

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Department of Local Government Report.

The NSW Government has released its Local Government Report, which compares NSW Local Council's services for a 12 Month period. Local Government Minister, Paul Lynch said the report reveals a variety of Council services from annual rates to a Councils financial stability and how quickly development applications are determined.

The mean determination time for development applications throughout the Hunter is Lake Macquarie (82.93 days), Ports Stephens (79.85 days), Cessnock (66.25 days), Newcastle (56.29 days), Great Lakes (44 days), Maitland (39 days), Gloucester (38 days), Dungog (30 days), Upper Hunter (29 days), Muswellbrook (25 days) and Singleton (22 days).

The report also lists the average Residential rates for Hunter Councils as Newcastle (\$702.76), Lake Macquarie (\$694.97), Cessnock (\$688.96), Port Stephens (\$671.40), Great Lakes (\$668.96), Maitland (\$642.06), Muswellbrook (\$516.91), Gloucester (\$505.86), Dungog (\$483.14) and Upper Hunter (\$449.62) – Note Water & Sewer and other charges such as waste collection are not inclusive in these figures.

Another interesting comparison is the figures relating to Council full time equivalent employees and population. For the Hunter they are -: Newcastle (935 staff, 146,967 pop), Lake Macquarie (831 staff, 190,320 pop), Port Stephens (405.5 staff, 63,579 pop), Maitland (304.3 staff, 61,517 pop), Great Lakes (288 staff, 34,659 pop), Cessnock (279 staff, 48,502 pop), Singleton (190 staff, 22,270 pop), Muswellbrook (187 staff, 15,149 pop), Gloucester (86 staff, 4917 pop) and Dungog (68 staff, 8440 pop).

To view the full 245 page document please visit www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Women in Local Government.

Cr. Vicki Woods, Deputy Mayor of Maitland Council, has been appointed to a Government Working Party designed to encourage more females in considering contesting the Local Government elections in September this year. I have known Vicki for a number of years and I applaud her appointment to this Committee. She is a great Ambassador for Women in Local Government and is very passionate when representing the Maitland Community.

When one considers the leadership and advocacy roles that women such as Cr. Julie Lyford, the Mayor of Gloucester Shire and our own Councillors, Margaret Flannery and Lea Mitchell fulfil in our communities, I would sincerely urge any women in our Shire to consider any role in Local Government. Be it as an elected representative or an employment position.

Without appearing to be gender biased, I personally find a mix of male and female elected Councillors more capable of interpreting Community aspirations and needs.

If anyone requires further information regarding the September elections please contact either myself or Council Staff. If any women would like to discuss running for Council with any of the female Councillors I have mentioned, I would be more than happy to organise such.

6 February 2008