



PROGRESS OF WATER STORAGE

The design of the new off creek water storage facility is now over 60% complete with preliminary design plans now showing the earthen dam wall as well as the intricacies of the new pumping system and associated pipe works.

- This preconstruction work is on track to have the design and all the tender documents completed by June 2021.
- The environmental approvals are also well underway with a number of State Government agencies assessing our proposal.
- Council intends to tender the construction of the storage facility as soon as the tender documents and the environmental approvals are completed with the expectation the project will commence later in 2021 and be completed in late 2022.
- The State Government has pledged \$9 Million towards the construction costs and have engaged Public Works Advisory (PWA) to oversee Council's management of the project. Council's first meeting with PWA occurred this week and was both constructive and encouraging.

This is becoming a great outcome after a grueling fund chasing process and when completed will secure our water security well into the future.

THE "OLD HOSPITAL"

After water, the most often raised issue is the fate of the Old Hospital and this remains a challenge for both our community and Hunter New England Health. Everyone in the system wants an outcome but there is a convoluted process to follow. Recently I have been in contact with HNEH, Crown Lands Department and Minister Kevin Anderson's Office who is pushing it up to Housing Minister Melinda Pavey's office and everyone seems to want to help out but Meanwhile the site continues to deteriorate, cost our local health budget, cause law and order issues and be a blight on our town. I feel that for all the pushing the situation is not improving, it's like the hot potato adage, no one appears to want to take hold of the problem. Eleven years is far too long.

STREET ART

The winning of the Silver Award for Walcha's Open Air Gallery after being named as a finalist in the 2020 Australian Street Art Awards is a credit to the instigators and especially the curators of this collection, along with the team at the Visitor Information Centre who saw the opportunity to enter this award. Coupled with the impressive advertising on Betts Transport trucks Walcha is certainly being showcased far and wide. With a COVID led focus on tourism and attracting people to visit country areas this should bring massive benefits to our local economy.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Following the great success of the Walcha Races a month ago under challenging conditions this weekend sees the return of the Walcha Show. One of the last shows to run last year the Committee has been hard at work to provide a packed program of entertainment and fun once again. Our local show is renowned on the circuit and with a



MAYORAL COLUMN:

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couple of fine days and the excellent season it will be well worth a visit and chance to catch up with friends. Good luck to Martin and his Committee.

Clr Eric Noakes
Mayor of Walcha