

# Council happenings . . .

with Mayor  
Glenn Wall

## Tillegra Dam EAR

As I advised a few weeks back, the Tillegra Dam Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) was imminent, and it has subsequently been released. The exhibition period for the EAR is from the 10 September 09 until the Friday 13 November 09. Submissions have to be lodged with NSW Planning by close of business the 13 November 09. The full legislative advertisement and all the details are available in last weeks Chronicle and on the NSW Planning website: [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au).

Since the Dam announcement, Council through various forums has continued to engage Hunter Water, the NSW Government, the Liberal / National Parties and various Members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly to ensure that the needs of our local Communities, their concerns and expectations were foremost in all discussions.

As the General Manager has commented recently and advised Councillors *"Council has great concerns as regards the lack of detail contained within the EAR documents that were reviewed particularly in relation to the local impacts from a socio-economic perspective and local infrastructure elements as regards transport movements etc. Staff have consistently raised the issue of assessing local impacts, they were required to be addressed through the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) as such were included in the Director General's requirements yet they have been effectively glossed over. Should this Dam be constructed it will result in a continuing financial burden being placed upon the Council, irrespective of the potential diversity of business opportunities and the like that may come there will be impacts on Councils infrastructure"*. This is of great concern and Council is attempting to resolve these issues with Hunter Water.

Also of great alarm is the lack of firm commitment from the NSW Government in relation to infrastructure upgrades to support the dam, if indeed it is approved and constructed. As implied above, the impacts need to be considered holistically by Government and when one considers that there may be three significant developments occurring within the Shire concurrently, being the Tillegra Dam (if approved), The AGL Gas Pipe Line (if approved) and the \$51 million upgrade to the Transgrid power distribution network, the impacts on the community and infrastructure are enormous and these matters seem to be disregarded. There is absolutely no assistance from other members of Government to address these matters. Dr. John Kaye MLC (Greens) and others have been briefed of our trepidations, yet the Socio – economic matters and impacts on infrastructure are of no concern to the Greens. Their mandate, whilst understandable, is to concentrate on the environmental aspects and justification of the dam. The Community impacts are not even on their "Radar". This is a similar response from others in key positions of Government.

For these reasons alone, all of us as a Community will have to carry the burden. We have to ensure that when forwarding submissions we do so addressing all the matters of consideration and I would request of everyone whether you believe the dam to be good, bad or indifferent, please be analytical, critical and methodical with your commentary.

Council will continue to lobby both the State Government and the Opposition to ensure that our communities are not disadvantaged if the Dam does proceed and my great desire is that a bipartisan approach is entered into by Parliament to address our needs.

To assist people in preparing submissions I advise that the NSW Department of Planning will conduct the public consultation process. The documents are available for perusal on the internet, and various local venues such as Dungog Council Chambers and Dungog Library. Hunter Water advises that they will provide electronic copies of the document on compact disk upon request and will carry out various information sessions during the exhibition period.

16 September 2009