

10 May, 2013

Border Mail - 'Corowa eyes big councils in merger'

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/1491817/corowa-eyes-big-councils-in-merger/>

10 January, 2014

Border Mail - 'VOTE 1 ALBURY: Corowa mayor says merger choice is clear'

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/2015315/vote-1-albury-corowa-mayor-says-merger-choice-is-clear/>

17 September, 2014

Border Mail - 'Small centres are a priority, says Corowa Shire'

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/2564268/small-centres-are-a-priority-says-corowa-shire/>

24 September, 2014

Corowa Free Press - 'Fit for future case'

<http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/corowa/fit-for-future-case-1.80676>

20 January, 2015

Border Mail - 'Mergers are a big ask, says Corowa mayor'

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/2827462/mergers-are-a-big-ask-says-corowa-mayor/>

4 March, 2015

Corowa Free Press - 'No to amalgamation - Corowa ratepayers'

<http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/corowa/no-to-amalgamation-corowa-ratepayers-1.89107>

21 April, 2015

Border Mail - 'Survey prefers 'power of one''

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/3024732/survey-prefers-power-of-one/>

29 April, 2015

Border Mail - 'We're ready to go alone: Mack'

<http://www.bordermail.com.au/story/3043716/were-ready-to-go-alone-mack/>

26 May, 2015

Yarrowonga Chronicle - 'Corowa budget Fit for Future'

<http://www.mmg.com.au/local-news/yarrowonga/corowa-budget-fit-for-future-1.93535>

YouTube video - posted 12 March 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-bGloJgm3g>

HAVE YOUR SAY...

Prior to completing the survey below, please read through the relevant background information within the Information Package.

Where possible, residents are encouraged to complete the survey online by visiting www.corowa.nsw.gov.au.

1. Please select one of the following;

- I live in Mulwala
- I live in Howlong
- I live in Corowa
- I live in a rural town / on a rural property
- I am a Corowa Shire ratepayer, but I live elsewhere

2. Are you familiar with the NSW Local Government Review and the Fit for the Future program? If no, please refer to the Information Package or Fit for the Future website www.fitforthefuture.nsw.gov.au

- Yes
- No

3. How important is your local Council to you?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

The Fit for the Future Program has recommended that Corowa Shire consider amalgamation opportunities and Council has been proactively discussing these options with neighbouring Councils. However, neighbouring Councils have made a formal decision to pursue options which **do not** include amalgamation with Corowa Shire.

As such, Corowa Shire Council has resolved to prepare a standalone proposal.

Despite this, Council would still like to understand the views of the community in relation to amalgamations so that these views can be presented to the NSW Government.

4. How supportive are you of Corowa Shire considering amalgamation opportunities?

- Completely supportive
- Supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Not very supportive
- Not at all supportive

5. Overall, do you feel that an amalgamation would present a potential opportunity or threat for your local community?

- Opportunity
- Threat
- Will remain the same
- Unsure

6. If amalgamations were to occur, would your preference be for Corowa Shire to become part of:

- A small local area (for example, Urana Shire and Corowa Shire)
- A large regional area (for example, Urana Shire, Berrigan Shire, Jerilderie Shire and Corowa Shire)
- A large regional centre (for example, Albury City taking in other small areas including Corowa Shire)
- Unsure

In order to continue as a standalone Council, with no changes to the existing Shire boundary, Council must be able to demonstrate that it has the scale and capacity to be Fit for the Future.

To achieve this, a range of measures will need to be considered including raising rates and charges and reviewing service levels.

7. Do you support Council preparing a proposal to standalone?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

The following questions will assist Council in understanding the views of the community in relation to service levels and rate increases. This feedback will be used to inform the proposal Council submits to the NSW Government about how it will become Fit for the Future.

8. Corowa Shire Council provides services to the community in a range of areas, listed below. Please rank these services in order of their importance to you, where 1 is the most important to you and 15 is the least important.

Please put a number in each box and only use each number once.

- Animal management (pounds, animal registration, dog off leash areas)
- Arts and culture (i.e. ArtSpace)
- Cemeteries
- Community and recreational facilities (i.e. swimming pools, sporting grounds, halls, public toilets)
- Community services (i.e. programs for youth, aged and children, library services)
- Economic development (i.e. business and tourism support, saleyards, aerodrome)
- Enforcement of local laws (i.e. parking, smoking in public places, swimming pool safety, food safety)
- Environmental management and sustainability (i.e. noxious weeds, Landcare)
- Land use planning policy and approvals (i.e. town planning, building approvals)
- Maintaining appearance of public spaces (i.e. streetscapes, parks)
- Road and community safety
- Roads, footpaths and drainage
- Support for local emergency management (i.e. Rural Fire Service, SES)
- Tourism (i.e. rail trails, foreshore improvements, events)
- Waste management (i.e. collection services, waste facilities)

9. Now think about how satisfied you are with Council’s performance in each of these areas? Please select one option only for each category.

Response Options	Completely Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Unsure
Animal management (i.e. pounds, animal registration, dog off leash areas)						
Arts and culture (i.e. ArtSpace)						
Cemeteries						
Community and recreational facilities (i.e. swimming pools, sporting grounds, halls, public toilets)						
Community services (i.e. programs for youth, aged and children, library services)						
Economic development (i.e. business and tourism support, saleyards, aerodrome)						
Enforcement of local laws (i.e. parking, smoking in public places, swimming pool safety, food safety)						
Environmental management and sustainability (i.e. noxious weeds, Landcare)						
Land use planning policy and approvals (i.e. town planning, building approvals)						
Maintaining appearance of public spaces (i.e. streetscapes, parks)						
Road and community safety						
Roads, footpaths and drainage						
Support for local emergency management (i.e. Rural Fire Service, SES)						
Tourism (i.e. rail trails, foreshore improvements, events)						
Waste management (i.e. collection services, waste facilities)						

10. Which statement below best describes your view?

- I support Option One
- I support Option Two

11. Would you be willing to pay more than option one for higher levels of service?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

12. What do you believe are effective ways for Council to communicate with residents?

Response Options	Very Effective	Effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Unsure
Corowa Shire Council website						
Corowa Shire Snippets in local papers						
Community Matters Newsletter						
Community noticeboards						
Word of mouth						
Facebook / Social media						
Community meetings						

13. Do you have suggestions for how Council can improve its communication and engagement? Please provide details below.

.....

.....

14. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?

.....

.....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We appreciate your input into the future of Corowa Shire.

Please provide your contact details below to go into the draw to **win one of four \$100 vouchers** at a local business of your choice.

Name:.....

Email:.....

Phone:.....

Competition terms and conditions:

- All online and hard copy entries will go into the draw.
- All survey questions must be completed for the entry to be eligible.
- Contact details must be provided, but will remain strictly confidential and will not be associated with survey responses. Corowa Shire Council does not subscribe to any third party provider for marketing. No personal details will be passed on to any third party for such purposes.
- The competition will be drawn at random on Thursday 2 April 2015 at 10:00am at the Corowa Shire Civic Centre, 100 Edward Street, Corowa.

Please either return your completed survey to a Corowa Shire Council office or Library, or forward to:

**Corowa Shire Council
PO Box 77, Corowa NSW 2646**

This survey will close on 30 March 2015



COROWA SHIRE

... working with you to build a better future



HAVE YOUR SAY!

Join the discussion about the NSW Government's **Fit for the Future** package and what this means for Corowa Shire.

Survey closes 30 March 2015

Visit www.corowa.nsw.gov.au



Corowa Shire

...the choice

SHIRE SNIPPETS – FIT FOR THE FUTURE ARTICLES

WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20152129047108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20152179078108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20152249237108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/2015339261108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20153129311108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20153199343108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20153269388108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/2015519525108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20155219582108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20155279604108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/2015639609108.asp>

WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2015

<http://corowa.nsw.gov.au/news/20156109616108.asp>

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WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2015	COROWA SHIRE FIT FOR THE FUTURE/ WHAT DID THE COMMUNITY SAY?
WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2015	FIT FOR THE FUTURE PROPOSAL
WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015	DRAFT 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL
WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2015	DRAFT 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL
WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2015	DRAFT 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

APRIL
2015

NO NAME

Staff Newsletter

Welcome to the first edition of the Corowa Shire Council staff newsletter!

This monthly publication will be a valuable tool in communicating information throughout the organisation. It will include things such as staff profiles, IT tips, competitions, project updates, frequently asked questions, important information on operational matters, training opportunities - and whatever else you want to see.

But first things first - we need your help to name the newsletter!

We'll be running a competition over the next few weeks to come up with the perfect name for the newsletter. The winning entry will receive a \$50 voucher to a local business of your choice. So put on your creative 'thinking caps' and email your ideas to communication@corowa.nsw.gov.au or deliver to the Corowa office. Entries close Wednesday 13 May 2015.

Each month we will be looking for staff to contribute to the newsletter by telling us about their projects, providing information to answer frequently asked questions, taking part in competitions and putting forward ideas for the next edition.

The staff newsletter will be made available on the third Wednesday of each month. It will be emailed to all staff, provided in hard copy to outdoor staff, uploaded to the intranet, available in lunch/tea rooms and posted on notice boards - so there's no excuse to miss an edition!

We look forward to keeping you up to date with all the latest news!

SUGGESTION BOX

'Suggestion boxes' will be set up at the depots and Council offices this week.

The idea of this initiative is to provide an opportunity for staff to offer suggestions, provide feedback and raise questions.

Some of the ways the suggestion boxes will be used include;

- The staff newsletter will include a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section and each month questions submitted via the suggestion box will be selected and answered.
- We will put forward a question each month in the newsletter and responses can be submitted via the suggestion box. This 'mini survey' will inform various initiatives and programs.

- If you have any suggestions or ideas (about anything really), you can put them in the suggestion box.

Entries will be anonymous and monitored by the Communications Team.

The suggestion box will close on the first Friday of the month.



CENTRE PIVOT IRRIGATOR FOR COROWA SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT EFFLUENT RE-USE

The Corowa Sewage Treatment Works processes an average of 450 megalitres of sewage per year, and produces a low strength effluent suited to be reused for agricultural irrigation. Until recently the reuse site has consisted of a mix of pastures and plantation trees that are irrigated by a flood irrigation system.

Recently the trees have seen the end of their useful life in terms of nutrient uptake, so in the interest of improved irrigation efficiency and long term sustainability, CSC have elected to harvest the trees, and move to the spray irrigation of crops and pastures as the primary enterprise on the site.

The primary crop for the new system will be

lucerne covering approximately 36Ha. The lucerne will be irrigated by a centre pivot irrigator 494m long. Due to the proximity of the airport, irrigation will be conducted in a half circle only.

Upton's Engineering won the contract for supply, installation and commissioning of the centre pivot. They have made great progress and it is expected that the pivot irrigator will be operational by mid autumn. Lucerne is a highly productive crop that remains in place for many seasons. Therefore, as the ground and soil re-establishes itself after the tree plantation removal, several cereal crops will be in planted and harvested before the first lucerne is planted.



Above: Picture of trees before removal. Flood Irrigation pipes in foreground.

Below: Ground cleared and ploughed



Above: Picture of trees being cleared.

Below: Centre Pivot up and operational



BRIEF THE TEAM!

Have you got news or photos you'd like to share with your colleagues?

Tell us about your wedding, baby news, travel, sporting achievements, charity work or any other exciting news. We would love to hear all about it and share in the newsletter!

Please email communication@corowa.nsw.gov.au with your stories and photos.

Kaedi Speer (Council's Communication Officer) and her partner, Alex at the NSW Young Achiever Awards in Sydney where Kaedi was a finalist. A fantastic achiever - well done Kaedi!



IT TIPS...

Each month, the Information Services Team will provide some useful IT tips. If you have any special requests, don't forget to include them in the suggestion box.

Here is this month's tips...

Do you think you have a secure Password?

Having a bad password is like putting a cheap padlock on your front door.

"Password" and "123456" are still among the worst passwords being used on the internet, exposing millions of users to being hacked or having their identities stolen.

Having a unique password is important to keep the bad guys out. The best passwords use a combination of letters, numbers and capitalisation and are often best based on phrases or sentences well known to the user.

Use a phrase or a sentence that means something to you so you can remember, but not your child's name. Also use a different password for each account you have.

You wouldn't leave your front door open, so why make it easy for people to get into your email, bank or Wi-Fi?

A top tip for creating a strong password involves

using an acronym of your favourite saying, interspersed with numbers and symbols, so it looks like gibberish.

An example could be "roses are red and violets are blue" and if your favourite number is 10, you could set your password as "10RaR&VaB10". This is both long and extremely difficult to guess, but very easy to remember.

Top 10 Worst Passwords

Rank	Password
1	123456
2	password
3	12345
4	12345678
5	qwerty
6	123456789
7	1234
8	baseball
9	dragon
10	football



NO NAME

Staff Newsletter

LONSDALE RESERVE WORKS

In 2012, Council worked with the Mulwala community to prepare a master plan for Lonsdale Reserve. Some of the priorities within this plan were to build a new netball court and address the drainage and road issues.

Last year, Council resolved to provide the committee with an interest free loan to complete the project. It was also agreed that Council could support the project further by doing some of the preliminary works such as tree removal and base earth works.

The works completed by the construction and

maintenance crews in Mulwala has helped to reduce the overall cost of the project. External contractors then finished off the project by pouring the concrete base, laying the synthetic surface, line marking and installing lights and a shelter.

The Mulwala crews have also completed the drainage and road works at Lonsdale Reserve - just in time for football and netball season!

Thanks to all the staff involved in this project - a great example of Council working in partnership with the local community.

STAFF INTRANET

We are very excited to launch the first version of our Staff Intranet! This is an internal website that staff can access to find a whole range of useful information, including;

1. Announcements (News) Page - for publicising information that is of interest to the whole organisation.
2. Knowledge Base - a set of pages on which staff can record information about their roles and answer common questions. These should be managed by the respective departments and will help develop understanding through the organisation.
3. Staff Calendar - a calendar for listing upcoming events that are relevant to all staff.
4. Document Repository - a linked Google Drive folder where important documents (policies, newsletters, etc) can be kept. At this stage this shouldn't be an area for working documents. We need to develop some rules and understanding for staff to correctly determine what documents are stored here.
5. Staff Forum - a Google Group that has been specifically set up for employees to use for asking questions of colleagues and promoting discussion.
6. Phone Directory - directory of important phone numbers.

7. Useful Links - a set of links that most employees will find useful.

We are now asking each department to consider what information they might like to include on the intranet about their area.

A link will be sent via email and staff can use this to create a shortcut on their computer. Then, accessing the Intranet will be as easy as clicking on the icon!

If you have any suggestions or ideas for how the Intranet could help us work together please let us know.

Enjoy!!

The Information Services Team



FIT FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE

What is 'Fit for the Future'?

Local Government has undergone a series of reviews which led the NSW Government to determine that most Councils in NSW are not financially sustainable.

'Fit for the Future' sets out plans for major reform of Local Government. The State Government strongly believes there is a need for the merging of many Councils in NSW and this is a major part of the 'Fit for the Future' program.

It was recommended by the State Government that Corowa Shire Council amalgamates with Urana Shire Council and form a Joint Organisation of Councils (Upper Murray).

While this Council has been very open to exploring amalgamation opportunities, we do not have any partners to an amalgamation and will be submitting a standalone 'Fit for the Future' proposal.

This requires Council to prepare a comprehensive improvement proposal to demonstrate how it is going to ensure long term sustainability. An important part of this process has been to seek feedback from the community. An extensive campaign was developed to inform the community about the 'Fit for the Future' program and engage with residents regarding the future of the Shire.

What did the community say?

Survey responses totalled 283 and 170 people attended the community meetings.

The key messages from the survey responses are as follows:

- 70% of respondents supported Council submitting a standalone option.
- 46% of respondents see amalgamation as a threat.
- If an amalgamation is to occur respondents favoured a small Rural Council e.g. Urana and Corowa Shire forming a new Council.
- 66% of survey respondents supported Option One..
- 33% of respondents indicated they preferred

Option 2 being lower rates and less service.

A full outcomes report is available for those staff who are interested in reading more.

What's next?

All Councils must submit a proposal to the NSW Government by June 30 and the community have indicated their support of a standalone submission. This process is now underway.

Councils must achieve a certain scale and capacity to demonstrate they are 'Fit for the Future'. A range of financial indicators will be used to assess the sustainability of Council into the future. These indicators include:

- Operating Performance ratio (greater than or equal to break even over a three year period).
- Own Source Revenue ratio (greater than 60% average over three years).
- Building and Asset Renewal Ratio (greater than 100% average over three years).

Council began addressing the own source revenue issue through an IPART approval to increase rates over a four year period. Respondents to the recent survey have supported two years of 11.5% rate increases to allow Council to meet the remaining criteria of operating performance and building and asset renewal.

A high percentage of survey respondents do not support ongoing rate increases although most ratepayers expect good levels of service. Council needs to continue improving its effectiveness and value for money but should strive to remain a low rating Council.

At the April Council Meeting, Council resolved;

1. That Council submit a standalone proposal based on Option One.
2. That Council continue to review all activities to continually improve the organisations effectiveness and efficiency.
3. That Council notes it will remain the lowest rating Council in the district even after the proposed rate increases.

NO NAME

Staff Newsletter

STAFF PROFILES - LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH!

Name

Nyree-Anne Terry

What is your job title?

Library and Customer Service Officer at the Howlong Resource Centre and Library

What does your role involve?

Threefold. Assisting with all council transactions and referrals, library customer assistance and daily running of the library at Howlong. Local area visitor information, genealogy and history assistance.

What's something your colleagues may not know about you?

I am a former national athlete and mountaineer.

How long have you worked at Council?

Since February 2008 after coming back to the region from Darwin, Northern Territory after 30 years.

What is your pet peeve?

Rudeness and being ill mannered to others.



What are some of your interests outside of work?

Australian Defence Force Cadet Scheme, Commander of local based area (Albury/Wodonga region including Corowa) Army Cadets.

My philosophy and practice with Army Cadets and staff at my unit is that they must contribute annually in some way positive to their community!

Do you have any words of wisdom to share with others?

Mature people in the work force are worth their weight in gold. Their work, life and people skills are enormous and intrinsic to the success of organisations like Council.



Name

David Coppolino

What is your job title?

Council Ranger

What does your role involve?

Compliance / animal care

What's something your colleagues may not know about you?

Greatest ever flower grower/ five premierships for the mighty Wahgunyah tigers.

How long have you worked at Council?

Since 2003.

What is your pet peeve?

Irresponsible pet owners, shopping trolleys.

What are some of your interests outside of work?

Kids sports, fishing, golf and a few cold beers around a fire.

Do you have any words of wisdom to share with others?

Every man's dream is to be able to sink into the arms of a woman without also falling into her hands.

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WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2015	DRAFT 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

ROAD SAFETY - MOBILITY SCOOTER WORKSHOP

Corowa Shire will be conducting a free Pedestrian Mobility Scooter forum on Thursday 16 April from 11am – 1pm at the Corowa Memorial Hall.

This workshop will provide a detailed overview into the world of motorised wheelchairs, commonly known as gophers or mobility scooters. Experts will be on hand to answer questions and discuss road rules, safe operation, insurance, maintenance and route planning.

This is also an opportunity for participants to see the range of products available and their various features. A free bus will transport attendees from Howlong and Mulwala and a light lunch will be provided.

To book your place at the forum, please contact Road Safety Officer Scott Landells on (02) 6033 8925 or scott.landells@corowa.nsw.gov.au

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Council extends its thanks to all those who have joined the Fit for the Future discussion.

This is an important time for Council and the community. Council appreciates the input received from residents who attended the information session, completed a survey, dropped in to the 'pop up' stand or spoke to a Council representative.

Council is now working towards the preparation of its proposal to the State Government. This proposal will be placed on public exhibition during June 2015 and will be available for residents to view on Council's website and in hardcopy at the Howlong Resource Centre & Library.

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME

Story time at the Howlong Library and Resource Centre is an opportunity for your children to have fun while learning skills in literacy, numeracy, sharing and listening.

Lay the foundations for a lifelong love of reading by exposing your child to a wide variety of books and making reading an everyday part of life.

When: Every second Friday at 10:30am

Who: Suitable for children aged between 0-6 years.

Cost: Free!

HOWLONG TOWN IMPROVEMENT FUND SURVEY

Council received more than 100 completed survey's which will provide valuable input to the future of the Howlong Town Improvement Fund.

This information will be considered by Council as part of its preparation of the 2015 - 2019 Delivery Program and Financial Plan.

The draft Corowa Shire Financial Plan will be placed on public display by the end of May this year. This will include any proposed expenditure of the Howlong Town Improvement Fund.

COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM

A meeting room is available at the Howlong Library & Resource Centre for community groups to hire. For further information regarding fees and room availability, please contact the Howlong Resource Centre & Library.

CURRENT CONSTRUCTION WORKS

An update is provided below of some works recently completed by Council or about to commence.

Shire Footpath Maintenance

Council will be commencing repair works on footpaths across the Shire, following the completion of an inspection program.

Works will be completed in order of priority.

St Brigids Lane

Realignment of the St Brigids Lane footpath has been completed to provide a safe distance between vehicles exiting the lane and pedestrians in Sturt Street. Railings will also be installed in the near future.

Victoria Street Cycle Way (Largely completed)

Works to construct the Victoria Street cycleway are now underway. This project is expected to be completed in late April.

Sturt Street and Kennedy Street Retention Basin

Works to construct a new retention basin at the corner of Sturt Street and Kennedy Street will commence in May. These works will improve Howlong's storm water drainage and storage.

Drivers and pedestrians are reminded to use caution and obey all roadwork and construction works signage.

For further information regarding the Howlong works, please contact Council on (02) 6033 8999.

DRAFT 2015/2016 OPERATIONAL PLAN, 2015 - 2019 DELIVERY PROGRAM AND FINANCIAL PLANS

Corowa Shire Council has endorsed the draft 2015/2016 Operational Plan, 2015 - 2019 Delivery Program and Financial Plans at its May Council Meeting.

The plans provide a detailed outline of how the Council will deliver and fund quality services and community priorities.

These documents are now on public exhibition and can be viewed on Council's website www.corowa.nsw.gov.au/csp or at any Council office.

Submissions are welcomed until Tuesday 16 June 2015 and should be addressed to the General Manager, PO Box 77, Corowa NSW 2646 or emailed to council@corowa.nsw.gov.au

DRAFT 'FIT FOR THE FUTURE' IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

Council has endorsed the draft Improvement Proposal, which has been prepared in response to the NSW Government's Fit for the Future program. This proposal outlines the measures Council will implement in order to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future criteria to continue as a standalone Council.

The Improvement Proposal has been informed by feedback provided by the community through an extensive consultation process.

The proposal is currently on public exhibition and can be viewed on Council's website www.corowa.nsw.gov.au/csp or at any Council office.

Submissions are welcomed until Tuesday 16 June 2015 and should be addressed to the General Manager, PO Box 77, Corowa NSW 2646 or emailed to council@corowa.nsw.gov.au

HOWLONG TOWN IMPROVEMENT FUND SURVEY

Earlier this year, Council sought feedback from the Howlong community regarding views of the Howlong Town Improvement Fund.

A total of 134 surveys were returned. 77% of the respondents supported the continuation of the Howlong Town Improvement Fund. 13% of respondents did not support its continuation and almost 10% were unsure.

Following this feedback, the draft 2015/16 Financial Plan includes the continuation of the Howlong Town Improvement Fund. This levy is expected to raise approximately \$250,000 which is being allocated to projects within Howlong.

Feedback from the survey has helped Council to prioritise the use of these funds which has included \$100,000 to support the extension of the Howlong Pre School.

A full list of the proposed Howlong Town Improvement Fund projects can be found on Council's website as part of the draft Financial Plan.

2015/16 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- \$100,000 to support the extension of the Howlong Pre School.
- \$35,000 to renew and consolidate equipment at Lions Park / Memorial Park, Howlong.
- \$20,000 new playground modules and fencing at Lowe Square.
- \$5,000 to support design of the Howlong Skate Park.
- \$80,000 for kerb and gutter in Read, Clark and Hume Street, Howlong.
- \$60,000 to seal south of Clark Street, Howlong.
- \$70,000 stormwater drainage in Howlong.
- Road renewal works across the Shire equating to \$1,300,000.
- Significant gravel road re-sheeting program of \$600,000. This is more than double Council's previous commitments.
- Annual Community Grants Program of \$30,000.
- Annual Tourism Grants Program of \$20,000.
- Almost \$900,000 towards Shire Presentation.
- Additional funding for Noxious Weeds with a further \$33,000 to help combat Khaki Weed.
- \$345,000 for tourism and events.
- \$438,000 for the delivery of library services.

'Fit for the Future'

Community Information Sessions

Corowa Shire Council will be holding information sessions to provide the community with an update on the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' program and what this means for Corowa Shire.

These sessions will be an opportunity for Council to present options to the community for residents to consider when helping to decide our future.

Background to 'Fit for the Future'

In 2011, the NSW State Government commenced a review of Local Government with a focus on its structure, finances and sustainability. This review will determine the way that Councils will deliver services in the future.

This process has been comprehensive and resulted in a number of Independent Panel Reports being released with recommendations about the future of each Council which include the formation of Joint Organisations of Councils and possible amalgamations.

Next steps...

All Councils in NSW are required to submit a proposal to the State Government by June 30 about their plans to become 'Fit for the Future'. For Corowa Shire, the options include amalgamation with adjoining Councils as recommended in the Office of Local Government final report or to continue as a standalone Council.

To continue as a standalone Council, we must make some difficult decisions in order to remain sustainable. This would include a review of current service levels, rates fees and charges. But we need to make these decisions together, as a community.

Residents will soon be receiving an information pack in the mail, outlining the options to be considered. These options will also be explained at the Community Information Sessions which residents are encouraged to attend.

A survey will be available from 2 March and will be used to inform the proposal Council submits to the State Government.

Residents are invited to attend one of the following sessions:

Corowa

Monday 2 March

@ 7:00pm

Civic Centre, 100
Edward St, Ball Park

Howlong

Tuesday 3 March

@ 7:00pm

Community Health
Centre, Hammer St

Mulwala

Wednesday 4 March

@ 7:00pm

Mulwala Civic Centre,
Melbourne St

Everyone welcome!



Corowa Shire

...the choice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Residents will have another opportunity to learn more about the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' program and what this means for Corowa Shire.

Council will have 'pop up' stands in Corowa, Howlong and Mulwala where residents can drop by to discuss the program and the options being considered for Corowa Shire.

Council representatives will be available to talk with residents following the delivery of the Fit for the Future information pack and survey last week.

Corowa Shire Mayor, Fred Longmire is encouraging people to get involved in the discussion about the future of the Shire.

'People may have some questions after reading through the information pack and we want to give residents the opportunity to have those questions answered.' he said.

'It's a chance to talk one on one with residents about our future, so we hope people will come along for a chat and a cuppa.' said the Mayor.

The 'pop up' stands can be found at the following locations;

Mulwala - outside the bakery, Monday 23 March from 3:30pm - 5:00pm

Howlong - outside the bakery, Wednesday 25 March from 2:30pm - 4:00pm

Corowa - Arcade (next to Sureway) Sanger Street, Friday 27 March from 3:30pm - 5:00pm

Council will also be facilitating additional information sessions on Tuesday 24 March in Rennie at 1:30pm at the Rennie Recreation Reserve and Daysdale at the Daysdale Hall, commencing at 4:00pm.

'We were really pleased with how many people attended our budget sessions in Rennie and Daysdale last year, so we are expecting some good discussion about this important issue too.' said the Mayor.

Residents are being reminded to complete the Fit for the Future survey which has been mailed to all households, by 30 March. The survey and information pack are also available online by visiting www.corowa.nsw.gov.au and clicking on the Fit for the Future banner.

Ends.

Contact: Kendall Reid, Corowa Shire Council, 0459 338 970 –
kendall.reid@corowa.nsw.gov.au

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 3PM, TUESDAY 19 MAY 2015

Corowa Shire Council has endorsed the draft 2015/2016 Operational Plan, 2015 - 2019 Delivery Program and Financial Plans at its May Council Meeting.

The plans provide a detailed outline of how the Council will deliver and fund quality services and community priorities.

Council has also been working towards the preparation of an improvement proposal for the NSW Government, to demonstrate its ability to remain a standalone Council.

The proposal outlines the key strategies Council will implement to meet the criteria set by the Government. The measures identified will also help to minimise the impact of a reduction in expected grants commission funding on Council's financial position.

An ongoing series of internal reviews and improvements have been set across most Council functions. Asset revaluations have been completed which has resulted in some changes to depreciation levels.

Council anticipates it will achieve five out of the set seven improvement measures through the implementation of the improvement proposal, however a key measure relating to the extent of Council's infrastructure backlog will not be met in the short or medium term.

Following recent consultation with the community, Council is proposing to increase the general rate by 7% next year and 11.5% for the following two financial years, before reducing the increase back to 7% in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

'The decision to increase general rates was supported by the community during the consultation process, with two thirds of survey respondents indicating they supported the proposed increases.' said Mayor, Fred Longmire.

'There is an understanding that Corowa Shire have extremely low rates and that increases are necessary to ensure community infrastructure is adequately maintained.' he said.

A strong focus has been placed on the renewal of infrastructure, with limited expansion and upgrade projects going forward.

Council has adopted an unprecedented capital works program, with \$12.8 million allocated to various projects and programs including the redevelopment of the Corowa Swimming Pool, foreshore improvements, new sheds for the Rural Fire Service, a major focus on buildings, road and footpath renewal and support for the Howlong Pre-School extension.

'These are projects that have been a priority for the community for some time, so we are pleased to include them in next year's budget.' the Mayor said.

The draft planning documents and improvement proposal are now on public exhibition and can be viewed on Council's website www.corowa.nsw.gov.au/csp or at any Council office.

Submissions are welcomed until Tuesday 16 June and should be addressed to the General Manager, PO Box 77, Corowa NSW 2646 or emailed to council@corowa.nsw.gov.au

Corowa Shire Council

Media Release



Ends.

Media contact: Kendall Reid, Corowa Shire Council, (02) 6033 8958 / 0459 338 970 – kendall.reid@corowa.nsw.gov.au

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corowa Shire Council will be holding community information sessions during the first week of March to update residents on the NSW Government's 'Fit for the Future' program.

The program was announced by the Government in September 2014 following a comprehensive review of Local Government. The review focused on the structure, finances and sustainability of the sector to determine the way that Councils would deliver services in the future.

A number of Independent Panel Reports were released throughout the review process, outlining recommendations for each Council such as the formation of Joint Organisations of Councils and possible amalgamations.

The final report made recommendations for Corowa Shire which included amalgamating with adjoining Councils and forming a Joint Organisation.

Corowa Shire Mayor, Fred Longmire said Council has been considering all options and proactively exploring these over the past few months.

'Council has had some very complex discussions with neighbouring Councils and we've also had some realistic conversations about our future as a standalone Council.' he said.

'Our neighbouring Councils have formalised their positions and will be exploring options that don't include an amalgamation with Corowa Shire, so we will need to work towards preparing a proposal to standalone.'

'This means making some difficult decisions about service levels, rates, fees and charges in order to demonstrate to the NSW Government that we are sustainable'.

'These are decisions we will make together as a community. We need to have some difficult conversations now, to ensure the best outcome for our community.' said the Mayor.

The community information sessions being facilitated by Council will provide the opportunity for residents to learn more about the 'Fit for the Future' program and what this means for Corowa Shire.

Residents will receive an information pack and survey in the mail and are being asked to complete the survey indicating their preferred option for the future of the Shire. The survey will also be available online by visiting Council's website and will close on March 30.

All NSW Councils are required to prepare a proposal for the NSW Government by June 30, detailing their plans to become 'Fit for the Future'.

'Our proposal needs to be informed by the community so we are urging community members to provide their feedback through the survey.' the Mayor said.

Information sessions will be held in Corowa on March 2, Howlong on March 3 and Mulwala on March 4, commencing at 7pm. For further information, please visit Council's website www.corowa.nsw.gov.au

Ends.

FOR RELEASE 3 MARCH 2015

Corowa Shire Council has been facilitating information sessions this week, to discuss its plans to become 'Fit for the Future'.

The sessions are part of an overall campaign to inform and engage with residents about the NSW State Government's 'Fit for the Future' program and what this means for Corowa Shire.

Corowa Shire Council General Manager, Chris Gillard and Mayor Fred Longmire told residents that having no partners to an amalgamation meant that Council was now focused on preparing a standalone proposal to submit to the State Government by 30 June.

'Council needs to prepare a proposal for the State Government which outlines strategies to improve its' financial position and demonstrate that it is sustainable.' Mr Gillard said.

'The organisation has made good progress towards financial sustainability but more needs to be achieved.'

'Council will continue to review its' operations to achieve cost savings and include this in a submission to the Government, but the reality is other options including rate increases are necessary.' he said.

The Council has tabled two options for the community to consider and is asking residents to complete a survey to provide Council with their feedback.

Whilst both options have included a proposed rate increase, Council is confident ratepayers will still enjoy comparably low rates when compared to most other Councils in NSW.

'We will go from an extremely low rating Council, to a low rating Council.' Mr Gillard said.

Option one, which proposes the higher increase of 7% in the first year and 11.5% in the following two years, will allow the Council to achieve a breakeven operational position within two years.

'The major difference between the two options is that one gives council a better chance of meeting key 'Fit for the Future' criteria set out by the State Government and being able to standalone.' he said.

Council has also reinforced its position in regards to community infrastructure, confirming that it is focused on asset maintenance and renewal rather than extensive new capital projects.

Corowa Shire Mayor, Fred Longmire said that Council has a responsibility to make sure the community's assets are properly maintained.

'We simply cannot afford to keep building and maintaining new assets in our current position.' said the Mayor.

An information pack and survey will be delivered to all households next week. Residents are being encouraged to complete the survey by 30 March, which is also available online by visiting www.corowa.nsw.gov.au.

Those who were unable to attend an information session can view an online video on Council's website to hear the discussion.

Ends.