

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Review of NSW Councils Investments.

Most people would be aware of recent articles in the media reporting losses incurred by a number of Councils throughout NSW after being caught up in the collapse of the USA sub-prime mortgage market.

Many of the Councils that recorded losses and write-downs on the value of their investments were utilising an investment product known as a Collateralised Debt Obligation which was an approved investment product for Councils to invest in accordance with the Ministerial Investment Order as released by the Minister for Local Government.

The investments that suffered were listed with at least an A rating by the international credit rating agency Standard and Poor's, and some were AAA rated. They were thus compliant with the NSW Government guidelines. Fortunately, the reported losses only affected about 3.5% of the combined total of all NSW council investments. The NSW Government conducted an inquiry, which made numerous recommendations to address shortcomings.

Dungog Shire Council has not reported any capital losses in relation to our investment portfolio because it has been structured on a conservative basis dealing with recognised institutions without leveraging into complex financial structures.

The old adage "risk equals return" seems to ring true at present and whilst Council could have ventured into the more diversified capital markets, our Staff have remained steadfast investing in local money market institutions.

Country Energy Support.

Some weeks back I highlighted that eucalyptus trees under power lines at the Vacy Memorial Green needed to be removed to ensure the safety of the general public and provide Country Energy an unencumbered easement.

At times it is difficult to single out an organisation or group for praise, as we have numerous throughout the Shire that strongly support our communities, but on this occasion the efforts of Country Energy warrant special mention

They have removed the trees in question and offered support to the Vacy Sportsground Committee by providing replacements that will not conflict with the powerlines. Also, they have removed the stumps and chipped the old trees for garden mulch in the surrounding beds, and offered to install a watering system to promote rapid growth. This is a noteworthy example of a major utility company working with community to ensure the best possible outcomes from what was a precarious situation.

Country Energy has also given assistance to the Gresford Showground Trust by providing eight lighting towers / poles for the Arena Lighting Project. On behalf of Council and our communities I would extend our sincere gratitude to Country Energy, CEO Mr. Craig Murray, Regional General Manager Mr. Andrew Latta, and District Manager Mr. Steven Howell.

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