Dr Archer to Head Dungog Tourism
The Dungog Tourism meeting held on Wednesday 30th March agreed to establish a Dungog Tourism Organisation and appointed Dr Cameron Archer, former Principal of Tocal College and President of Paterson Historical Society to chair a steering group to establish the new organisation.

The meeting was an outcome of the creation of the new three-year Dungog Visitor Economy Strategy which was recently adopted by Dungog Shire Council at their first meeting in 2016.

Councillor Nancy Knudsen, who chaired the working group for the development of the Strategy, which was co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, suggested that all businesses, whether selling sandwiches, plumbing or fuel, were part of the tourism industry, as all benefited from the bringing of more visitors to our destination as the southern Gateway to the Barringtons.

“The strategy is important to the destination regardless of whether the Shire becomes amalgamated in the current round of NSW amalgamations, or continues to stand alone. “We are a Destination, not just a Shire,” she said.

The evening was well attended by many of those in, or associated with the industry. Those present were invited to nominate by way of an email expression of interest to be part of this steering group. Cameron was asked to select a small group from nominations.

The strategy calls for a newly formed tourism association to drive tourism development by the implementation of the plan. The organisation is to consist of a simple skills-based Board structure, led by a Chair, with a tourism skills-based management team, led by a Tourism coordinator.

Council is to provide seed funding to assist with the set-up to ensure the successful launch. The organisation is to establish an annual reporting structure that is focused on a suitable business plan and KPI's. Once some of the uncertainties surrounding the amalgamation are over the Council is to provide seed funding so that the new organisation can employ a Dungog Tourist Coordinator for two days a week to drive the implementation of the plan.

A membership structure will include membership categories of individuals, non-profit organisations and profit organisations as members.

Feral Cats
In July 2014, Minister for the Environment, the Hon Greg Hunt MP appointed Australia's first Threatened Species Commissioner. Last year, Australia’s first Threatened Species Strategy was released which established targets for the recovery of threatened species. These targets include tackling feral cats and improving the future of 20 bird and 20 mammal species.

Feral cats are driving many of our threatened species to extinction, with each cat capable of killing 1400 native animals each year on average. We need to intensify our effort to control feral cats if we are to save the unique wildlife that defines us. What can we all do? First and foremost, if we have unwanted animals, it is irresponsible and cruel to take them somewhere and leave them to their devices. One of two things will happen. They will either die of starvation or they will become predators. Dogs will predate farm animals and cats our wildlife. There are humane ways of disposing of unwanted animals which is better for the unwanted animal and certainly better for our wildlife.

20 April 2016