

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Council Rating Structure.

Residents will recall that last year Council wrote to all ratepayers advising of the need to increase our general rates income by \$500,000 to carry out essential maintenance of infrastructure, and roads in particular. In that regard, Council applied to increase our general rates by 6.55% above the rate-pegging limit of 3.4% as approved by the Minister for Local Government, which provided additional rate revenue of \$216,402.

This year the Minister has announced that the rate-pegging limit for 2008/2009 will be 3.2%, and Council has resolved to make another application for an increase in our general rates of 4.24% above the rate-pegging limit.

In late May Council will place our draft Management Plan 2008-2011 on exhibition to outline Councils budget and planned activities, as well detailing as the proposed rating structure for 2008-2009. At this time Council will write to all ratepayers of Dungog Shire Council, seeking comment on our proposal.

Planning LEP Amendment.

The latest word from the NSW Department of Planning is that they expect our Transition Zone amendment to the LEP 2006 to be finalized by the end of this year. Our consultant has completed the studies and preparing the Draft Amendment, which will be placed on public exhibition in due course.

Council is very pleased that new planning staff has been appointed. Mr Brent Mason has replaced Mr. Tom Gaff as the Senior Development Control Officer and we offer him a warm welcome. The new Manager Planning Mr. Matthew Brown will commence work on 19 May 2008. We are also grateful to Mrs Kristy Cousins for her commendable efforts as Acting Manager Planning in keeping things moving forward over the last few months.

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.

23 May 2008