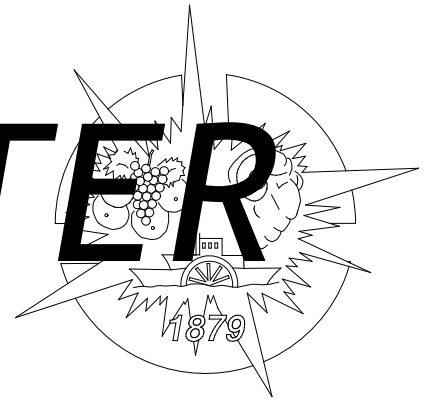


NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Number 8, September 2007



“Keeping our community informed”

The water's back on... for now!

COUNCIL has thrown ailing gardens in the municipality a lifeline, with the easing of water restrictions from Stage 4 to Stage 3a.

However, while the new restriction regime does allow some watering, lawns are still outlawed and the guidelines are strict.

And, Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, has warned that how long Stage 3a can continue will depend on residents.

“If we use what little water we have too quickly, Stage 4 is likely to be reintroduced rather quickly,” she said.

“What I am asking is that residents be very careful with how and when they water and that way we may get through this summer.”

The Mayor said the water shortage across the country was critical and people needed to double their efforts to become more water wise.

The decision to ease the restrictions came after Councillors Cherie Ribarits, Don McKinnon and Bill Wheeldon requested that Council reconsider its move the Stage 4.

They successfully argued that Council impose water restrictions closely aligned with Victorian Stage 3A restrictions, “allowing restricted outside watering”.

Continued on Page 2

New Mayoral team pic...

INSIDE

Frequently asked water questions -- Page 2

Meet the Shire staff -- Page 3

Midway Centre needs more use -- Page 4

‘My Thoughts’: Have your say -- Page 5

Street lights in the spotlight -- Page 6

The Mayoral team to lead the Wentworth Shire for the next 12 months will be Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, returned at the September Statutory meeting for a third term, and as her deputy, Cr Sue Nichols.

The water is back on... for now!

• Continued from Page 1

There move was prompted by “a considerable number of requests being received for a relaxation of the Stage 4 restrictions”.

In the main, Council’s Director Infrastructure and Assets, Bill Turner, told the latest monthly meeting, to allow for some outside watering, particularly by the elderly who have considerable difficulty with buckets and are at risk of injury.

“The stage 3A restrictions would allow only gardens to be watered by dripper systems, a hand-held hose with a trigger nozzle, a watering can or a bucket,” he said.

“Watering may be allowed for up to two hours on two specified days per week. The watering of lawns will not be included in any relaxation of restrictions although it may be possible to water a limited number of sports-grounds, particularly where there are or could be safety issues.

WHICH DAY CAN I WATER?

Even numbered houses can *ONLY* water on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Odd numbered houses can *ONLY* water on Sundays and Wednesdays.

WHAT TIME CAN I WATER?

Hand held hoses with trigger nozzles or manual dripper systems can be used between 6am and 8am on two days per week (see above). Automatic dripper systems can be used between midnight and 2am on two days per week (see above).

IF I AM OVER 70, HOW DO THE RESTRICTIONS AFFECT ME?

Households with at least one resident aged 70 years or over may water their gardens manually on specified watering days between 6am and 8am or 8am and 10am.

“Safety is also a potential concern with respect to the elderly. There are risks involved with filling and carrying buckets of water to a garden but it could be debated whether these risks directly result from the water restrictions or from a personal choice to use buckets. Any exemptions, if able to be given, would have to be on a strictly case by case basis.”

Mr Turner told Councillors that if water could be purchased to allow a relaxation of restrictions there would be a cost involved.

“The current price of water is in the range of \$850 to \$950 per ML although there is an expectation the price will increase.”

Councillors Ribarits and McKinnon moved that the motion passed at the ordinary Council meeting on July 18 for Stage 4 restriction be imposed should be rescinded and in its place Council should “impose water restrictions that are reduced to closely align with Victorian Stage 3A restrictions which

allow restricted outside watering, and that Council uses its water entitlements (other than urban entitlement) in the first instance”.

When put to the vote, Councillors voted for Stage 3a restrictions to be adopted.

In a nutshell, the move means that Council will find extra water from its own entitlements in the first instance and not have to resort to buying water at this stage, the Mayor said.

“But how long we can maintain Stage 3a it will last will depend on how frugal we can be,” she said.

“I am encouraging everyone to think long-term and only water enough to keep their gardens alive.”

If you require further information regarding water restrictions, please call Council’s Infrastructure & Assets department on 5027 5040.

The most frequently asked questions about the new restrictions and the answers appear below.

HOW DO THE RESTRICTIONS AFFECT SPORTING GROUNDS?

Sports grounds used for competitive scheduled sports may apply for exemptions subject to an approved Water Conservation Plan to demonstrate water usage reduction of at least 25 percent.

CAN I WATER MY LAWN?

No

CAN I WASH MY CAR WITH A HOSE?

No

HOW DO I WASH MY CAR?

With a bucket filled from a tap.

CAN I FILL MY SWIMMING POOL OR SPA?

No

CAN I TOP UP MY SWIMMING POOL OR SPA?

No

CAN I WASH DOWN PAVED AREAS OR MY ROOF?

No

CAN I WATER MY MARKET GARDEN OR ORCHARD?

No

DOES THIS ALSO APPLY TO NURSERIES AND COMMERCIAL FLOWER GROWERS?

Yes

CAN I RUN MY FOUNTAIN?

No

WHAT ABOUT AUTO FLUSH TOILETS?

Prohibited

AND WATER CARTAGE FROM THE TOWN SUPPLY?

Only with a Council licence.

Tip loads

Residents are reminded that tip loads to Buronga Landfill or any of the transfer stations at Wentworth, Dareton and Pomona must be covered and/or firmly secured to prevent any rubbish being dropped on Shire roads.

17th September MEETING NOTES

Mayoral Election

Councillor Margaret Thomson was elected as Mayor and Councillor Sue Nichols as Deputy Mayor.

Appointment of Committees

Council made decisions on internal committees, Section 355 management committees and council delegates to various committees and groups.

RFCS Wentworth/Balranald

A presentation was made to Council by the Wentworth Balranald Rural Counselling Service.

Strategic Alliance Conference

The Mayor and the General Manager reported on the outcomes of this conference, including an address by the Minister for Local Government and an update on resource sharing and strategic alliances between Councils.

Western Darling Arts AGM

The Mayor reported on the AGM held in August in Wentworth.

Rates Discount

Council is considering the introduction of a 2.5% discount on rates for the 2008/09 financial year.

Easing of Water Restrictions

Council moved from Level 4 restrictions to 3A. A pamphlet is available detailing what can and cannot be done in relation to Level 3A. (See story this issue).

Australian Inland Botanic Gardens

The Mayor reported on the AIBG Committee meeting held in August.

Wentworth Regional Tourism Inc

The minutes of the 13 August meeting were received by Council.

CDSE Report

Council ratified a number of recommendations in relation to funding applications by the Community Development Support Expenditure local committee.

Mainstreet Committee

Council noted the minutes of the last Mainstreet Committee meeting.

Meet the Shire staff

WELCOME to the first of what we are planning will become a regular monthly feature.

Each month we will profile a Shire staff member and outline a little about what they do for Council and ultimately the community.

We will also include some personal details as a way of introducing them to our ratepayers and making it easier to recognise our staff when you

have reason to speak with them during the course of your business with Council.

Not all members of staff are in contact with our residents on a regular basis, and this feature will help you get to know who is actively working for you to improve our communities.

To get the ball rolling, we profile Kathy Collinson, our Reserves and Acquisitions Officer.

Name: Kathy Collinson
Position Title: Reserves and Acquisitions Officer

Duties:

Reserves

In Wentworth Shire, all the recreation facilities including parks and ovals are located on reserves owned by the Crown (NSW State Government). I liaise between the Department of Lands and the users of the facilities to ensure that the reserves are managed as required by the government.

Acquisitions

There are very specific rules and regulations governing the acquisition of land for Council purposes. I am involved in liaison with the Department of Lands, the Department of Local Government, Native Title Tribunal and legal representatives to facilitate the process of obtaining title to land required by Council.

I am also involved in the Local Emergency Management Committee.

Lives: Wentworth (when you find paradise it's a good idea to stay put)

Family: Husband Tony and son, Mark.

Community Involvement / Groups: Community Focus Group Member ~ Mallee Division of General Practice.



• Kathy Collinson

The Focus Group Members provide community feedback to the Division and one member sits on the Board of the Division to ensure community representation. Attend free Tai Chi classes at the Wentworth Services Club, an initiative of Dareton Health and Arthritis Victoria. I am one of the Library walkers who wander around Wentworth each Thursday evening. It is very easy to become involved in the community at Wentworth, as everyone is so warm and friendly.

Many positive from past 12 months

AFTER many years the acquisition of housing land in Murray Street, Wentworth, appears to be nearly finalised.

That was just one of the many positives Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, mentioned during her traditional outgoing Mayor's report at last month's Statutory Meeting.

Of course, Cr Thomson was re-elected as Mayor, so she will be making a similar speech again in 12 months time!

She went on to say: "As Mayor I have continued to have an open door

policy and met with ratepayers and developers on request.

"I have promoted the Shire and its activities strongly. I firmly believe that increasing Council's profile in as many areas as possible is necessary to seize opportunities and lead from the front.

"During the past 12 months, there have been many significant issues to deal with and a stronger focus on advocacy, representation and consultation."

A full transcript of the report is available on the Shire's website at www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au.

Hall for hire... Midway Centre needs use

COUNCILLORS would like to see the Midway Centre at Buronga/Gol Gol get more use.

“It is a splendid facility,” Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, said. “But it needs to be used more often.”

“It is an extremely versatile building. It has several areas that lend themselves to a different types

of events, everything from sports training and community group meetings to birthday parties and wedding receptions.”

Anyone wanting more information on the centre is invited to call Yvonne on 5027 5040 in Council’s Assets and Infrastructure Department.

See charges schedule below:



INPUT SOUGHT

COUNCIL is seeking input from the community on how we can improve our monthly newsletter.

In keeping with Council’s continuing drive to improve our service and services, we would welcome your ideas and/or constructive criticism.

The newsletter is just one of the many ways we are endeavouring to keep our ratepayers abreast of all the latest

Shire happenings. It complements our website and regular contact with the local media. Ideas and feedback should be forwarded via email at

newsletter@wentworth.nsw.gov.au or addressed to the General Manager, Peter Kozlowski at PO Box 81 WENTWORTH NSW 2648.

Midway Community Centre			
Stadium - <i>The stadium to be free of charge to schools within the Shire of Wentworth area on one occasion per year</i>			
Functions			
Stadium Hire (with prior approval)	\$400.00	\$450.00	\$500.00
Plus Bond – Outside Bodies	\$450.00	\$500.00	\$550.00
User Groups – No bond	\$175.00	\$225.00	\$275.00
Speech Night, Presentations	\$175.00	\$225.00	\$275.00
Sports Training			
User Groups – per hour	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$30.00
Professional Teams & Groups outside the Shire of Wentworth – per hour	\$35.00	\$40.00	\$45.00
Function Room <i>This room is free to Senior Citizens Clubs who meet their own costs for running the Centre</i>			
Social Functions			
Function Room Hire (with prior approval)	\$250.00	\$300.00	\$350.00
Plus Bond – Outside Bodies	\$400.00	\$450.00	\$500.00
Meetings			
Functions Room Hire – per hour	\$30.00	\$35.00	\$40.00
Day Care Group			
Function Room Hire – per hour	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$30.00

Council will clean the Stadium or the Function Room if required at a cost of \$275.00

My Thoughts

Wentworth Shire Council is committed to improving its services and "My Thoughts" is a valuable way of providing feedback to councillors and staff. Take the opportunity to write your thoughts down in the area below and drop it into one of Council's libraries in Wentworth, Buronga or Dareton, the Visitors Centre or the Main Council Offices in Wentworth or simply pass it on to a staff member or councillor.

As a resident/ratepayer of the Wentworth Shire, I would like to offer my thoughts:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

If you provide a name and address on the following lines we will write back to you with a response within 10 days. In that time your request may be attended to in full and, if not possible, you will be advised as to the action to be taken.

Name:.....Phone:.....

Address:.....

"My Thoughts" may be ideas, complaints, requests for information or action, observations, comments or questions. If the space provided is insufficient attach your additional information to the back of this page.

Peter Kozlowski
General Manager

**NEXT
COUNCIL
MEETING**

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 21, 2007, at the new time of 2pm. Residents are welcome, and encouraged, to attend.

Important police telephone numbers

RESIDENTS should be aware of several important police telephone numbers. They are:

- 000 For All Emergencies – 24 hours a day. 000 can connect you to Police, Fire or Ambulance, depending on your situation. Only dial this number if you want to report a crime in progress or it is a life-threatening situation.
- The local Police Station Dareton 5027 7599. You can call Dareton Police Station to report non-urgent crimes or to make general enquires.
- 131 444 Police Assistance Line (PAL) – 24 hours a day. You can call PAL to report minor crimes that have already been committed (crimes that are not in progress) and that do not involve traumatised victims or require urgent police attention or attendance.
- 1800 333 000 Crime Stoppers. Monday to Friday, 7am to 11pm, weekends 8am to 8pm. If you have information about a crime or criminal behaviour, then call Crime Stoppers on this toll free number. Crime Stoppers uses information that members of the public provide to solve crimes and catch offenders.

HELP us help the environment

WANT to help save the environment? Then consider receiving your monthly Shire newsletter by email, thereby saving printing paper and in the long run a tree or two. It really is simple. If you would like to receive your newsletter in a PDF document via the Internet simply let us know. Send your email address to newsletter@wentworth.nsw.gov.au. Or, you could log onto our website at www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au and follow the newsletter link from the home page to read all the latest news on line, or download it to your computer.

More September 17 MEETING NOTES

Fluoridation

Council called for a report on the costs associated with the introduction of fluoridation to local water supplies.

Integrated Strategic Planning

Council adopted the Wentworth Shire Councils strategic planning model and the strategic planning process. These frameworks will be used for future planning.

Rural & Regional Taskforce

Council decided to send at least two delegates to aforum associated with the Rural & Regional Taskforce to be held in Broken Hill in December.

LEMO

Council appointed Mr Bill Turner Director Infrastructure & Assets to the role Local Emergency Management Officer.

Wentworth's Draft Crime Prevention Plan

Council noted that this draft Crime Prevention Plan is currently on public exhibition. The draft plan will be adopted by Council in October.

Performance Monitoring

Council received a report detailing how various neighbouring Councils were going in relation to their performance in dealing with local development. It was noted that the statewide average number of days for determining a development application was 68 days whereas Wentworth's average was 34.

VEAC Submission

Council will be making a submission to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council in relation to the river red gum forest investigation.

On Site Sewerage Management Plan

Council adopted this Plan after 30 days of advertising.

Streetlights given priority

MAINTAINING street lighting levels in regional towns and villages remains a priority for Country Energy.

To ensure the prompt repair of streetlights, Country Energy encourages residents to identify and report any streetlights that are not working.

Streetlights that are broken or faulty should be reported directly to Country Energy through one of the following methods:

- Call Country Energy's general enquiries number on 13 23 56 or the Supply Interruption Line on 13 20 80.
- Visit your nearest Country Energy Customer Service Centre located at 24-26 Darling Street, Wentworth, or
- Visit the CE website at www.countryenergy.com.au

According to Country Energy's regional general manager, far west, Guy Chick maintaining streetlights is a key priority for Country Energy, as is creating a street

lighting system that is safe for the community.

"Country Energy maintains more than 120,000 streetlights in our network, with around 3,400 of these located in the Far Western region," Guy said.

"We are continually looking at ways to improve the management of street lighting maintenance, and for the safety of our customers and the reliability of the network, we encourage people to contact us if they see a streetlight that is not working.

"Your assistance will enable us to put it back into service as soon as possible.

"By reporting a faulty streetlight, people will be assisting us to provide reliable, safe and energy efficient lighting services that meet customer needs," Guy said.

For more information please visit your nearest Customer Service Centre or contact Country Energy on 132356.

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
number: (03) 5027 5091

For all water, sewerage, rubbish tip
hours, emergency dog matters, stray
stock and cemetery emergencies.