

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Federal Funding.

The Federal Assistance Grant (FAG) represents a return of our fair share of taxation revenue to provide general services. Council uses this money towards the funding of general activities and in particular, local roads and bridges.

The announced allocation of the FAG for Dungog Shire in 2007/08 of \$1,749,523 (allocated as \$1,101,465 General Purpose Component and \$653,042 as Local Roads Component), is an increase of \$49,523 or 3.82% above that received in 2006/07. This extra money will be most useful, but it does not constitute an increase in real terms considering inflation over recent years.

For many years local government has been seeking a fair share of federal taxation revenue to provide local services, such as a fixed allocation of taxation revenue of at least one per cent. Local government is being left behind facing escalated costs and community expectations at a time when the national economy is growing.

Although extra funding has been provided under the Roads to Recovery Program until 2014, as reported previously in this newspaper, this is a funding resource upon which we have to rely in future years.

Council will continue to work closely with our local Member, The Hon. Bob Baldwin to ensure that the Roads to Recovery Program and Black Spot Funding initiative are long term funding programmes beyond 2014 and that the Federal Government considers a percentage return of GST back to Local Government.

Green Vouchers for Schools Programme.

The Australian Government will provide up to \$50,000 for every school to install solar hot water systems and a rainwater tank to improve energy and water efficiency.

This funding programme is available to all Australian primary and secondary schools, however, where a school has previously received funding for rainwater tanks under an Australian Government programme, such as Community Water Grants, this amount will be deducted from the \$50,000 grant. An example of what will be funded could be a rainwater tank above 10,000 litres and a solar hot water system, along with the associated infrastructure and fittings which can be purchased with the grant. For tanks the installation costs can include a pump and reticulation to toilets, gardens and ovals etc. The water is not to be used for drinking purposes.

The Federal Government have advised this programme will cost \$336 million over the next four years. All schools will be sent a voucher they can use to access the programme. Every school will be invited to [register their interest online](#) or by calling 1800 020 625.

Schools will need to develop a plan to determine the works that best suit them. During this planning process schools will also identify necessary licences and approvals.

Each school will receive a single grant payment. The payment will be based on a firm quote and delivery timelines obtained by each school to undertake their identified works.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Department of the Environment and Water Resources on 1800 020 625 or via email on greenvouchers@nrm.gov.au.

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