



TENDER

Everything going well today, Wednesday, Walcha Council should award the package 1 of the Off Creek Storage. This package includes the construction of the embankment and spillway and is by far the largest package with another eight either being tendered now or soon to be. You may remember through negotiations by our General Manager, Barry Omundson, this project was set up under an Engineering, Procurement and Construction Management model to allow local contractors an opportunity to be involved in the construction. In doing this it also allows Council to have a far more hands-on approach. The land has been purchased and approvals have been sought, we are ready to go.

There has been a rigorous vetting process both through the pre tender and tender stage to give five companies the opportunity to be involved in this process. One company withdrew due to other commitments which allowed four to progress.

This step is obviously the culmination of years of lobbying, paperwork and begging (crawling) to get the funds but will, when finished and filled create a secure water supply for our community. While lack of water seems so far from our concerns at this time there will certainly be a time in the future when it will be front and centre again. Depending on many issues, some beyond our control, hopefully we will see completion and commissioning of this infrastructure within a year. Our infrastructure department are working hard with Hunter H2O to bring this project in on time and budget.

BUDGET ETC

After a very successful public engagement of Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) last Thursday saw the Council resolve to place this document plus DRAFT Delivery Program and 2022-2023 Operational Plan inclusive of the Draft Budget, Fees & Charges and Revenue Policy on public display for 28 days. While this is a legislative requirement it should be remembered that these documents belong to the community. The input received from public consultation has been included in the CSP and any input into the above documents will also be given due consideration.

These documents set out the community's vision for our LGA, how it will be funded and delivered. Like all visions, whether Council goes through our financial sustainability process there will be many more opportunities to engage in our way forward.

On behalf of Council I would like to thank all community members who engaged in the community consultation process, and especially those who provided feedback. This engagement is the foundation of good local government.

BLUE HOGAN BRIDGE

Anyone who has driven along Fitzroy Street in the last week would have seen preparations under way to erect safety railing on Blue Hogan Bridge between the walkways and the bridge decking. Having walked across this bridge it's surprising how close pedestrians are



to traffic and the risk this raises for safety. I don't know of another bridge on a State Highway that faces this issue. Work should be completed by the end of June and Transport for NSW need to be commended on finding the funding for this project. Mick Papadopoulos – Regional Community Partnering for TfNSW) deserves special mention for reviving a project that seemed doomed.

OXLEY HIGHWAY CLOSURE

I have to admit I was disappointed with the way the closure of the Oxley Highway between Nodingbul Road and Mt Seaview Road was communicated to effected communities. The first most of us knew about it was through a Facebook post. No consultation or notification was given and after the devastation to our businesses when it was closed due to fires and flooding I believe we deserved better. It appears this section of road will be closed at certain times over coming years and if you are travelling that way it would be a good idea to check Live Traffic. Any relevant information that Council can will be posted on our website. Sometimes the little people get lost in a sea of bureaucracy.

MOTORCYCLE RALLY

At its last meeting Council decided to seed fund, underwrite and manage the November Motorcycle Rally for another three years. An event raised from the ashes of the ill fated Freak Show of Motorcycles it has been plagued by every problem that could be thrown at it yet has managed to grow each year. Supported by an enthusiastic and experienced committee we are hoping that weather, viruses, plague, pestilence and bushfires give us a break this year.

Clr Eric Noakes
Mayor of Walcha