



Wyong Shire Council

**Business Paper**  
EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING  
**09 September 2015**

**VALUE. CREATE. LEAD.**

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# MEETING NOTICE

**The Extraordinary Council Meeting  
of Wyong Shire Council  
will be held in the Council Chamber,  
Wyong Civic Centre, Hely Street, Wyong on  
Wednesday 9 September 2015 at 5.00 pm,  
for the transaction of the business listed below:**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

**RECEIPT OF APOLOGIES**

**1 PROCEDURAL ITEMS**

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**4 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE ASKED**

At the conclusion of the meeting and at the discretion of the Mayor, Council may meet with staff in an informal, non-decision making mode for a period of no more than 30 minutes.

Michael Whittaker  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

## 1.1 Disclosure of Interest

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TRIM REFERENCE: F2015/00040 - D12052135

MANAGER: Sonia Witt, TL Governance and Councillor Services

AUTHOR: Jade Maskiewicz; Councillor Services Officer

The provisions of Chapter 14 of the *Local Government Act, 1993* regulate the way in which Councillors and nominated staff of Council conduct themselves to ensure that there is no conflict between their private interests and their public trust.

The Act prescribes that where a member of Council (or a Committee of Council) has a direct or indirect financial (pecuniary) interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council (or Committee), that interest must be disclosed as soon as practicable after the start of the meeting and the reasons for declaring such interest.

As members are aware, the provisions of the Local Government Act restrict any member who has declared a pecuniary interest in any matter from participating in the discussions, voting on that matter, and require that member to vacate the Chamber.

Council's Code of Conduct provides that if members have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest, the nature of the conflict must be disclosed. The Code also provides for a number of ways in which a member may manage non pecuniary conflicts of interest.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Councillors now disclose any conflicts of interest in matters under consideration by Council at this meeting.***

## **2.1 Mayoral Minute - Mayoral Report 2014-2015**

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TRIM REFERENCE: F2004/06511 - D12060963

AUTHOR: Doug Eaton OAM; Councillor

Since the Mayoral election in 2013, this Council has been committed to a solid plan with three main objectives.

- Jobs as the number one priority
- Getting back to basics – focus on roads, our lakes and parks
- Repairing the budget – continuing the job we started.

I can say with confidence we are certainly delivering in all of these areas and I believe the community are really starting to see the results of our commitment and hard work.

Council is well and truly back in the black. After driving a \$35.5 million turnaround in our operating budget since 2010, we are now in the strongest position we have ever been in to deliver the infrastructure and services that will create jobs and opportunities for our community. Our \$361 million budget for this financial year is sound, responsible and balanced.

This has not happened by accident. It is because of the choices we have made to rein in unnecessary spending and find savings wherever we can. We have found inefficiencies in our service delivery by reducing staff and finding better ways of doing things. We established Wyong Water to better manage our water service and that is paying off with our ratepayers enjoying one of the lowest water bills in the state.

We are getting back to basics with 75% of our spending this year going to the five big services our community have said they want us to focus on – roads, water and sewerage, waste, open space and recreation and our lakes and environment.

Since 2010 we have more than doubled our spending on roads – from \$32 million to a record \$66 million this year. There is no other Council in NSW spending as much as us on roads.

Council's investment in essential infrastructure continues to grow each year, with \$100.1 million in projects delivered in the last financial year. Significant projects completed include the Saltwater Creek Reserve Makeover (\$900,000), Buttonderry Landfill Cell (\$9 million), Norah Head Boat Ramp (\$3 million), Wyong River Construction Project (\$2.4 million) and Metro cinema and commercial building complex (\$6.7 million).

Construction is well over halfway for a project close to my heart – The Art House – a new performing arts and conference centre in Wyong opening in early 2016. Council's investment of \$12.7 million will deliver a flagship facility for residents and visitors and strengthen the region's capacity as a significant arts destination.

We have continued to improve the amenity of our lakes with the remaking of Canton Beach foreshore proving popular with locals and visitors. Improvements to the Long Jetty Foreshore are underway and plans are now in place for a beach at Long Jetty too. The health of our

lakes is better than ever, as our gross pollutant traps continue to stop thousands of cubic metres of wrack entering our lake system each year. The lakes themselves will take centre stage this November when the inaugural Wyong Lakes Festival is held in what will become the signature event for our region.

Hundreds of residents showed up for the opening of Saltwater Creek Bridge and the new BMX track at Saltwater Creek Reserve as well as the new play space at Buff Point, just last month, highlighting the importance our community place on recreational facilities. The Shire's only ocean access boat ramp is back in operation after a \$3 million makeover and is proving more popular than ever.



Australia's unemployment rate is actually decreasing but that is not the case for our Shire. Unemployment, particularly amongst our young people, is on the rise and something needs to be done. Jobs are now officially our number one priority and need to be at the centre of everything we do.

This is why we have been pushing for a stand-alone Central Coast University, a regional airport and an education and business precinct at Warnervale as it will create thousands of local jobs and keep talent in our Shire.

We spent the lead up to the State election lobbying candidates and party leaders for funding for 39 key projects that we know will transform our Shire, create more local jobs and build vital infrastructure for our growing community. The campaign did pay off as now we have commitments The Link Road will be built, the Pacific Highway through Wyong CBD will be widened and Wyong Hospital will get a much needed upgrade.

Investment confidence has never been higher in our Shire with our planning team dealing with record numbers of DAs and rezonings worth billions of dollars. This is a direct result of the plans and policies we have put in place over the past few years to revitalize our Shire, attract investment and create jobs. We don't just talk about jobs, we deliver them. We are now tracking job numbers created by development and our capital works projects. In April we

adopted an estimated job creation indice of 10 jobs per \$1 million of investment. To put that in perspective – in 2014-15 \$723.9 million worth of DAs were lodged with Council, which have the potential to create a staggering 7239 jobs. And that is just the tip of the iceberg.

In April 2015, a super storm swept through our Shire causing extensive damage to property and infrastructure. Thousands of our residents were without power for several days and many of their properties were destroyed or damaged by fallen trees. Council responded swiftly with our roads and open space crews working around the clock clearing roads, fixing infrastructure and restoring services. We opened our Buttonderry Waste Management Facility and four old landfill sites so residents could drop off their green waste for free. The equivalent of 32 Olympic sized swimming pools of green waste was also collected from residential kerbsides. We opened the doors of our Civic Centre and our Libraries for those without power to recharge devices, stay connected with free Wi-Fi and even showers. The community was appreciative of our efforts and it was heartening to see everyone pull together during such a difficult time. A real testament to the power of communities.

There was also plenty to celebrate with the Centenary of Anzac and the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of The Long Jetty attracting large crowds. NSW Public Libraries celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, we opened the Grove Arts Centre and we hosted the Academy Games, Italian flag raising day and the international Anne Frank exhibition. Community involvement in Council programs has been in record numbers with over 780,000 attending a huge diversity of events.

It has certainly been a big year for our Shire and I am proud of the work this Council has done to deliver the jobs and opportunities our community need and we will continue to do so.

We must be doing something right with 75% of our residents telling us in an independent survey that they are satisfied with Council's services, well above the 59% benchmark.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my Deputy Mayor, Cr Lynne Webster, for her unwavering support and advice over the past 12 months and the Chairs of our various Committees: Cr Best (EEDC), Cr's Taylor and Troy as joint chairs of the Tuggerah Lakes Estuary and Coastal Management Committee and Cr Nayna as Chair of the Sports Advisory Committee.

I must also acknowledge our four Directors – Greg McDonald (Infrastructure and Operations), Maxine Kenyon (Community and Recreation Services), Scott Cox (Building and Development), and Mike Dowling (Property and Economic Development) – for their outstanding commitment to delivering Council's vision and professionalism throughout the year

It is with a heavy heart that I write my particular thanks to our General Manager, Michael Whittaker. Mike leaves at the end of this week to take up the head job at Sunshine Coast Council.

We have been fortunate to have had such a strong leader who has guided the Council through what has been a period of immense change for our Council and local government in general.

Mike has been instrumental in getting our Council back in the black, focused on delivering essential services in a best value manner and moving our economy forward.

I thank Mike for what he has achieved for our community and wish him and his family all the best for the future. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him and will miss his advice and support.

We have been fortunate to have found the ideal replacement in Rob Noble. Rob has extensive experience leading Councils through difficulty and change and I look forward to working with him in the challenging months ahead.

Thanks must go to my Executive Assistant, Mrs Jean Pooley, for her support and hard work. She is a true professional and a delight to work with.

Finally I could not do this job without the unwavering support of my wife Ruby and I thank her from the bottom of my heart.

### **Economic Development and Investment**

Wyong Shire has been identified as a key growth centre in NSW, with an expected 50,000 new residents to call the Shire home by 2031. Our Shire will need the infrastructure, housing and employment for this growing population, and I have been working hard to secure investment, create employment generating opportunities and encourage sustainable economic development to achieve this. There are enormous opportunities right now for new residential, business, educational and visitor facilities in this region to support that growth, and we currently have over \$5 billion in the investment pipeline for projects in the Shire.

The **Wyong Shire Economic Development Strategy** adopted in 2014 outlined our vision for the Shire to have a high-value, diverse economic base attractive to business, providing local jobs for residents and a prosperous sustainable community with an enviable lifestyle and environment.

In realisation of the job ahead, Council is taking a coordinated approach to development and investment, and in 2015 I launched two key initiatives - Transforming the Central Coast and the Smart City Vision.

Council developed **Transforming the Central Coast**, 39 key initiatives worth almost \$2.5 billion, to help deliver our vision for the future to create more jobs and opportunities for our community and attract more private sector investment. The initiatives are across health, education, economic development, recreation, environment, water, roads and transport.

With these initiatives relying on significant investment from other levels of government, Council took the opportunity prior to the State Government election in March 2015, to advocate for funding and raise awareness of the area's priority infrastructure needs. I addressed two large media forums for political candidates to address over 100 key community members and explain their approach to meeting the Central Coast growth needs.

Seven out of these 39 projects received confirmed State Government funding including the Link Road Warnervale (\$25m), future Central Coast Highway upgrade at Long Jetty (\$2m), Pacific Highway upgrade through Ourimbah (\$100m) and a boost to Wyong Health infrastructure (\$200 m).

In July, I launched Council's vision to create a **Smart City** in Warnervale. The Smart City aims to be regionally significant and will consist of an education, industry and business precinct, supported by residential and lifestyle components. The foundation of the Smart City



includes:

- The Wyong Education and Business Precinct – the precinct will cover 65ha and include a university, with student accommodation for up to 1,500 students and a business technology park for 5,000 workers.
- Warnervale Town Centre – the centre will cover 119ha and include a mixed of commercial, retail and residential, with a proposed railway station and bus interchange.
- Wyong Employment Zone (WEZ) – the zone will cover 740ha and has the capacity for \$1.5 billion of investment and 6,000 jobs.
- Precinct 7A – the precinct will cover 500ha for residential use with the capacity for 2,500 homes, neighbourhood shops, open space and significant conservation areas.
- Regional Airport

This has generated national and international investor interest. We are now in negotiations with a number of Australian universities and national level developers to deliver this transformational project.

To facilitate Wyong Shire's competitive advantage, Council developed and adopted a new **Place Branding** Strategy in December 2014. It underpins Council's economic development activity moving aiming to change perceptions of the area over time and have Wyong recognised as a key growth centre and sought after destination in NSW. Activating the brand is a cross-council activity with involvement from property management through town centre master planning, improvement works and major developments; rejuvenation of open space and new recreation spaces; improving the quality of lakes and waterways; cultural planning and events, festivals and public art to provide great experiences for visitors; supporting tourism initiatives and Council's marketing activities stimulating community pride.

Wyong's development economy continues to grow. After determining \$575 million of development in 2013-14, developer confidence has strengthened with nearly \$724 million of development applications (DAs) lodged with Council during 2014-15. This is a clear testament that Wyong is a good place to invest and a demonstration of the strength of the local market.

Council is continuing to achieve one of the fastest, most efficient DA processing times in the state at just 38 days to determine applications under \$1 million. In May 2015 Council received 130 applications worth almost \$43 million – the highest number in four years. This was exceeded just last month when \$107.2 million dollars' worth of DAs including the Chinese Temple at Warnervale. With job creation a priority for Wyong Shire Council, these developments alone have the potential to create 1500 local jobs.

In early 2015 I was proud to see a number of new businesses established in the Shire including Life Health Foods, a manufacturer of vegetarian healthy food products, which opened a new 6,000m<sup>2</sup> multi-million processing plant and head office in Berkeley Vale employing 70 staff. This followed the opening of Cordina Chickens' new \$15 million facility in Wyong in October 2014 employing 100 staff to produce gourmet pre-packaged meals for national markets. Metro Cinemas also opened a new \$6.7 million outlet in Lake Haven in December 2014, in a building we own.

We continue to work on progressing development on the seven Council-owned **iconic sites** and work with private owners to progress development on 21 privately owned iconic sites. In the last 12 months ALDI has completed preparation works on their new site in the Wyong CBD, the DA for a \$45 million 20 storey mixed used development on the Key Site at the Entrance has been approved by the Hunter Central Coast Joint Region Planning Panel (JRPP). Last month the JRPP also approved a \$20 million redevelopment of the Oasis site in the heart of Wyong CBD. The Rustrum site at Toukley is also progressing nicely and we have commenced work on a masterplan for the Baker Park area in Wyong. Together all these developments stand to create hundreds of construction and ongoing jobs over the coming years and will help to transform our region into a smart, modern area that is very livable.

As a testament to how Council is doing business, over three quarters (77%) of businesses independently surveyed in April 2015 said they were overall satisfied with Wyong Shire Council. The majority of respondents believed that each of Council's major projects were important, however there was a higher perceived importance placed on a University for the area (76%) and the creation of a new employment precinct at Warnervale (74%).

Ten years in the making, and now construction is well on track for The Art House to open in early 2016. This is a project close to my heart and one I am proud to say has been fully funded by Council. Our investment of \$12.7 million will strengthen the region's capacity as a significant arts destination and add to visitors' experience. Additionally in the north, the Chinese Cultural Theme Park gathers momentum with the lodgement of the development application for stage one in August 2015 and heightened community interest as a large scale model of the temple went on display at Tuggerah Westfield.

The Shire's **Town Centres** have had lots of attention over the last twelve months.

The **Wyong CBD** is in an ideal location to become a 'living city.' With its smaller retail, increasing café lifestyle and good transport links, I believe it has the potential to become a mini Hornsby or Chatswood. Over the last 12 months we have worked closely with Roads and Maritime Services on plans for expansion of the Pacific Highway and rail-line services through the town, with a transport interchange at Wyong. We have invested heavily in transforming the area with the \$12.7m new performing arts centre, the \$20m Oasis site development on its way, a \$1.3m rejuvenation of Frank Ballance Park into a modern piazza style civic space and a major \$7m overhaul of drainage to address flooding issues.

The private sector is starting to take notice with new café and businesses moving into the CBD and new accommodation facilities being built by the Grand Hotel in 2015. Council recently approved a 24 unit building in the Wyong CBD and is currently discussing two further proposals that will yield 185 units – representing a further \$50million in investment.

**Long Jetty's** rejuvenation continued with the upgrade to The Long Jetty completed in time for the 100<sup>th</sup> year celebrations and installation of a public mural telling the stories of the Jetty's history and people who have loved it over the years. The upgrades included re-decking older parts of the Jetty, updating landscaping and the installation of gross pollutant traps, with a constructed wetland still to come. Hundreds turned out for what really was a joyous celebration of this unique jetty.



Also at Long Jetty, the popular playspace at Saltwater Creek Reserve received a major makeover, with improvements to the existing BMX track, installation of free Wi-Fi, and a new pedestrian bridge on the shared cycleway. This is a vital piece of infrastructure providing the link on the increasingly popular Tuggerah Lake shared pathway network that more and more residents and visitors use every day.

Further north in Toukley, the eight month enhancement project at Canton Beach helped to reinstate 400 metres of natural foreshore and shoreline to become a sandy beach and recreational area, enhance the water quality and improve the adjacent community recreational facilities. Many, many residents are rediscovering the foreshore since it reopened in December 2014 with key events including Australia Day festivities, the recent food and fun fair and the launch of Central Coast Sevens Tournament attracting big numbers. Canton Beach will also be one of the event hubs for the inaugural Wyong Lakes Festival in November 2015. Stage 2 of the Toukley's town centre footpath upgrade works completed in August and Council is also working very closely with the business chamber around the management of graffiti.



The other jewel in our tourism crown, **The Entrance**, is undergoing a major facelift with realignment of the foreshore edge, stabilising the bank with replacement timber posts and concrete blocks and more over the next twelve months following masterplan design approval for Stage 1 of construction works. Council recently took over care and control of Memorial Park at The Entrance so this important community space could be part of the upgrade too. The Entrance will be firmly on the map for Chinese tourists when a reality show shot at The Entrance is shown to millions of Chinese viewers. Council is also looking to expand the tourism potential of the whole shire and are working on establishing our own Marketing and Promotion Board so we can attract the right events in the right places that will bring the tourists flooding in. Recently we awarded \$80,000 in sponsorships to events that will do just that as we know how important tourism is to creating jobs and opportunities for our community.

Lake Haven's new cinemas are flourishing since opening in December and in Budgewoi we are continuing engagement with the community about the proposed land swap. This would involve Woolworths opening a supermarket in a more appropriate location in the town centre, while Council receives a bigger parcel of land in space suited to a dedicated sports ground and recreational facilities in Colongra. Council adopted a new Masterplan and rezoning for Bateau Bay and will soon start building a significant regional skate place that can attract national competitions. A new 20 year masterplan is also under development for Ourimbah aimed at protecting the area's unique character and sensitive setting with managed growth.

The \$6million Warnervale Town Centre entry road jointly funded by the three major land holders, was completed in July 2015, opening the way for the next phase of establishing this brand new community. We also extracted election promises from the State Government for funding for the Link Road connecting Wyong directly to Warnervale opening up the area for the new residential, business and educational precincts.

## Wyong Water

A new business called Wyong Water was established in April 2015 to manage Council's water service.

Wyong's water authority is one of only a few authorities subject to regulation by both IPART and the NSW Office of Water under the Local Government Act and the Water Management Act. These governance arrangements result in significant red tape and financial disadvantage to our customers.

A review of Council's water and wastewater services was undertaken to ensure all was being done to reduce the burden of these regulatory requirements. The result was the establishment of Wyong Water as a separate business within Council. Wyong Water remains 100% owned and operated by Wyong Shire Council.

I am pleased to report the new business is well on its way to achieving the goal of providing a more efficient water service to customers. A new structure has been introduced to allow the business to focus on core services to ensure costs are kept to the absolute minimum, whilst continuing to provide customers with quality drinking water and an effective system to remove wastewater.

Changes to the water accounts have been implemented. The new look water bill is now issued four times per year instead of twice per year and includes all water related service charges that were previously issued with the annual rates notice.

The business continues to face many challenges, such as ageing infrastructure and the demands of a growing population, so we are investing heavily in replacing or upgrading our capital assets to provide services to our customers in the most efficient manner. A total of \$52 million has been invested in capital works projects for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 financial years.

Our water supply is in the best shape it has been in 24 years, with **dam levels** reaching 70% in May 2015 and remaining at this level. There are a number of factors that contributed to this result including: water security planning; investment in infrastructure; working with adjoining water authorities; educating residents and businesses on being water wise; and significant rainfall received over the last year.

In the six week period following the April 2015 storms, 5,000 million litres of water from Wyong River was pumped to Mangrove Creek Dam via the Mardi to Mangrove Link – the equivalent to 2,000 Olympic sized swimming pools.

I was particularly pleased with the results in the latest NSW Office of Water annual report on the performance of regional and local water utilities in NSW, which confirmed Wyong Shire customers have one of the lowest water bills and some of the best drinking water in the state. Wyong Water achieved full compliance with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and the requirements of the EPA licences for treated wastewater.

It is my intention this high level of service is maintained, while we continue to deliver value for money to our customers.

## Natural Areas

One of the most exciting projects we have finished during this term is the **Norah Head boat ramp**. This is the Shire's only ocean-access boat ramp and is now more accessible and safer for users to launch and retrieve their boat. The \$2.85 million upgrade was made possible with grants from both the State and Federal governments. The boat ramp is situated in the historic Cabbage Tree Harbour and is proving even more popular for locals and tourists alike after the upgrade.

Next to the ramp is a **rock pool** that is also extremely popular with families. With beach season around the corner, we recently did some maintenance in the pool to improve the safety by putting the dislodged rocks back in place.

Our beaches are one of the main attractions and one of our most important natural assets.

**Shelly Beach** is one of the busier beaches in our Shire and we are currently putting the finishing touches on the upgrade to the forecourt area. We have spent more than \$380,000 on these improvement works such as paving, seating walls, stairs, planting, shared pathway and new picnic facilities along the beach front to improve the amenity and pedestrian flow. I can't wait for the official opening at the end of the month.

We invest almost half a million dollars in maintaining our ocean beaches and access ways – with four beach accesses at The Entrance North receiving a substantial upgrade at a cost of nearly \$80,000.

The **April storms** certainly increased the workload in Natural Areas this year, especially for our two operational tree teams and arborists. Council received 3,471 tree requests in the year, far in excess of the approximately 2,200 normally received. We had 367 requests in November, 671 in April 2015 and 512 in May. As a direct result of the damage to properties from trees Council changed its tree policy to make it easier for residents to remove dangerous trees. I believe the overwhelmingly majority of our community are supportive of our tree policy and the way we handled the storm clean-up.

I was happy to accept help from Cessnock Correctional Services to assist with the additional litter collection, removal of dumped rubbish and cleaning storm debris from parks, reserves and laneways in the wake of the storms.

**Landcare** is growing in Wyong Shire and Russell McAllister is a great example of that. Russell is our **500<sup>th</sup> volunteer** who signed up to our Landcare program earlier this year. He is a member of one of the newest groups - the Salties Landcare Group who are working to improve Killarney Vale foreshore along Hinemoa Avenue.



We've had seven new volunteer groups join the Landcare and Tidy Towns Programs – Salties Landcare, Mataram Ridge Landcare, Fountaindale Conservation Area Landcare, Pumped Trackworx, Tuggerah Lakes Care, Gwandalan Earth Care and Jenny Dixon Reserve Coastcare.

Volunteers and our staff planted more than 22,640 trees, shrubs and groundcovers across the Shire. This is huge number and I thank all those who volunteer their time to help protect our beautiful natural environment and do their bit to keep our Shire green – something our Shire should be proud of.

All our Natural Area volunteers (Landcare, Bushcare, Coastcare, Dunecare and Tidy Towns) contribute more than 18,000 hours a year of their time to help improve our natural environment – and this is something I would like to personally thank them for.

### Open Space and Recreation

We have more than 140 play spaces around the Shire and maintain them on a regular basis.

I was honoured to recently open the new look **Edgewater Park**. The popular reserve at Buff Point already boasts a boat ramp, BBQ facilities, Boules court, shelter and furniture – and this upgrade has improved the amenity and will encourage more people to use the area. Not only did we build a bigger and better play space, we also added in more seating, a large shelter and fencing.

As well as Edgewater Park, we also upgraded the local size play spaces at Spotted Gum Reserve, Watanobbi, Kanwal Oval and Heritage Drive Kanwal.

But the biggest upgrade on one our reserves would have to be at **Saltwater Creek Reserve**. Here we have added in free Wi-Fi, renewed the BMX track and replaced the pedestrian bridge which is part of the shared pathway along Tuggerah Lake. The BMX track would have to be one of the best things we have done. Every day you go past you will also see someone using the track – and the kids just love it! I got on a bike myself at the recent launch and I can tell you it is fun.



Another thing kids love is the new bridge. We replaced the ageing timber bridge over the creek with a more robust structure that also requires less maintenance. The \$900,000 bridge is receiving rave reviews and the residents enjoy using the shared pathway around Tuggerah Lake. Users of our shared pathway can now safely ride, walk, jog or skate off-road from Chittaway to The Entrance.

And I am hoping our pathway network will soon extend to Blue Haven as during this mayoral term we have successfully completed the design and environmental approval for Stage 1 of the **Magenta Shared Pathway**. This is a vital missing link in our shared pathway network that will result in 32kms of linked pathways from Tuggerah Station to Blue Haven Community Centre.

We know how important it is to lead a healthy lifestyle and that's why we continue to deliver these projects that will encourage the community to get out and be active.

One of the projects I am particularly excited about is the **Tuggerah Regional Sports Complex**. Design for Stage 1 (sporting fields) is now complete and a submission for the \$10 million under Stage 2 of National Stronger Regions Fund was submitted at the end of July. This project is going to be great for not only our Shire, but the wider sporting community. The fields will be top notch and will be able to cater for a wide range of sports on a local, state and even national level.

Another major sporting drawcard for our Shire will be the **regional skate place** we are building at Bateau Bay. The \$2.25 million project is being designed by one of the world's best in the business – Convic. There is no stopping this project. We have already had two sets of workshops where more than 500 participants got to meet the designers from Convic and have some one on one time with them to share their ideas.

The skate place will cater for everyone from beginners to professionals and has the potential



to attract state and even national competitions. We are expecting to see the final design at the end of September 2015 and construction will start in November with the official opening planned for July 2016. Sport is a very popular past-time in our Shire – whether it's on a field or on wheels – and we are making sure our facilities are the best they can be for our community.

That's why it's a shame that vandals find some sort of pleasure in destroying facilities at our fields. Within the space of a couple of months vandals set alight the clubhouses at Ourimbah and Bateau Bay - this type of vandalism strikes at the very heart of our community.

Both Ourimbah Rugby Club and The Entrance Rugby League Clubs have not only lost their clubhouse, canteen and other amenities, they have also lost all their training equipment.

To attack the clubhouse of a local sporting club is the lowest of the low and we want to send a strong message that enough is enough and we won't put up with it. I want to see vandals behind bars so I have called on the community to get on board and report vandalism as soon as they see it and have doubled the reward offered to the public for reporting vandalism.

### **Road and drainage upgrades**

This financial year we have increased our spending on roads and other associated works to \$66 million.

Since September 2014 we have carried out a number of **major road and drainage upgrades** around the Shire.

Some of these projects include:

- Darri Road, Wyongah - road and drainage upgrade
- Imga Street, Gwandalan - final stage of road and drainage upgrade
- Vincent Close, Buff Point – new road construction
- Berkeley Road, Fountaindale – road upgrade
- Panorma Avenue, Charmhaven – road and drainage
- Palmdale 3 bridge – replacement of old timber bridge
- Wyong CBD drainage upgrade – Frank Ballance Park to Hope Street
- Ashton Avenue, The Entrance – road and drainage
- The Ridgeway, Tumby Umbi - road and retaining wall
- Bay Rd, The Entrance - Stage 1 road and drainage upgrade.
- Dicksons Road, Jiliby – 1km of new sealed road
- Ruttleys Rd, Mannering Park – road upgrade
- Kanangra Drive, Gwandalan - road upgrade and safety improvements
- Chittaway School - carpark upgrade
- Rotherham Street, Bateau Bay - traffic calming devices installed
- Johnson Road, Tuggerah - road upgrade

Work is continuing to on two major road and drainage upgrades along Hume Boulevard, Killarney Vale and Goorama Avenue, San Remo.

As well as the major road and drainage upgrades we also carried out a number of road resealing projects and built new paths. Shared pathways were built at Picnic Point, Lakes Beach and Lake Munmorah along the Pacific Highway and Tall Timbers Road.

### **Waterways and flood management**

Improving the health of our lakes and the amenity around them is one of the main focuses for Council.

I would like to thank the Federal Government for the \$3.3 million funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme to help improve the health of Tuggerah Lakes

At The Entrance, dredging is well underway and we have also upgraded the foreshore wall between Picnic Point and the bridge. This has helped reduce erosion, improve the quality of water and local amenity.

In this last 12 months, we have removed 7,459 cubic metres of wrack and lage from the Tuggerah Lakes estuary. A big part of the success of removing this wrack is the installation of **11 new Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs)** around the Shire. GPTs are designed to stop pollutants entering the lakes.

We know that whatever goes into the stormwater drain, creeks or rivers will eventually end up in our lakes, so it's vital to capture as much litter and organic matter as possible from entering our lakes in the first place.

The lakes are actually owned by the state government, but it continually falls to us to pick up this responsibility as we realise how important it is for our residents and tourism generally.

A gross pollutant trap may not seem too exciting but they are doing a great job keeping the lakes looking great.



You can now see new ones in action at:

- Liamera Avenue, San Remo
- Scenic Drive, Budgewoi
- Scenic Drive, Buff Point
- Imga Street, Gwandalan
- Gwandalan Community Garden
- Imga Street, Gwandalan
- Bald Street, Norah Head
- Yaralla Road, Toukley

We also have three others that will be finished at the end of the month at Erin Ave, Berkeley Vale; Crossingham Street and Canton Beach Parade, Canton Beach. We have also started a GPT cleaning contract so we can recover more pollutants before they enter the lakes.

We are just about to wrap up the **Wyong Lakes Flood Study**. This is an overland flood study for the urban catchments surrounding the northern catchments of the Tuggerah Lakes area including Lake Munmorah, Budgewoi Lake and the north-east and north-west sections of Tuggerah Lake.

We have also been successful in receiving grants from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage for:

- Wyong River Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan

- Ourimbah Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan
- Wallarah Creek Flood Study
- Tuggerah Lakes Southern Catchments Overland Flood Study
- Dredging study for Ourimbah Creek

### **Community Engagement**

Council values community engagement at a local level and the important role it plays in providing input for Council decision making.

In December we held a stall at the Christmas Expo at The Entrance. I made myself for a Meet the Mayor session and staff were on hand with information, giveaways and to answer questions. Around six hundred residents visited the stall and also enjoyed the free BBQ on offer. It was a great way to bring the Council directly to the community and the success of it will see us be present at similar community events in the future.

Due to the success of this Meet the Mayor opportunity we trialled a series sessions across the Shire this year. The purpose of the sessions was to make myself available to residents for a one on one chat on any issue they liked. They proved popular with residents – six were held at our local libraries and shopping centres and I got to speak directly with 50 residents.

In April 2014 we also introduced a trial of community ward forums. The purpose of these forums was to provide more structured engagement to residents on major projects, give residents the opportunity to engage directly with staff and Councillors. We held last round forums in May on the Strategic Plan and I must say the turn-out was disappointing considering the huge cost involved to stage these events. A recent review of forums will see us abandon this approach all together, and instead host community forum style events specific to major projects where residents will have more input at the planning stage. This is a no brainer considering the great results and turn out we had recently for the workshops on the regional skate park in Bateau Bay.

Surveying our residents directly on key projects and initiatives is proving to be an important engagement tool. We now have 1245 residents on our epanel - 1245 residents who are keen to hear from us and have a say on our major projects. Our online reach is certainly growing - over 8000 residents now like us on Facebook and regularly share and comment on our initiatives. That number has doubled in the past year and shows clearly this is a key way to communicate with a major section of our community.

### **Community Services**

It has been an incredibly busy twelve months in the area of Community Services with a strong focus on engaging the community on the value of Council projects and initiatives as well as building community capacity through strategic partnerships with individuals, businesses and service organisations.

One of the most significant events of the past 12 months has been the celebration of the Anzac Centenary. Council's Australia Day Ambassador and Citizen of the Year, LCDR Steven Reynolds joined MPs, Councillors and dignitaries at a series of events including Council's official Anzac Centenary Flag Raising Ceremony and Anzac Day services across the Shire. These events, including the dawn services, were extremely well attended and truly

brought home to me the strength and ongoing respect across the community for our servicemen and women.



A key focus for the past twelve months has been our youth through the successful Wyong Action Team (WAT). The WAT held a number of events to attract and engage with 14 to 17 year olds including the inaugural Yfest, Coast Cuts Film Festival, Speak Up Shire Slam and the Youth Forum conducted as part of Youth Week.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Council ran its inaugural Creative Ageing Arts and Crafts Expo attracting local residents to displays and stalls at The Entrance Community Centre. We also packed out the Civic Centre with 240 seniors for our free Seniors Week Concert. Our GOALL (Growing Older and Loving Life) Magazine reached 6000 residents across the year as a hard copy reference and many more through online viewings and access through Council libraries.

I turned the first sod on the \$12.7 million Art House Conference and Performing Arts Centre which is on track and on budget to be completed at the end of this year with first shows scheduled for early 2016. We are already receiving significant interest from across NSW and Australia for access to this state of the art centre and I look forward with much excitement to seeing the opening concert delivered to a packed house.



Alison Homestead has also risen from the ashes and has been restored to its former glory following a devastating arson attack in December 2011. This has been a painstaking process of sifting through what could be salvaged from the building and museum artefacts, calling for donations of items of historical significance from the community to rebuild the collection and ensuring the build is sympathetic to the original historic homestead. This rebuild has also included additional civic works to make Alison Homestead easier to access for the entire community.

I am very proud that both The Art House and Alison Homestead building projects have used local companies employing local tradespeople, architects and other specialists underpinning our number one priority of job creation in the Shire.

Wyong Grove, leased by Council in July 2014, has become home to a number of permanent users including The Wyong Drama Group and Wyong Musical Theatre and offers spaces for groups to master their artistic crafts. The Wyong Grove will continue to be an incubator for artistic and cultural groups, many of which will move into The Art House as their productions mature for delivery to a larger audience.

Wyong Grove was the venue for Council's Status of Women Advisory Committee inaugural Connect and Affect Wyong Women's Services event in the lead up to International Women's Day 2015. This significant event brought together a range of locally based service providers, women's groups, local authors and advocates to listen to guest speakers and engage in a World Café style workshop to identify opportunities to inspire and recognise women in Wyong.

Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC) activated events and networking for our community and should be applauded for the way they actively welcome all new immigrants to the Shire and seek opportunities to shine the spotlight on community and linguistically diverse

(CALD) community objectives.

Without the dedication of the MAC, the community wouldn't be able to enjoy celebrations like Harmony Day and the Italian Flag Raising Day, which is locally co-ordinated by the volunteers on the Committee. The Committee should also be acknowledged for the extensive work within the education sector, providing information and inspiration to our young people through targeted programs and culturally diverse student awards.

In a ground breaking initiative to support social entrepreneurs, community enterprises and aspiring local artists, Council partnered with Westfield Tuggerah in Activate Westfield. This project provided grassroots enterprises with the opportunity to trial their business in a retail environment on a thirty day rolling agreement, which offered extensive exposure to over 100,000 visitors a week. The trial continues with Westfield Tuggerah providing business mentoring for these fledging enterprises.

Council's annual Exposure Photographic Competition goes from strength to strength with almost double the amount of entries received this year. 145 finalists were chosen from the almost 700 entries for display in the exhibition at The Entrance Gallery. The competition aims to encourage participation, originality and excellence in the art of photography and to showcase the achievements of photographers – local, national and international. The captivating image titled *Grace*, taken by local Warnervale resident Hilda Bezuidenhout, took out first prize overall.

Wyang Alive launched in July this year as the key campaign to highlight and celebrate the Year of the Community. This has already achieved traction in the community through its use of local people telling local stories about our local community. A key activation tool of this campaign is Wyong Alive TV, where locals have the opportunity to showcase what they love about Wyong Shire through the power of video and share it with the world. This type of innovative community based initiative puts our Council on the map as a leader in the way local government engages with its community and I am very proud of it.

Finally, after more than twelve months of planning, Council announced a new annual festival, the Wyong Lakes Festival, which will be held from 7-15 November 2015. The festival, which we hope will become a signature event for the region, will celebrate the aquatic lifestyle, diverse culture, identity, history and natural environment of the Shire through a comprehensive program of lakes based events.

### **Community Safety**

Council continues to combat graffiti vandalism throughout the Shire and has recently released a revised Graffiti Management Strategy. This strategy found that 70% of key stakeholders feel that graffiti has decreased since 2010. Initiatives identified under the new strategy including murals, graffiti removal kits and the installation of CCTV cameras have been instrumental to the reduction of graffiti as well as anti-graffiti education in high schools and an increase in volunteer groups removing graffiti in their local areas.

Council continues to support community efforts to remove graffiti quickly via the provision of Graffiti Removal Kits giving away on average 200 each quarter. Council adopted the Community Safety Plan for Wyong Shire (CSP) in December 2014 and the plan was subsequently sent to the Department of Justice for endorsement as a Safer Community Compact. This is a great achievement for Council as this will enable us to apply for funding for Community Safety projects. We were advised in late August by the Department of Justice

that the CSP for Wyong has been reviewed by the Minister for Police and the Minister for Family and Community Services for their comment and is now with the Attorney General awaiting endorsement.

### **Lifelong Learning**

Last year we celebrated 75 years of public libraries and acknowledge they have become an important shared resource that connects the community and provides access to knowledge and technology.

The library's role in lifelong learning in our community is absolutely vital. By delivering active and flexible spaces to support education and learning opportunities for all ages and walks of life we're providing everyone a chance to succeed and improve our residents' quality of life, which we've achieved through a number of social, economic and cultural programs and events.

With job creation as our key priority we have introduced free online help service for job seekers, Lifelong Learning, which allows users to live chat with a job expert, upload their résumé for feedback, get interview tips as well as assistance with English, business writing and more.

I also recognise that improving job opportunities for our local youth starts by investing in their education. Alongside many information databases, libraries offer the online tutoring service, YourTutor. This free program for students in years 3-12 allows students of all abilities and circumstances to get help with their homework when they need it most, by instantly connecting to a qualified tutor. So far this year we have seen a 26% increase in usage and delivered more than 350 tutorials.

Our annual short story competition, which helps to foster reading and literacy levels in our community while providing a fantastic platform for our talented creative community to be recognised and discovered. This competition continues to grow, this year receiving 167 entries, a 27% increase on last year.

This year I've made myself more available to hear what residents want and the libraries are delivering - we're building upon the services to offer to provide what our community wants when they want it.

To meet increasing demand our eBranch collection members now have access to more than 15,000 eBook and eAudioBook titles and our eMagazine subscription has grown by over 100%. I love to read an eBook myself and am particularly pleased to see this interest is taking off in our community as well.

With a third of households without access to broadband we are working hard to ensure all our residents have access to technology and resources they need to thrive. Our libraries now offer a free in house miPad resource for children, to develop reading and language skills, with applications recommended by local speech pathologists to help young children with fine motor, language, cognitive and social skills. Android tablets have also become available to borrow for members to use in conjunction with free Wi-Fi to download items from the eBranch and read in the comfort of their own home.

We're working hard to find new ways to bring the libraries to you. I myself have been able to enjoy a coffee and book at Farm Gate Café thanks to the innovative Letterbox Library – this



free book exchange allows anyone to pick up a book to read or drop one in for others to enjoy. Due its success we are now working with the Men's Shed to build two more.



We're bringing inspiring and culturally significant events to the Shire including the 'A Camera on Gallipoli' exhibition and the renowned international exhibition 'Anne Frank – A History for Today', which attracted 5,898 people.

You must agree that we're doing a fantastic job. Libraries received very positive feedback in the independent customer satisfaction survey conducted earlier this year with 94 per cent of respondents either very (61%) or quite (33%) satisfied.

With an expected 70,000 additional residents by 2031 it's crucial we keep pace with increased service requirements while keeping an eye on fiscal responsibility. To ensure we continue to provide modern, relevant and sustainable services, we adopted the Library Strategic Plan 2015-2020, which builds on existing initiatives to deliver best value for our community.

In the near future you will have access to even more eBooks, the opportunity to learn languages online and will be bringing the library to you through our pop-up, which will be seen in shopping centres and transportation hubs around the Shire.

### **Fit for the Future**

Just after the Mayoral election last year, the State Government announced a \$1 billion reform package for Local Government. All Councils were then required to prepare a 'Fit for the Future' proposal by June this year. Originally the Minister for Local Government asked us to prepare a joint cost benefit analysis of a merger with Gosford City Council. Gosford refused

to take part and we were required to fund our own independent cost benefit analysis. The result of this analysis found we are certainly financially fit to stand alone as an independent Council and that formed the basis of our submission. Like every other Council in NSW we have had to spend a lot of time and resources on preparing reports and submission and our fate is now in the hands of the State Government.

Despite all this uncertainty I can assure residents we are still focussed on the main job at hand – delivering jobs and opportunities for our growing community and that will not change no matter what happens.

### **Award winning Council**

Our vision is to be recognised as a benchmark for the delivery of quality essential services, governance and creativity. We certainly do that with a number of our staff and projects winning awards for their performance. At the top of the list is the NSW Employer of the Year. This was not just a local government award - we were up against big corporates and came out on top. We continue to attract high quality staff who are committed to delivering for the community and that is certainly something to be proud of. Below is the full list of awards received in the past year.

- NSW Large Employer of the Year – Annual NSW Training Awards
- Best Play Space Award - Canton Beach Playground – Parks and Leisure National Awards
- Winner Road Safety Education Supporting Excellence – Rotary Youth Driver Awareness
- Silver Award – Australasian Reporting Awards – 2013-14 Annual Report
- Silver Award – QantasLink Hunter and Central Coast Tourism Award – Central Coast Holiday Parks
- Highly Commended – Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia – Wyong River Construction Project
- Highly Commended – Excellence in Communications – Council launch of eBooks
- Highly Commended – Australasian College of Road Safety Awards – road safety initiatives
- Highly Commended – Leadership in Community Services – Community Enterprise Project
- Finalist – NSW Awards of Excellence – Caravan and Camping Industry Association – Central Coast Holiday Parks.
- Finalist NSW Local Government Awards – Leadership in Community Services – The Voice of the Customer Program
- Finalist 2015 Local Government Awards – Leadership in Community Services – Open Space and Recreation Business Improvement Initiatives.

A number of our staff were also recognised for their outstanding contributions in their chosen fields and are a credit to Council.

- Winner of the Ministers Award for Women in Local Government - Sara Foster –

Council's Project Officer in Contracts and Project Management

- Winner of Central Coast Rising Star Third Year Apprentice Award – Thomas Walsh
- Winner Hunter TAFE Foundation Encouragement Award for apprentices – Luke Ryder
- Winners of the 2015 Wyong Tuggerah Rotary Pride of Workmanship Awards – Kirily Sheridan, Council's Environmental Manager and Projects Officer and John Hardwick, Council's concierge.

### Ministerial Meetings

A major part of my role is to meet with community groups, individuals and organisations to hear their concerns and attempt to address them. I also meet regularly with State and Federal MPs, bureaucrats and Ministers to ensure issues important to our community become important to higher levels of government as well. Below is a list of all my formal meetings.

	<b>Visits to Parliament &amp; Ministers Meeting (State &amp; Federal)</b>
30/10/14	Meeting – Chris Holstein The Member for Gosford
3/11/14	Round table Meeting – Mike Baird – Premier NSW, Rob Stokes- Minister for Central Coast, Chris Holstein MP
10/11/14	Visit State Parliament - Meeting Minister Toole – Fit for the Future
25/10/14	Brief meeting at function – The Hon Tony Abbott PM
3/11/14	Visit State Parliament – The Hon. Mike Baird Premier – Mayor and GM – discuss Rail Marshalling Yard (intercity Maintenance and Storage Facility)
10/11/14	Visit State Parliament - Meeting Minister Toole – Sydney – and Cl McKinna Fit for the Future
10/11/14	Visit State Parliament – Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joe Stella – Senior Advisor Min Berejiklian - (Office of the Minister for Transport)</li> <li>• Marco Diaz – Manager, Rail Fleet and Stabling Strategy (Transport for NSW)</li> <li>• Melanie Fyfe – Principal Manager, Active and Regional Transport Planning (Transport for NSW)</li> </ul>
10/11/14	Visit State Parliament – Meeting Minister Humphries -Water Management Act, Payment for the Crown Land
17/12/14	Transforming the Central Coast - WSC

17/12/14	Visit State Parliament – Meeting Minister Roberts – Local issues at Wyong
4/3/15	Forum – Transforming the Central Coast Wyong Ministers, MP's, business leaders and community leaders.
7/4/15	Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clr Lawrie McKinna, Mayor Gosford</li> <li>• Steve Orr, ACE OLG</li> <li>• Karen Legge RM re FFTF</li> <li>• OLG Sydney Office, Level 9, 6 O'Connell St, Sydney</li> </ul>
7/4/15	Meeting Scot MacDonald MLC – Parliamentary Secretary Hunter and Central Coast - WSC
23/4/15	Meeting Adam Crough – discuss local issues
7/5/15	Meeting Hunter Central Coast Recovery Reference Group - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brigadier Darren Naumann</li> <li>• Scot MacDonald MLC</li> </ul> Parliament House Sydney
1/6/15	Meeting Hon Scott Farlow - Mayor, Cr Webster
3/6/15	SMART CITY VISION - Integrated University and Education Business Park Masterplan EOI Launch 10-11am followed by networking morning tea – WSC EOI Event invitation only
3/6/15	Meeting Minister Roberts – Local issues, mines and power stations – Parliament House Sydney
15/6/15	Meeting Dept Infrastructure and Regional Development – Hon Jamie Briggs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ruth Wall and Brendan</li> <li>• Mayor and Mike Whittaker</li> </ul>
16/6/15	Meeting Dept Education & Training – Hon Chris Pyne - Mayor & GM – University: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary Lisa Paul</li> <li>• James Hart – Group Manager</li> <li>• Prue Richardson</li> </ul>
19/6/15	Meeting Minister Toole – Fit for the Future package – Parliament House Sydney - Mayor

19/6/15	Meeting Minister Stokes – Central Coast Joint Regional Planning and Gateway Panel
28/7/15	Meeting David Mehan MP – Member for Wyong

As you can see, the role of a Mayor is demanding but rewarding, involving a rich diversity of experiences and relationships.

In the past year, we have stepped up our efforts to advocate to the NSW and Commonwealth Government to promote the projects and decisions that benefit our Shire. We have been successful in seeking grants and resources and will continue our efforts in the future.

### What we achieved in 2014-15

We have certainly faced a number of challenges over the past twelve months but I believe we have really achieved in our overall goal of delivering exceptional services and infrastructure for our community.

- Over 7000 jobs in the development pipeline
- 60km of roads resurfaced and rebuilt
- Road pavements improved to 7.1
- 7500m<sup>3</sup> of wrack removed from our lakes system
- Delivered a budget surplus for third year in a row
- The Art House is on track for December completion
- Canton Beach has been restored to its former glory and Long Jetty is underway
- Norah Head boatramp underwent a significant upgrade and is open again
- Smart City University Campus underway
- \$200 million secured for Wyong Hospital upgrade
- Super storm clean up finalised
- ANZAC Day Centenary – thousands turned out for events across the Shire
- 76,000 people attended other major events including the 100 year celebration of The Long Jetty
- Introduced new events such as the Creative Ageing Expo, Neighbourhood Day celebration and Italian Flag Raising Ceremony
- Completed 7 collaborative public art projects
- Held 6 citizenship ceremonies for 208 new citizens
- Over \$400,000 grants given to help fund 83 community initiatives and \$80,000 in sponsorship for 8 key events.

**Conclusion**

I thank all the staff at Council for their hard work over the past year. We could not have achieved everything we have without their commitment to delivering the services our community need, expect, and value. And our community do value what we do. They told us so in a recent customer satisfaction survey. It is pleasing, as Mayor, to know we have got the balance right – we have delivered the big infrastructure projects and services our community need while being fiscally responsibility. Not an easy task but it is pleasing to know we have achieved what we set out to do.

I look forward to the year ahead. It will be a challenging one as we navigate the waters of Fit for the Future. However, I am confident we have the plans, policies and drive to continue to move our Shire forward. And we have found the right CEO steer us through. Rob Noble is a very experienced CEO, particularly in relation to amalgamations and stepping into acting roles and I am looking forward to working with him on the challenges ahead.

*I formally move:*

*That Council adopt the Mayoral report for the past 12 month term, 2014-2015.*

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

### **3.1 Election of Mayor and Voting Procedure**

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TRIM REFERENCE: F2004/06511 - D12052136

MANAGER: Sonia Witt, TL Governance and Councillor Services

AUTHOR: Jade Maskiewicz; Councillor Services Officer

#### **SUMMARY**

Nominations are invited for the Office of Mayor for the 2015 – 2016 term. The election of Mayor of Wyong Shire Council must be held in accordance with Schedule 7 – “Election of mayor by Councillors” of the Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005 and Council's Code of Meeting Practice. The Office of Mayor commences on the day the person is elected and becomes vacant when the person's successor is declared elected.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1 That Council hold an election for the Office of Mayor by all councillors in accordance with the provisions of Section 290(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993.**
- 2 That Council determine whether the vote is to proceed by preferential ballot, by ordinary ballot or by open voting.**
- 3 That Council note the election of Mayor will be for the 2015 – 2016 term.**

#### **BACKGROUND**

In accordance with Section 227(a) of the Local Government Act, 1993 the Mayor of Wyong Shire Council is elected by the Councillors from among their number.

Schedule 7 of the Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005, outlines the following procedures for the election of a Mayor.

#### **Returning Officer**

In accordance with the provisions of Schedule 7, the General Manager (or a person appointed by the General Manager) is the Returning Officer.

#### **Nomination**

A Councillor may be nominated without notice for election as Mayor. The nomination is to be made in writing by two or more Councillors (one of whom may be the nominee). The nomination is not valid unless the nominee has indicated consent to the nomination in writing.

### **3.1 Election of Mayor and Voting Procedure (contd)**

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The nomination is to be delivered or sent to the Returning Officer, who shall announce the names of the nominees at the Council meeting at which the election is to be held.

#### **Election**

If only one Councillor is nominated for the position of Mayor, that Councillor is elected. If more than one Councillor is nominated Council must determine if voting is to proceed by preferential ballot, by ordinary ballot (both secret ballots) or by Open Voting (voting by a show of hands or similar means). The elections of Mayor and Deputy Mayor are the only times Council can choose to vote by way of secret ballot. In all other matters open voting must be used. The election is to be held at the Council meeting at which the Council resolves on the method of voting.

#### **Ordinary Ballot**

- 1 If the election proceeds by ordinary ballot, the Returning Officer is to decide the manner in which votes are to be marked on the ballot-papers.
- 2
  - a If there are only two candidates, the candidate with the higher number of votes is elected.
  - b If there are only two candidates and they are tied, the one elected is to be chosen by lot.
- 3
  - a If there are three or more candidates, the one with the lowest number of votes is to be excluded.
  - b If three or more candidates then remain, a further vote is to be taken of those candidates and the one with the lowest number of votes from that further vote is to be excluded.
  - c If, after that, three or more candidates still remain, the procedure set out in subclause 3 (b) is to be repeated until only two candidates remain.
  - d A further vote is to be taken of the two remaining candidates.
  - e Clause 2 of the above then applies to the determination of the election as if the two remaining candidates had been the only candidates.
  - f If at any stage during a count under subclause 3 (a) or 3 (b), two or more candidates are tied on the lowest number of votes, the one excluded is to be chosen by lot.

#### **Open Voting**

Follows the same procedures as for ordinary ballot excepting it is by a show of hands or similar means.



### **3.1 Election of Mayor and Voting Procedure (contd)**

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#### **Preferential Ballot**

- 1 This Part applies if the election proceeds by preferential ballot.
- 2 The ballot papers are to contain the names of all the candidates. The Councillors are to mark their votes by placing the numbers "1", "2" and so on against the various names so as to indicate the order of their preference for all the candidates.

#### **Count**

- 1 If a candidate has an absolute majority of first preference votes, that candidate is elected.
- 2 If not, the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes is excluded and the votes on the unexhausted ballot-papers counted to him or her are transferred to the candidates with second preferences on those ballot-papers.
- 3 A candidate who then has an absolute majority of votes is elected, but, if no candidate then has an absolute majority of votes, the process of excluding the candidate who has the lowest number of votes and counting each of his or her unexhausted ballot-papers to the candidates remaining in the election next in order of the voter's preference is repeated until one candidate has received an absolute majority of votes. The latter is elected.
- 4 In this clause "absolute majority" in relation to votes means a number which is more than one-half of the number of formal unexhausted ballot-papers.

#### **Tied Candidates**

- 1 If, on any count of votes, there are two candidates in, or remaining in, the election and the numbers of votes cast for the two candidates are equal the candidate whose name is first chosen by lot is taken to have received an absolute majority of votes and is therefore taken to be elected.
- 2 If, on any count of votes, there are three or more candidates in, or remaining in, the election and the numbers of votes cast for two or more candidates are equal and those candidates are the ones with the lowest number of votes on the count of the votes the candidate whose name is first chosen by lot is taken to have the lowest number of votes and is therefore excluded.

#### **Ballot Papers**

Ballot papers will be issued at the election as required. The Returning Officer will decide the manner in which votes are to be marked on the ballot papers.

**Formality of Ballot Paper**

Under Schedule 7 to the Local Government (General) Regulations, 2005, the formality of a ballot paper will be determined in accordance with Clause 345, 1 (b) (c), 6 and 6A of that Regulation, as follows:

- 345 (1) *A ballot-paper of an elector at an election is informal if:*
- (b) it has not been initialled on the front by an election official, or*
  - (c) it contains a mark or writing that, in the returning officer's opinion, would enable the elector to be identified.*
- (6) *Despite subclause (1), a ballot-paper of an elector at an election is not informal by virtue of the existence of an unnecessary mark on the ballot-paper if, in the opinion of the returning officer, the elector's intention is clearly indicated on the ballot-paper.*
- (6A) *Despite subclause (1), a ballot-paper is not informal by reason only that the elector has placed one or more numbers, a tick or one or more crosses, adjacent to but outside a square or squares, if, in the opinion of the returning officer, the elector's intention is clearly indicated on the ballot-paper. In such a case, each such number, tick or cross is taken to have been placed within the relevant square.*

**General**

To choose a candidate by lot, the names of the candidates who have equal numbers of votes are written on similar slips of paper by the Returning Officer, the slips are folded by the Returning Officer so as to prevent the names being seen, the slips are mixed and one is drawn at random by the Returning Officer and the candidate whose name is on the drawn slip is chosen.

It is custom at Wyong Council that each nominee for the Office of Mayor may appoint one scrutineer who is not a Councillor.

Two Nomination Forms for the position of Mayor have been enclosed with the Business Paper.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Nomination forms for the position of Mayor Enclosure D12054597

### **3.2 Election of Deputy Mayor**

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TRIM REFERENCE: F2004/06511 - D12052141

MANAGER: Sonia Witt, TL Governance and Councillor Services

AUTHOR: Jade Maskiewicz; Councillor Services Officer

#### **SUMMARY**

Nominations are invited for the Office of Deputy Mayor for the 2015 – 2016 term. The election is held in accordance with Schedule 7 of the Local Government (General) Regulation, 2005 and Council's Code of Meeting Practice.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1 That Council determine whether to appoint the position of a Deputy Mayor.**
- 2 That Council conduct the election of Deputy Mayor in the same manner as the election of Mayor for the 2015 – 2016 term.**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Local Government Act states:

***“231 Deputy Mayor***

- (1) The Councillors may elect a person from among their number to be the deputy mayor.*
- (2) The person may be elected for the mayoral term or a shorter term.*
- (3) The Deputy Mayor may exercise any function of the mayor at the request of the mayor or if the mayor is prevented by illness, absence or otherwise from exercising the function or if there is a casual vacancy in the office of mayor.*
- (4) The Councillors may elect a person from among their number to act as deputy mayor if the deputy mayor is prevented by illness, absence or otherwise from exercising a function under this section, or if no deputy mayor has been elected.”*

The Code of Meeting Practice provides that the procedures will be the same as those which apply to the election of the Mayor.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Nomination forms for the position of Deputy Mayor Enclosure D12054606**