estate."

However, Ms Maguire said Council needed to be aware that currently, the NSW Government refunded just 55 per cent of pensioner rebates with the balance being funded by individual Councils.

"Rate deferments would not generate significant revenue in the short term, but would do so in the long-term. With the population quickly ageing, the proportion of ratepayers who are pensioners is escalating dramatically. New Zealand already applies this system that gives asset rich but income poor pensioners the financial relief they need.

"This would create an administrative nightmare for employees keeping track of rate revenues that are currently funded by Council, but may have to be deferred until the property of the pensioner is sold at a much later date particularly with the increased expected lifespan of the aged community. This could mean that deferred rates may not be received for a property for up to 40 years.

"The other consideration would be that the outstanding rates could quite easily at some stage outweigh the property value – in which case, does Council then sell up the property while the pensioner is still living in the property to recover the rates?

"The fairest solution would be for the NSW State Government to lift its rebate to Councils from 55 to 100 per cent of the cost of pensioner rate concessions so that Councils were put on the same footing as their counterparts in other States.

"Councillors should be mindful of the second part of the recommendation and oppose it at every possible opportunity at a political level if the State Government ever considers the second option."

Cr Crisp was not alone in his stand and his insistence that Council take a strong

stand against the proposal.

His sentiment that the proposal amounted to "another dumb idea from those people in Sydney" was echoed by fellow Councillors including Cr Sue Nichols.

"Why should Councils like ours, that are already struggling financially, have to bear this burden?" she asked.

"We should be pushing at every chance we get to raise the rebate to 100 per cent."

Cr Nichols said the deferment of rates would sound the death knell for NSW Councils already struggling to make ends meet under the system of rate capping.

"This will just aggravate the problem," she said.

With wide Council chamber support, Cr Bill Wheeldon suggested the issue be raised as soon as possible with the Shires' Association.

"We need to get it on the agenda at the next meeting," he said.

"This could turn into a really messy situation for Council."

Cr Nichols said the two issues – that of rate deferment and rate capping – went hand in hand.

"We need to tackle both," she said.

Her fellow Councillors agreed and Council resolved to take up the issue with Western Division Group of the Shires Association immediately.

## Recycling commended

AUSPLAZTIK'S Chris Curran has been commended for his efforts to see Sunraysia become a national centre for recycling.

After addressing Councillors, senior staff and ratepayers at the latest monthly meeting, Mr Curran was told by Cr Jim Macri that his fledgling company was to be commended for its efforts to turn local waste products into useful items including garden stakes, vineyard posts and protective bollards.

"This is something I have been pushing for years," he said.

Mr Curran outlined his vision for the next ten years as Ausplaztik's revolutionary technology allowed it to turn waste into products to be marketed all over the globe.

# Wentworth comes alive for flood event

*Continued from page 2*

shone on row after row of grey Fergies, resplendent in the morning sun.

Local tractor enthusiast Colin 'Smacca' McKenzie recreated history when he parked his entry in the front bar of the Royal Hotel to be served a cool beer by publican Ron Andrews (Yes, that Ron Andrews, the former Essendon great!)

It was the final gesture for the weekend as the Fergie faithful began to think about making their way home. For all those that travelled to our fair town, the organisers thank you. It is a mammoth task to organise a weekend like this, but it is so rewarding to see so many people enjoying themselves and ensuring the spirit of our fighting Fergie is not diminished.

There are already rumblings about another Rally in the future and we will keep you posted.

Maybe 2011?



*A happy Fergie Rally participant makes his way into Wentworth on Sunday morning*

## Festival and Rally photographs, DVDs & posters

The organisers have had numerous enquiries about photographs (particularly the tractors on the oval aerial shot) and video footage from the weekend.

We have also had quite a few about the marvellous posters we had printed and created by Wentworth's own Arctic Design team.

First, let us say don't panic! There will be plenty made available in the near future.

We are now in the throes of organising this and will keep you posted.

All those who entered the Rally itself will receive an order form and details on how payment can be made in the mail within a month.

All those who left their name and address with us over the weekend will receive the same.

No prices have been set at this stage. As soon as they become available they will be posted on this website along with order details.

Some of the popular Massey Ferguson caps and Festival of the Flood stubby holders remain. These will also be available as a backorder on the same order form while stocks last.

Once again, thanks for your interest in the Wentworth Grande Resort Festival of the Flood and the Massey Ferguson Great Wentworth Tractor Rally and we will make the information available soon.

## Books donated

*Local historian Maud Crang has donated three copies of her latest book 'Maud's 2nd Book of Houses' to our local libraries. Mayor Margaret Thomson is pictured presenting the books to Shire Library Services Manager, Peggy McKenzie, following the recent launch in the Wentworth Town Hall.*



## Shire contacts

**Shire offices:** 26-28 Adelaide Street,  
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2648

**or:** Post Office Box 81  
WENTWORTH NSW  
2648

**Telephone:** (03) 5027 5027

**Facsimile:** (03) 5027 5000

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### Libraries

Wentworth: (03) 5027 5060

Dareton: (03) 5027 4258

Buronga: (03) 5023 3078

**Shire after hours emergency  
mobile: 0428 488 862**

**For matters concerning stray stock  
telephone  
5027 5050**

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浅井町