

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Regulation Reduction Incentive Fund

Council Staff have been successful in gaining \$109,829 subsidy from the Federal Government funded Regulation Reduction Incentive Fund (RRIF). Council's non monetary in-kind contribution towards the project will be \$64,350.

The RRIF Red Tape Blueprint project aims to foster growth potential and sustainability of small businesses by removing red tape and administrative impediments at the Local Government level. Council will use the funding to provide access via the internet to planning, building, construction, licence and permit information and with associated application forms able to be downloaded or completed online. Internal monitoring and tracking of development applications will also be a feature. All DAs or just business? This will involve all DA's.

The forms and information will be simplified into plain English and made available for access to small business and home based industry on Council's website 24hrs a day, seven days a week. Additionally, searchable plans and property information will also be available to customers online. Privacy aspects? Is it information that is normally available over the counter? Yes, information of a private nature will not be made available.

Council Staff was also successful in obtaining \$28,653 under the RRIF contingency budget for enhancements to the Electronic Data Management System. Council's non monetary in-kind contribution towards this part of the project will be \$39,680. This will further enhance Council's capacity to monitor each stage of development applications and associated correspondence. What will this mean and to whom?

Furthermore, I would thank the Australian Government and acknowledge the initiative of Council staff in again pursuing external funding for these important projects that will provide the "BizGateway and One Stop Shop" to provide regulatory information to businesses.

Major Road Funding Program.

The Federal Government has announced that it will allocate \$345 million towards extending the national Black Spot road upgrade program until 2014. A total of \$45 million will be distributed through the Black Spot program each year until 2009-2010, when the annual amount distributed will rise to \$60 million.

There was considerable uncertainty over the future of this excellent program, which was due to end next year, and extensive representation was made to the Hon. Bob Baldwin MP and Roads Minister, Jim Lloyd, requesting that the Black Spot program be extended beyond 2008.

We are delighted that the Commonwealth will not only extend the program for another six years, but increase the annual funding. Over the last 2 years, Dungog Shire Council has received \$1,393,000 in much needed funds for upgrades to numerous "black spots" associated with serious accidents on both local and regional roads.

Council Staff will continue to identify potential "Black Spot" areas and be vigilant in securing additional funds. On behalf of Council. I applaud the Federal Governments decision to extend this vital program.

Recreational Fishing Community Grants Program

The \$15 million Australian Government Recreational Fishing Community Grants Program has been operating for almost two years and proved very popular. Round 5 of the Program is now open and this may be the last opportunity to access this great opportunity.

Over \$5 million remains available for high merit projects that meet the guidelines. A broad range of recreational fishing projects are eligible, including boat ramps, jetties and fishing platforms, fish cleaning tables, improving angler safety, increasing participation, providing facilities and education and awareness initiatives.

Community organisations can apply for grants of up to \$100,000 until 25th May 2007. Council has been successful in obtaining funds under this program for infrastructure at Tocal and Clarence Town. For more information visit: www.daf.gov.au/recfishinggrants or email: fishinggrants@daff.gov.au.

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