

Council happenings . . .

with Mayor
Glenn Wall

Grant Funding Opportunities.

There are currently numerous Grant Funding opportunities available from both the NSW and Federal Governments.

The NSW Department of State and Regional Development has several funding opportunities to assist Business development and expansion and an infrastructure incentive program to attract new Business.

The programs include; Building the Country funding package, Regional Development Australia (EOI required); Regional skilled migration; Business relocation; Growing communities and Regional programs. These programs can be accessed at www.business.nsw.gov.au.

The NSW Office of Rural Affairs has opened the \$85 million "Building The Country" package which is designed to stimulate, strengthen and sustain country communities. The programs deliver community infrastructure, upgrades to facilities and support for business and tourism. The Country Hall Renewal Fund and Small Communities Awareness Fund applications are available at www.lands.nsw.gov.au

The Coles "Local Community Support Program" is also now open. This program offers small grant opportunities for Schools and kindergartens, Hospitals, Sports clubs, Guides and scouts groups, Community and church groups, Welfare groups, Fairs, events and shows, Aged care and Community emergency organisations eg RFS, SES etc. Visit www.coles.com.au for more information.

Hunter Water Charges.

Recently a number of people have raised the issue that they believe they are paying more for their water than they were previously, when Council operated as the Water & Sewer Authority. The figures below are what were presented to the Community during the consultation period to consider transferring the asset.

The three options considered by Council on the future direction of the Water & Sewerage Business were:

1. Retain the current Dungog Shire Water and Sewerage Business Model.
Current Costs per annum (Dungog Water \$341, Dungog Sewer \$401), (Clarence Town Water \$347, Proposed Sewer \$1,244), (Paterson, Martins Creek & Vacy Water \$560), (Gresford Water \$613)
2. Convert to a Shire wide Consolidated Water & Sewerage Business Model that will enable cross subsidisation within the whole community of Dungog Shire.
Estimated Costs per annum (Dungog Water \$465, Dungog Sewer \$588), (Clarence Town Water \$465, Proposed Sewer \$588), (Paterson, Martins Creek & Vacy Water \$465), (Gresford Water \$465)
3. Transfer the existing Water & Sewerage Business to the Hunter Water Corporation.
Estimated Costs per annum (Dungog Water \$364, Dungog Sewer \$403), (Clarence Town Water \$364, Proposed Sewer \$476), (Paterson, Martins Creek & Vacy Water \$364), (Gresford Water \$364)
Please note that the above figures were based on 2007 / 2008 prices with the Water figures calculated on a water usage of 200kl p.a.

I would ask residential water customers, particularly in Paterson, Gresford, Martins Creek and Vacy and to compare last years (08/09) rate notice and Councils water accounts against their Hunter Water Accounts. People need to be reminded that Hunter Water only sends three accounts per annum compared to Councils previous four, and that the Council's Water Access fee was a component of your general Rate Notice and was not reflected in your water accounts.

If after completing this comparison, residential customers in Paterson, Vacy, Gresford and Martins Creek still believe they are paying more for their water now, than they were with Council, I would urge them to contact me to attempt to resolve the matter.

1 April 2009