



## **SIX WEEKS**

It is amazing what decent rain and six weeks can do. It has always been said that after a long break country responds quickly. It is satisfying to see cattle lying under trees instead of chasing feed vehicles and thousands of acres of crop being sown to ease the winter feed shortage. Hornets have been scratched out of mower exhausts and the Aspley Falls is suffering from selfie overload. The economic recovery of a drought of this severity and length takes longer, and we can only hope that good times are ahead. It seems these days if we go two weeks without rain we start and feel concern. Buoyant stock prices for those with an excess, will aid in this recovery but it will take years to rebuild the stock numbers to pre-drought numbers. Small business of any nature can be a tough gig, but also can be very rewarding. Every time I walk around town I am grateful for the resilience of our businesses. They have been heavily impacted recently by drought and bushfires, but continue provide a friendly service that we sometimes take for granted.

With the Walcha Show just around the corner the emotion of the community will be better than last year. Good luck to Martin and Dale for a successful and enjoyable show.

## **ROADS**

Walcha Council is acutely aware of the condition of its gravel road network. Without seeming to make excuses the previous six months where there was virtually no water to grade roads to a sudden turn around where storms have washed and eroded large sections. To grade and form these roads under the current wet weather pattern presents its own issues. The Engineering Department has and is taking this chance to stockpile gravel to repair and restore these roads to a trafficable state. In saying this there is and will be sections of roads that become impassable which will still need reporting to council. Council has hired an extra grader plus engaged an external contractor to help keep up with the workload. If it makes anyone feel better the Hartford Road is as bad as any.

## **WATER**

Even though it has rained Council is keeping the pressure on to secure our long term water supply. You may recall last year we were granted \$1.5m to move along this path and there is a body of work being done in the area of emergency supply. We are in the process of engaging a consultancy company for the design of a storage and associated licences and controls. General Manager Anne Modderno and myself are travelling to Sydney today to meet with Water Minister Melinda Pavey and Local Member Kevin Anderson to push for further funding to construct our off creek storage.

## **PHONE CALLS YOU DON'T WANT**

The news that Director of Engineering at Walcha Council, Dylan Reeves, has chosen to move on leaves a hole in our workforce, but more importantly we lose a great person. The filling of the role can be achieved, but to combine that with someone who carries the respect of his workforce and any of the community that Dylan dealt with is a much harder task. Since his resignation many people from outside council have expressed their regret that such an approachable and accessible member was leaving. Dylan was known to



answer his phone at any time to resolve a problem. On behalf of Council we wish Dylan, Sammy and Ruby smooth sailing in the next phase of their life.

## **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

If one issue has been highlighted through the devastating bushfires that have impacted a large section of Australia is the poor quality of telecommunications that we have. We all know Australia is a large country with a small population and that certainly makes the economics of provision of this service more difficult, in 2020 we are not seeing any improvement. The rollout of mobile towers seems to be slow and the signal from the ones in place anecdotally appears to be in decline. No matter how much lobbying and pressure is applied there seems a total lack of support to improve the situation.

Clr Eric Noakes  
Mayor of Walcha