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Help on the way

Council moves to assist clubs meet new laws

COUNCIL is moving to assist the Wentworth and Coomealla sporting clubs meet the requirements of the latest New South Wales Government's legislation that outlaws smoking in licensed premises by July 2007.

The legislation requires Clubs to provide non-smoking areas within the club and in effect forces them to establish separate, designated areas for their smoking customers.

"The clubs will have to ensure these alternative areas do not impact upon their current operations but remain close to their principal gaming area," General Manager, Michael Boyd, told Councillors in a report to the latest monthly meeting.

"Both Clubs have said they would be unable to accommodate these proposals within their existing buildings," he said.

"But they have identified external areas that would suit but these would require the consent of the Council before they can proceed with building plans."

For the Wentworth Services Sporting Club, Mr Boyd said discussions with Club representatives had revealed the simplest solution to satisfy the new regulations would be to utilise the area beneath the porticos built over the Sandwyeh Street road reserve as well as an area between the Club and the Darling



Standing
on the
corner...

Wentworth's heritage precinct is undergoing a major facelift with the installation of new, heritage-style street signage. The project is integral to the Shire's continuing efforts to promote the area's heritage 'feel'. Shire senior engineer, Howard Clay, has been integral to the municipality's heritage push for many years and says the new signs enhance the town's image as a historic river port. Wentworth was once the third busiest port in the country behind Sydney and Newcastle.

Continued on Page 2

It's all about Bikes in Wentworth

WENTWORTH is planning a warm welcome for the Tour of the Murray riders and their entourage when they race into the historic river town on Saturday, September 2.

'It's all about Bikes' is a new event for the township, organised by the Mainstreet Events Committee with the assistance of Council and putting the bicycle firmly in the spotlight.

"It is something we haven't seen before," Wentworth Shire Mayor and events committee member, Margaret Thomson, said.

"We thought there should be something to mark the end of the day's racing in the Tour of the Murray while promoting bicycle awareness," the Mayor said.

'It's all about Bikes' will be staged in Beverley Street outside the historic Old Wentworth Gaol from 1pm to 3pm, finishing just in time for the Tour finish at the same location.

"We are inviting residents from across the Shire to join us for a bit of bicycle fun including bike orienteering and time trials, a mounted treasure hunt, bikes races, an obstacle course and some prizes for the best decorated bike," Cr Thomson said.

"All this will take place from 1pm to 3pm and end when the Tour of the Murray riders race into town for the finish of their racing day outside the Gaol.

"We have also organised a great display of new bikes from Mildura's Bicycle Superstore."

Mayor Thomson said the event would showcase the Shire as a bicycle friendly area.

"It's flat so there are no hills to tackle, our climate is perfect most of the year for bike riding and the Shire, in partnership with the New South Wales Road Traffic Authority, is constructing a network of safe, convenient shared ways for pedestrians and bike riders," the Mayor said.

And those attending won't go hungry. A sausage sizzle is scheduled along with tasty pancakes for 'afters', and cool drinks, tea and coffee.

"It will be a great, healthy way to spend a Saturday afternoon," the Mayor said.

Shire moves to assist sporting clubs

Continued from Page 1

River levee bank.

"These areas are subject to current development applications to Council that are being considered by Council's Development and Environment Department under delegated authority," Mr Boyd said.

"The Club has expressed an interest in leasing the road reserve from the Council (as the relevant road authority) to enable the portico proposal to proceed. Subsequent discussion by the General Manager with Club representatives has indicated an interest in purchasing the road reserve, subject to negotiated costs. This may be able to be resolved by way of an agreed payment plan similar to that extended to property developers.

"Discussions with representatives of the Department of Local Government and the RTA Property Services Department ensured that this can proceed in either permit, lease or sale format although these options have yet to be confirmed in writing.

"To enable this to proceed, the Council, by resolution, will need to support the application from the Club."

Turning to the Coomealla Memorial Sporting Club, Mr Boyd said that similar to the solution suggested by Wentworth, the Club had identified the car park area between the Club building and the Silver City Highway as suitable.

"This proposal is more complicated because of the physical encroachment of water mains beneath the land required (Council) and power mains above the land (Country Energy), both of which will require resolution at the Club's expense," Mr Boyd said.

"Similarly, and subject to RTA and Department of Lands concurrence, the Club has indicated that they wish to purchase the road reserve identified, but will require a permit in the interim to speed up the process for development purposes to comply with the legislation.

"Council will be required to support these options by resolution."

Councillors readily agreed.

Cr Nichols, a Wentworth Services Sporting Club director, was keen to see Council pursued the sale of land to both Clubs as a matter of urgency.

"We need to instill a sense of urgency for our part in the process," she said.

"And in the interim, we need to make sure they have a permit to allow them to proceed with their plans for these areas," she said.

"We must get on and do our bit," she said, adding that the July 2007 deadline is now less than 12 months away and "nothing like this is done overnight".

Cr Warren Ward agreed, saying he was also keen to see Council assist the Clubs as major employers and supporters of the community.

"I must, however, ask that we ensure that any works inside the levee for the Wentworth Club take into account Council's standing policy of not approving any permanent structures within 4.5 metres of the toe of the levee."

Mr Boyd was happy to assure Cr Ward that this would be taken into consideration when the Development Application was considered for the area.

Council will now move on the sale of the road reserve land to both Clubs and grant permits in the short-term to allow both organisations to get on with their renovations.

Give this a try....

Friends of Wentworth Library Service
are conducting a

READER SURVEY

Cast your vote for your favourite book.

Survey results will be compiled and results will be available at all libraries.

My favourite book of all time is:

Category:

灩 Fiction

灩 Non Fiction

灩 Children's

Surveys can be returned to Wentworth, Dareton, Pooncarie or Buronga Libraries.

Council disappointed by continued wet road abuse

WENTWORTH Shire's unsealed rural roads continue to deteriorate as some motorists ignore 'road closed' signs.

The signs were introduced in recent months to promote the safety of drivers and their passengers and protect the municipality's unsealed rural roads network.

"Despite our best efforts, drivers are continuing to put themselves at risk and at the same time ripping up our roads," Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King, said.

"Rain events are few and far between as we know, but some people seem incapable of looking after themselves or our roads network by steering clear of these roads until they have had time to dry off.

"It has certainly become a concern to Council as we try to maximise the impact of our limited roads budget.

"We are spending too much money cleaning up after selfish motorists who travel these roads when they are wet.

"That money could be put to better use elsewhere.

"We have an extensive roads network, the majority of it unsealed and we do not need people undoing all the good work we have been doing to keep our roads up to standard."

Cr King said the Council kept a close eye on its unsealed roads network and that the 'closed signs' were only kept in place for as short a time as practical.

"We do not close the roads without good reason," he said.

"And we reopen them as soon as it is safe and the risk of damaging the surface has passed."

Cr King said the Shire was aware that sometimes drivers had no option but to use the roads, like in the case of a medical emergency.

"But all too often it appears these roads are suffering because of selfish joy riding 4WD drivers, heavy trucks or other purely recreational users."

Council is appealing to drivers to heed the 'road closed' signs in the interests of safety and the greater community good and have not ruled out fines if the practice continues.



Typical damage, this time to the Pooncarie to Ivanhoe Road, caused by a heavy vehicle travelling the road during, or too soon after, a rain event. This road was graded on a Thursday and destroyed on Friday!

No firm decision on road sealing

SEALING the Pooncarie to Menindee Road continues to be the subject of discussion in the Council chamber.

Wentworth Shire has met with representatives of the Central Darling Shire and NSW Road Traffic Authority (RTA) in recent months to progress the issue, but still there has been no firm resolution.

It is a matter of frustration for Cr Jim Macri who said he would like to see the road sealed sooner rather than later.

He said a recent Western Research Institute investigation, commissioned by the Central Darling Shire, had shown sealing the 123-kilometre link would provide a great economic boost for the region.

Fifty-two kilometres of the road is in the Wentworth Shire.

The Institute claims that if the road were to be sealed, it would dramatically increase tourism by developing a tourist loop between towns while providing a

positive impact for local agriculture by reducing transport costs.

The economic impact alone would not only provide improved access to the labour market and reduce transport costs, but may also provide jobs, the Institute claimed in its report.

The estimated cost of sealing the Menindee to Pooncarie Road is \$24 million, but at this stage neither the Wentworth or Central Darling Shires has sufficient funds to undertake their portion of the works.

"The best option," according to now-departed Infrastructure and Assets Director, Peter Turner, in one of his last reports to Council, "is to continue to press the Government to provide funding for an all weather road."

Cr Jim Macri advocated borrowing the funds needed to "get the job done".

"Once it's done it's done," he said. "I cannot believe it would cost too much to maintain."

Staff departures prompt speedy moves to fill roles

THE Shire has moved quickly to ensure the continued smooth running of its vital Assets and Infrastructure Department in the wake of three staff departures in recent weeks.

The first to leave was Roads Engineer, Jeremy Rudd, who left to pursue career opportunities with a Mildura-based firm of engineering consultants.

Mr Rudd had been with the Shire for four years, coming straight from university to serve an 18-month 'apprenticeship' under the Shire's now-retired Roads Engineer Robert Rigby before taking on the role himself.

Mr Rudd left the Shire in mid-July.

Assets Engineer Nam Ranatunga, who left earlier this month, also departed to pursue professional advancement.

Mr Ranatunga joined the Shire in August 2004 and left to take up the position of Assets Manager with the Eurobadella Shire on the New South Wales far south coast.

Assets and Infrastructure Director, Peter Turner, followed him most recently. Mr Turner joined the Shire in July 1995 and was set to retire in 2007, however poor health prompted him to rethink the timing of his retirement.

He had been on indefinite sick leave before making his final decision to retire.

General Manager, Michael Boyd, told the August monthly meeting at the Midway centre last week that he had made several prompt staffing arrangements to ensure the department continued to deliver services to ratepayers.

Mr Boyd told Councillors he has appointed qualified civil engineer John Webb to the Assets and Infrastructure Director's chair to oversee the day-to-day administration of the department and to prioritise the Shire's works program in coming months.

"This will also include getting a handle on the larger, longer-term projects we are undertaking."

Mr Webb will work three days a week

in the short-term and comes to the Shire after holding a similar post with the Swan Hill City Council, Mr Boyd said.

"He went onto to become that Council's Chief Executive Officer. He is well qualified to fill the position for us until a full-time appointment can be made."

The departure of Mr Turner and the appointment of Mr Webb prompted the suspension of the search for new personnel to fill the other two, vacant engineering positions in the department, Mr Boyd said.

"I will now focus on filling Mr Turner's position first as it is not unreasonable to expect the new Director will want to have a say in who fills the other two, vacant engineering positions."

Mr Webb will start work on Monday, August 28.

Robert Rigby has also returned to the Shire in a part-time capacity to assist the Shire's works manager and works supervisor.

He is already assisting to co-ordinate the day-to-day works programs and overseeing Council's contractual obligations for RTA-funded road works in the municipality.

He is, according to Mr Boyd, making a "valuable contribution".

"I have also spoken to my remaining directors and in the short-term they will all contribute by picking up some of the Mr Turner's previous workload," he said.

"Director of Development & Environment, Ken Ross, for example, will assist the Infrastructure & Assets Department address day-to-day issues until Mr Webb is up to speed."

Mr Boyd also announced that the Shire's accountant, Scott Jennings, has tendered his resignation citing personal reasons.

Mr Jennings has been with the Shire for the past 11 months and leaves to rejoin his family and friends in Geelong.

There are no plans to replace Mr Jennings permanently in the short-term.

Shire warns of traffic delays

WENTWORTH Shire Council has moved to alert motorists alerted to potential delays on Wentworth's Darling River Bridge from Monday, August 21 until Friday, August 25, between 7am to 6pm daily.

Traffic on the bridge over the Darling River on the Silver City Highway will be reduced to one traffic lane to facilitate repairs on the bridge deck and all going well, including favourable weather, the job should be completed within the nominated time frame, Wentworth Shire Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, said.

"Lights will control traffic and motorists may experience short delays of up to about five minutes during the works," the Mayor said.

"A speed restriction of 40km/h will apply for all vehicles using the bridge, but pedestrian traffic should not be affected.

"We are asking all drivers to exercise caution when travelling through the work site and to comply with all temporary sign posting and traffic control measures for the safety and convenience of all."

Mayor Thomson said the potential delays were regrettable, but necessary to allow the essential maintenance work to be carried out.

Nominations call

NOMINATIONS are now open for the 2007 NSW Seniors Week Achievement Awards program.

The awards program, administered by the Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care is an integral part of the NSW Seniors Week celebrations.

The 2007 NSW Seniors Week Achievement Awards highlight and recognise seniors across the State for their contribution to the development of the community and for their leadership and initiative.

For 2007, NSW Seniors Week will be held between March 11 and 18.

Nominations for the 2007 NSW Seniors Week Achievement Awards close at 5pm on Friday, October 6, 2006.

More information is available from Council's Community Services Officer, Grant Maynard, 5027 5052, the Seniors Information Service on 13 12 44 or by visiting the DADHC website at www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au.

Council refuses West Road access for B-Double trucks

COUNCIL has once again rejected a plea from several Buronga businesses for permission to construct a B-Double access road.

The matter has previously been considered and rejected by Council, but another report was presented to Council for consideration at its August monthly meeting after further enquiries from businesses in the area.

In a written report to council, the Assets and Infrastructure Department reminded Councillors tests undertaken with the RTA in 2002 had concluded that B-Double access to the Sturt Highway from West Road, Buronga, was not possible or desirable.

“At the time, an understanding was reached to allow B-Doubles to use what amounted to a track in a reserve at the rear of the developments in West Road, in the short term at least, pending one business relocating to alternative premises,” the report said.

“Discussions with the then Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR and now known as

the department of Natural Resources) required Council to survey the area as a precursor to acquiring land for construction of a road. This survey has been partly completed but was stopped when Council decided the project should not proceed.

“Since then advice has been received from the RTA that Council cannot grant B-Double access to the properties via Pitman Avenue or the unofficial road behind the business premises.

“It must be pointed out that it is possible to ‘break’ the B-Doubles which traverse the area prior to them entering their depots, which would alleviate the need for a B-Double route to be constructed.”

Cr Brian Wakefield was the first to speak against the construction of a B-Double route through the reserve area.

“I thought we had agreed (at an earlier meeting) to encourage these businesses to relocate to a more suitable industrial area,” he said.

Cr Warren Ward also spoke against the idea, saying he had spoken to people living in the area and he was “not convinced they would be happy” with

the idea of a B-Double route through the reserve.

“These are people who live and make their living in the area,” he said.

“And I also think we cannot be seen to be bending over backwards for one operator to the detriment of everyone else.

“It would not be hard for the operator to ‘break’ his B-Doubles. The Merbein Saw Mills trucks, for example, do it all the time.”

Cr Sue Nichols was also a vocal opponent.

“I know at least two people who are not happy about it,” she said.

“And they have been concerned since the first native vegetation was removed some time ago to facilitate truck access.”

The final speaker was Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King, who also spoke against the B-Double route proposal and for the idea of ‘breaking’ the B-Double trucks apart to facilitate access via West Road.

Councillors then voted to: “Encourage those companies involved in B-Doubles to break the units prior to entering their depots.”



Campus car park construction

Council has recently completed the construction of a gravel a car park for the Coomealla TAFE campus, adjacent to Coomealla High School. The work was funded by Riverina TAFE and provides an all weather car park for 20 vehicles. The work was a follow-on from the kerbing and guttering project undertaken in 2003 along the Silver City Highway outside the Coomealla TAFE.

Fergie aerial photograph orders now being taken

ORDERS are now being taken for the post-event merchandise generated by the Massey Ferguson Great Wentworth Tractor Rally; the feature event of the Wentworth Grande Resort Festival of the Flood 1956 – 2006 in Wentworth last month.

“There have been so many calls about the aerial pic of the ‘Showgrounds Fergie’ we organised as part of the event on Saturday,” Co-ordinator, Louise Funnell, said.

“We have received a similar amount of calls for views of the Wentworth Services Sporting Club Mainstreet Muster on the Sunday.”

“Due to the demand, two aerial shots will be available for a limited time. The first is a photograph of the entire ‘Showgrounds Fergie’ and the second a closer shot of the back wheel of the ‘Fergie’ created by parking the entrants’ tractors in a tractor shape.”

Ms Funnell said the photographs would be available in three sizes -- 11 x 14, 16 x 24 and a whopping 20 x 30. (All measurements are in inches).

New hall caretakers get a big thank you

THE willingness of the Pomona Public School Parents & Citizen’s group to take over the caretaker’s role for the Pomona Hall has pleased Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King.

“It is good to see a community group taking responsibility for the hall,” he said. “Hopefully there may be some other community groups that will follow suit in other areas of the Shire.”

Council recently received a letter from former caretakers Michael & Tina Dale informing Council that they were no longer able to look after the hall.

Responding in writing, Council thanked the Dales for their efforts and the time they had freely given to ensure the hall was kept secure and in good order.

Council is due to consider the future of all of its halls later this year.

The halls are the subject of a yet-to-be-completed audit that has been used to generate a comprehensive report outlining issues including condition, facilities, usage rates and maintenance.

Meanwhile, there are two shots available from Sunday’s Mainstreet Muster.

“The first is of the tractors parked in Darling Street between Sandwyck and Adelaide Streets (the main shopping precinct) and the other of those parked outside the Wentworth Services Sporting Club and Grande Resort,” Ms Funnell said.

“We are also reprinting the fabulous poster designed by Wentworth’s Artistic Designs that proved really popular with rally goers. So much so that there were few if any left in town after the weekend.

“The committee is also holding very limited stocks of the screen printed black, red and white Massey Ferguson caps and the Festival of the Flood stubby holders. Once these are sold out that will be the end of them.”

Ms Funnell said the organising committee had decided not to commission a supplementary order for the special rally badges struck for entrants in the Great Wentworth Tractor Rally.

“I know this will disappoint some people but the committee wants the badges to remain something special for those who took part in the Massey Ferguson Great Wentworth Tractor Rally ‘Flood of the Fergie 2006’ rally run from Buronga to Wentworth.

“I am sure they will become a treasured item and evoke many memories for those who made the journey.”

Order forms for the memorabilia and proof shots of the photographs for sale will be forwarded to all entrants and those people who left their name with organisers over the weekend.

They are also available for download from the official weekend website at www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au/fergie or at the Wentworth Shire Council offices in Adelaide Street, Wentworth.

The deadline for orders has been set for 5pm Friday, September 1, 2006.

“That way we can order in bulk and pass the savings onto the buyer,” Ms Funnell said.

“We cannot guarantee that orders received after the deadline will be fulfilled so I am urging people to get their order in promptly.”

A postage and handling fee of \$10 will apply to all orders.

Free dementia forum

THE Mallee Division of General Practice Dareton/Wentworth Community Group, in conjunction with Dareton Primary Health & Home Care Services, invites carers to attend a free information session on ‘Understanding Dementia’.

The session will be presented by Ruth Gobbitt, project manager with the Orana/Far West Dementia Respite Service.

Topics to be covered include memory changes, coping with challenging behaviour and why respite?

The session will be held on Wednesday, September 20 from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Coomealla Club Harvest Room, Dareton.

A free lunch will be provided.

For further information and to RSVP please contact Helen Alvey on 5027 4011; Dareton Primary Health on 5021 7200 or the Mallee Division of General Practice, 5023 8633.

Respite care is available for carers attending this session.

Shire contacts

Shire offices: 26-28 Adelaide Street,
WENTWORTH NSW
2648

or: Post Office Box 81
WENTWORTH NSW
2648

Telephone: (03) 5027 5027

Facsimile: (03) 5027 5000

email: council@wentworth.nsw.gov.au

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**

Wentworth Shire &
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