



WATER

Even though Council has been outwardly quiet on the issue of town water it has been far from that in real terms. A number of potential dam sites and options for extractions from the Macdonald River have been identified and preliminary geo technical work carried out by consultancy company GHD, who continue to liaise with Council to find a workable and cost effective solution. Due to stringent regulation of water use by Council and residents being cooperative in their consumption we remain in a good position to not have to increase level 4 restrictions. A step that is yet to come is sourcing government funding for this project. Under the current climate of water shortages in most towns and cities in rural NSW we are just one of many in this mix and must make sure every step we take is effective and brings the result we require. Even though there are many communities sourcing these funds we are confident that the connections and strategies we have developed will keep us in a good position. Even when we do build a dam we will need a decent flow in the river to fill it.

SHOWGROUND

The completion of the new Function Centre at the Showground is a credit to all involved. To be officially opened later this year it will offer an excellent venue for many years to come. The level of tradesman-ship exhibited here is a reflection of the ability and work ethic of our local 'tradies'. Funded by the Federal Government through the Council Drought Communities Grants it is one good thing to come out of this devastating drought. The opening will be a public event and will be a great opportunity to view this centre and thank those involved. This facility, as part of the Showground Trusts infrastructure will be available for hire. The rest of this grant went towards the smaller communities of Yarrowitch, Nowendoc, Ingleba and Woolbrook to improve their facilities.

DROUGHT

While on the subject of drought there is a constant desire by Governments to ease the pressure that it is inflicting on communities. This is a difficult case for them to meet the needs of so many businesses, both farming and retail in rural communities. The changing face of funding and its delivery is hard to keep on top of and to this end the Rural Financial Counselling Service is there to assist people who wish to access these opportunities. Debbie Maddox, our local counsellor, visits Walcha on a regular basis and will once again be at the WCCC on Friday, 19 July from 2pm to 4pm. Debby's easy manner and knowledge of what is available can cut through what may seem a difficult path. No appointments are necessary, just turn up with your paperwork, questions or desire for a cuppa and chat.

STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES FUND

The recent announcement by Kevin Anderson of the State Governments' allocation of \$763,000 in the SCCF for infrastructure development in Walcha complements grants received under this scheme for the last two years. Any group or club can apply for this funding, but there is obviously criteria that form part of the application. As it is basically a



community based grant one of the most important is that it is community focused and supported. Past projects funded under this have been the Preschool, Walcha Oval upgrade, Gym and Community Storage Shed. Applications are open now and close on 28 September.

FREAK SHOW FESTIVAL

With the Development Application for this festival passing through Council all is in place for it to progress. Coming to Walcha in November (15 to 17) it will offer a variety of motorcycle focused entertainment and with other events in the pipeline should be a great weekend. Projected to bring a massive crowd to Walcha and envisaged to be an annual event it has the potential to create many benefits for town. This combined with a push bike race from Port Macquarie to Walcha in October and the Rural Women's Gathering in early November it augers as a busy end to the year. All offer a boost to business in these dry times, an opportunity to provide accommodation and exposure of our area to a broad section of people both nationally and internationally. The Walcha Visitor Information Centre has details of these events. A public meeting is being held on July 30th at the Ex Services Club commencing at 6.00pm to update and inform businesses on the opportunities out there. Event organisers and Council representatives will be present to answer questions. There is a possible opportunity for owners of caravans to park them at John Oxley Oval and rent them out.

Clr Eric Noakes
Mayor of Walcha