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Advertising crackdown Council intends to get tough on non-payers

THE public will now get a say on Council's landmark decision to actively restrict the placement of advertising materials at the Wentworth Visitor Information Centre.

And Cr Warren Ward, a former head of Wentworth Regional Tourism, is one Councillor who is pleased with Council's tougher stance.

"Too many people have been freeloading for too long," he said.

"It is unfair on those who pay their Wentworth Regional Tourism membership year in, year out and get nothing more for their money than those who do not pay.

"It's time things changed."

General Manager, Michael Boyd, told the June meeting that following the May monthly meeting when "consideration was given whether the Council had a policy of restricting the placement of promotional materials at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) for businesses within the Shire who were not financial members of Wentworth Tourism Inc" enquiries had been made to all Councils within New South Wales.

"Approximately 25% responded and the indications were that 40% of those have a restriction of the type of promotional material placed in the Council-funded VIC.

"It was acknowledged that at the end of the day, it is in the Council's interest to have these types of businesses involved and actively supporting Wentworth Tourism to ensure the success of tourism within the Shire and the Council should

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Mayor marks milestone birthday

Long-time Shire resident Norah Ward celebrated her 80th birthday last month with family and friends at the Coomealla Club's Harvest Room. Honouring a tradition founded by her son and former mayor, Cr Warren Ward, current Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, was on hand with a special certificate to mark the occasion. "Marking significant milestones for our residents is important," the Mayor said. "It was a good idea of Warren's and I am happy to honour the tradition and reinforce it as a way of the Shire recognising noteworthy community milestones and events."

Community safety group established

THE Shire has taken a lead role in the formation of the Community Safety Action Group (CSAG), its membership brought together to oversee the implementation of the initiatives contained within the Wentworth Shire Community Safety Compact formerly known as the Wentworth Shire Crime Prevention Plan.

Council resolved at its April meeting to establish a community-based committee to oversee the implementation of Community Safety Compact initiatives nominating Councillors Macri, Wakefield and Wheeldon as its representatives.

That decision was the catalyst for a meeting of interested parties on Thursday, June 1, attended by about a dozen people representing a number of interest groups including Council, NSW Police, Mallee Family Care, Dareton Neighbourhood Watch, Dareton Primary Health, the Dareton Coomealla Namatjira Community Action Team and the Dareton community.

From that meeting the core CSAG committee was formed with the initial membership being:

- Wentworth Shire Councillors Brian



Cr Jim
Macri

Wakefield and Jim Macri

- NSW Police Inspector Mark Rowney
- Mallee Family Care's Paul McCullagh
- Dareton Community Action Team's Chris Plumridge
- Dareton's Ron Kuhn (former Councillor and Shire President)
- A Dareton Primary Health representative
- And WSC's Grant Maynard

The membership of the committee is not 'set in concrete' however, and moves are already afoot to enlarge the group to make it more community representative.

The latest group meeting resolved to extend the membership base of the committee and to that end an invitation will be extended to the following organisations and individuals to either field a representative or attend meetings.

Those to receive the first round of invitations include:

- The Barkindji Elders Group
- A representative from the area's school community
- Leanne Taylor (Aboriginal Liaison Officer for schools)
- Two youth representatives (one male and one female to be determined)

It was also decided that the committee would keep a group of other organisations that had expressed an interest in the CSC informed on the progress of the committee and its intended actions under the Compact. This list included:

- Dareton Primary Health (DPH)
- Coomealla Health Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC)
- Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- Dareton Neighbourhood Watch
- Wentworth Neighbourhood Watch

Council is expecting to take the lead role initially as a member of the committee, but it has a vision for a 'whole-of-community' approach to a range of community safety issues whereby all groups will take an active role in chasing funding and implementing strategies for the advantage of all members of the community.

Tough new stance on brochure advertising

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also encourage these businesses to take responsibility, by working together, for their own financial future, rather than expect the Council, with its own decreasing available funding, to do it for them," Mr Boyd said.

"Council at that time resolved that, in principle, promotional material placed in the Visitor Information Centre, or any Council facility, be limited to that from financial members of a Tourism Association, not-for-profit organisations or a community event, subject to the discretion of the General Manager.

I have now prepared a policy for Council's consideration:

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE BROCHURE ADVERTISING

Council believes that all types of businesses impacted by tourism within the Wentworth Shire should be involved with and actively support Wentworth Tourism to ensure the success of tourism within the Shire and that the Council should also encourage these businesses to take

responsibility, by working together, for their own financial future.

In support of that view, the Council believes that any advertising or promotional material of any form that is placed in the Visitor Information Centre should preclude non-financial members of Wentworth Tourism.

In appreciation for the courtesy extended to financial members of Wentworth Tourism by adjoining and complementary tourism organisations to display their advertising material and in appreciation for the voluntary work undertaken by community organisations, the following exemptions are granted to this policy:

- *Regional tourism organisations, specifically only town or regional brochures, not individual businesses*
- *Financial members of a regional tourism organisation within the Shire or adjoining an adjoining tourism organisation*
- *Not-for-profit business or organisation if not a member, but within the Shire*

- *Must not be an offensive business*
- *Forthcoming community events allowed*

Pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, the General Manager is hereby delegated the legislative authority to determine any application which falls outside these guidelines.

"I now recommend that Council resolve that pursuant to the provisions of Section 160 of the Local Government Act 1993, we advertise the proposed policy for public consultation," Mr Boyd said.

Councillors agreed as one, with Cr Sue Nichols commenting that it wasn't before time and that she agreed in principle with Cr Ward's comments.

However, she was keen for Council to alert all interested parties so they had time to "get their house in order" and could not claim to have been unaware of Council's intentions.

Once the public consultation phase is completed, the policy will return to Council to be ratified and take effect.

GM agriculture policy adopted

COUNCIL has adopted an official policy opposing Genetically Modified Foods being tested or grown commercially within the municipality.

At the April 2006 meeting of Council, the Council considered the development and adoption by Council of a policy against the genetic modification of agricultural products within the Wentworth Shire.

General Manager, Michael Boyd, told Councillors at their latest meeting that perusal of the Council records indicated that this has been previously considered by the Council, mainly in relation to an application in 2003 by the Monsanto Group and a copy of that consideration was attached for Council's information.

"Council's view in 2003 was to oppose the application as it applied to the Shire and following consideration at the April meeting, members resolved to adopt a policy and to advertise the proposed policy for public consultation pursuant to Section 160 of the Local Government Act 1993.

"No comments have been received from the public about Council's proposal to adopt the policy:

"POLICY - GENETICALLY MODIFIED AGRICULTURE

Genetically modified crops (also referred to as genetically engineered crops or genetically modified organisms) are crop cultivars or varieties that have been modified by a process of artificially inserting specific genes from a source organism into the gene sequence of another, with the purpose of producing specific traits in the resulting crop.

Council is philosophically oppose to trials of genetically modified crops within the Wentworth Shire until such time as it can be comprehensively proven and endorsed by the Department of Agriculture that they do not have the potential for irreversible and unforeseen serious environmental and economic impacts."

Councillors voted as one to adopt the policy, pleasing Cr Jim Macri immensely.

Cr Macri has been an outspoken critic of genetically modified foods, telling his fellow Councillors that debate on the issue "has been going on since Don McKinnon was Mayor".

"I am pleased to see we have now adopted an official policy of opposition."

Council delays debate on new stormwater levy

COUNCILLORS have voted not to introduce a levy on ratepayers to help pay for the provision and maintenance of stormwater systems.

Councils across the State have recently been advised that a charge for the provision of stormwater management services has been allowed independently of the rate capping arrangements and that it could be adopted in the new financial year.

"The Local Government (General Amendment (Stormwater) Regulation 2006 has been amended to allow Councils to make a levy as an annual charge for stormwater management services only in respect of urban land that is categorised for rating purposes as residential or business and excluding vacant land," Council's Director Corporate and Community, Terri Maguire, told the latest monthly meeting.

"The maximum annual charge for land categorised as residential is set at \$25 per property, and land categorised as business set at \$25 plus an additional \$25 for each 350 square metres or part thereof.

"The charge for strata title units is set at a maximum of \$12.50."

"Income from the stormwater charge can be spent on both Capital projects and recurrent expenditure relating to new or additional stormwater management services."

Cr Sue Nichols was quick to oppose the introduction of the levy.

"We have just raised rates and water charges. I think another charge in the new financial year would be very unwelcome," she said.

Deputy Mayor, Cr Mark King agreed while Cr Peter Crisp said Council would be better served by an audit identifying water stormwater works that were needed at present and into the future to help justify a new levy on ratepayers.

"I think we would need to have some specific projects in mind if we were to go ahead with this," he said.

"Maybe then we could sell the benefits

as a way of justifying another impost on our ratepayers."

Councillors were told funds raised through the charge did not have to be spent within the year they were raised.

"It is recognised that these funds may be used to resource major programs spanning a number of years," Ms Maguire said.

The estimated revenue from implementation of the annual stormwater management services levy in the Shire would be an estimated \$50,000 annually.

While many NSW municipalities intend to implement the charge in 2006/2007, Wentworth Shire's Councillors voted to delay the consideration of an annual charge for stormwater management services for at least 12 months.

News from the Wentworth aerodrome

A credit card system for the sale of fuel at the Wentworth Aerodrome has been investigated, but Council is happy that the present system is working well and there are no plans to change at present.

Meanwhile, fuel sales at the Wentworth aerodrome continue to exceed expectations and some of the money raised through those sales will be pumped back into aerodrome infrastructure, the most immediate projects being sealing of the apron and the refuelling area.

And thirdly, an advertising campaign undertaken in a number of specialist aircraft enthusiast magazines asking for expressions of interest for the second stage of the Wentworth Aerodrome subdivision has failed to garner the necessary interest to proceed with the project at this time. Several information packages have been circulated, however, only two firm offers have been received.

Enviromission promises to build at Buronga

TWO members of the Enviromission management team addressed Council during its latest meeting, essentially updating the municipality on the progress of the exciting Solar Tower project.

Roger Davey and Kim Forte told Council the company had now applied to the Federal Government to help fund the project by way of a renewable energy grant and that Enviromission has made the final 30 projects to be considered for funding from the original 200-plus.

The pair stated, however, that should the Federal funding application not be successful, the project would still go ahead, albeit on a smaller scale.

The proposed tower in 2006 is a "much modified version" of the original but remains a world-first and will provide employment for about 400 people in the estimated 2.5-year construction stage.

Enviromission has assured Council it is "committed to the initial Solar Tower being constructed at Buronga" and is working towards that end.

Council also heard from the chairman of the P.S. Ruby Board of Management, Leon Wagner. Mr Wagner outlined the progress of the paddle steamer restoration effort and was pleased to announce the board can at last see a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

Mr Wagner spoke about the recent Heritage grant of \$48,000 which combined with other funds available, including a sizeable contribution by Council, should complete Ruby in time for her 100th birthday next year.

"Won't that be a cause for celebration?" Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, asked her fellow Councillors.

"Particularly for those people who have worked tirelessly on her for the past decade.

"It has been a mammoth effort and they deserve plenty of praise."

Council's third visitor was Nationals-endorsed candidate for Murray Darling at the coming State election, John Williams.

Broken Hill-based Mr Williams

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All set for sweatbox art competition 2006

THE entries are in, the hall is booked and the stage is set for another unique Sunbeam Foods Sweatbox Art & Furniture competition.

The exhibition opens this coming Saturday, July 1, at 10am with the official opening at 11am.

The venue is once again the Wentworth Town Hall and dried fruits industry patriarch Eddie Lloyd will be the guest speaker.

The number of entries this year is on a par with 2005, Wentworth Arts spokesperson, Cynthia Keenan, said, with record entries in the Primary Schools section.

"The Wentworth Shire's primary schools have really gotten on aboard this year," Mrs Keenan said.

"We haven't heard a lot about any of this year's entries, with many people playing their cards close to their chests.

"But judging by some of the titles for the work already entered, this year's competition is shaping up to be another unique arts experience," Mrs Keenan said.

Names like 'Punched tin pie safe' and the 'Rack Shaker' have ignited the imagination, she said.

This year's judging panel is West Darling Arts' James Giddey, Sunbeam Foods' Chris Ellis and Mildura Arts Centre's Julian Bowron.

Judging will take place on Friday (June 30) and the prize winners announced on Saturday morning as part of the official opening ceremony.

The judges are relishing the thought of assessing this year's entries, Mr Giddey said.

"We continue to be astonished by the quality of work and the imagination that has been brought to bear on the projects," he said.

Unlike other years there will be no market to complement this year's opening, however, there will be the now-traditional sausage sizzle with tea, coffee, cake and biscuits on the menu as well, catered by the Wentworth Pre-School fund raising committee.

"Coming along to the opening and having a cuppa or a sausage will be a



Wentworth's Richard Lambe was entry number one for this year's competition and is looking forward to the event opening.

great way to support our event and the very worthy Wentworth pre-school at the same time," Mrs Keenan said.

Another popular annual feature to return in 2006 is the "People's Choice" award where those attending the exhibition have the opportunity to judge the works for themselves and vote for their favourite work.

The votes will be tallied after the exhibition closes and the winner, to be announced post-competition, is the work compiling the most votes.

Entry to this year's exhibition is by gold coin donation and a handy catalogue is free.

The Sunbeam Foods Sweatbox Art & Furniture Competition exhibition will be open til 4pm on opening day, from 10am to 4pm on Sunday, July 2; noon to 4pm Monday, July 3, through to Friday, July 7; 10am to 4pm on Saturday, July 8, and 10am to 2pm on the final day, Sunday, July 9.



Council encourages nominations

WENTWORTH Shire Council is encouraging residents to consider recognising the efforts of individuals, organisations and business networks in their community through the NSW Regional Achievement & Community Awards.

Prime Television, Commonwealth Bank, NSW Department of State and Regional Development, Integral Energy, Kleenheat Gas, Department of Lands, The Land Newspaper, Rex Airlines and the Local Government Shires Association of NSW proudly sponsor the program.

Wentworth Shire Mayor, Cr Margaret Thomson, said the NSW Regional Achievement & Community Awards program is about "recognising, encouraging and rewarding valuable contributions and outstanding achievements in regional and rural areas".

"I am encouraging all those individuals, community organisations, businesses and groups involved in enhancing environmental, economic or social prosperity for the Wentworth Shire to nominate now and showcase our communities' achievements."

Nominations are now open in five categories:

- Business Enterprise Award
- Events and Tourism Award
- Regional Service Award
- Environment and Landcare Award
- Community of the Year Award

"This is another opportunity for our area to show what we are capable of and that we are worthy of recognition for our efforts," the Mayor said. Award criteria and nomination forms are available at all Sponsors branches and offices. You can phone the local awards office on 02 9899 7251 or visit the awards website at www.awardsaustralia.com Nominations close at 5pm on Friday, August 11.

270+ tractors to take to the roads in July

An amazing 270-plus tractors will take to the Shire's roads on Saturday, July 22, for the Great Wentworth Tractor Rally as part of the Wentworth Grande Resort Festival of the Flood 1956 – 2006.

And entries have definitely closed for the trek from Buronga to Wentworth, organising committee chairman and Wentworth Shire Councillor, Warren Ward, said.

"The response has been overwhelming and we are now forced to advise those who were intending to take part that entries have closed," he said. "The logistics of getting so many tractors from Buronga to Wentworth safely will be stretching our small organising committee and we welcome the generous offers of help we have had," Cr Ward said.

"However, those wishing to take part in the static display of tractors at the Wentworth Showgrounds complex on the Saturday are still welcome to do so.

"All we are asking is that display tractors be in place by 10am to aid organisation," Cr Ward said.

Rally staff will be on hand from 8am to guide enthusiasts to designated parking areas.

While the Rally entries have thrilled the organising committee and all is on track for a great weekend of entertainment under the Festival of the Flood banner, there has been one cloud cast over the planned activities, Cr Ward said.

"We have been in contact with the Guinness Book of Records people and they have advised us they are not interested in our record attempt," he said.

While the news has disappointed the organisers, the news is not all bad, Cr Ward said.

"We may not be able to establish a world record, but we certainly intend to break the Australian record of 154 Ferguson greys claimed by the organisers of the annual Grey Fergie Tractor Muster at Bendemeer, the self-proclaimed

Grey Fergie capital of Australia," Cr Ward said.

"Claiming to be the capital is a bit cheeky considering our long history with the Fergie that was immortalised with the erection of the world's first tractor monument here.

"But I hope breaking the record in Wentworth will be the start of a friendly rivalry between

our two towns, both of whom have a great and obvious affection for the grey Fergie."

Cr Ward said the Bendemeer muster attracted 144 grey Fergies this year and he was confident the upcoming Wentworth event had many more 'on the books'.

"We are compiling the database as I speak and I will be very surprised if we do not break the record by good margin," he said.

"We'll set the new benchmark," he said confidently, "And then it will be up to Bendemeer to better it."

As the organising committee puts the final touches to the weekend's organisation this week, Cr Ward advised that all registered entrants would soon receive a final information pack outlining the finalised program of events, the timing of different facets of the weekend's activities and other attractions and services that will be offered to make the weekend one to remember.



Real progress being made on Structure Plan

WORK on the eagerly anticipated Buronga Gol Gol Structure Plan continues with further progress being reported at the latest monthly meeting.

Council's Development and Environment Department reported that consultants Daris Olsauskas and Associates had been formerly engaged to assist Council prepare the Stage 2 planning phase of the Buronga Gol Gol Structure Plan.

"The inception meeting took place on Monday, 5th June," the report said, "Followed by a week of intense on-the-ground analysis and site investigations.

"Further, a human services workshop was facilitated on Wednesday 7th June, which allowed a range of local and regional service providers to discuss with Council the key issues for future development within the Buronga Gol Gol area.

"The meeting was well attended with 31 participants representing a wide range of service providers. A total of 61 different organisations were invited to attend.

"In summary, the stage 2 planning process includes the following key tasks:

- The development of the Buronga Gol Gol Social Plan
- The development of the Buronga

Gol Gol Transport Management Plan

- The development of the Buronga Gol Gol Environmental Management Plan

- Review of plans and preliminary facilities and cost schedules

- Development and design controls.

"Preliminary discussions with the consultants indicate that there is a range of tasks to be completed and much work to be done to ensure the integrity of the roll out of the structure plan.

"In order that the rezoning process is not delayed, Council will be better positioned to formally commence the preparation of a draft local environmental plan, to run in parallel with the strategic plans being undertaken to support future development within the Buronga Gol Gol area.

"This approach will also allow Council to expedite the implementation of the new LEP, and in advance of the original date established with the Department of Planning, which was between January and March 2007.

"The continued commitment to the strategic planning process will enrich the future of the Shire by providing a clear framework for development of the Shire and deliver outcomes that are sustainable and effective.

"NSW Planning have expressed confidence in Council to deliver the

new LEP within the prescribed time frame and within an appropriate strategic framework."

Councillors welcomed the news that planning for Buronga and Gol Gol, the fastest growing area of the Shire, was advancing in line with the time frames they were familiar with.

"It appears we are finally making some real head way," Mayor, Margaret Thomson, said.

The Mayor told Council her recent trip to visit State Ministers in Sydney had been a real success and that there was some admiration in Ministerial circles for the way the Shire was approaching its planning obligations.

"They like the way we are going about the business of preparing for the future of our municipality."

Enviromission promises Buronga tower

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said he had been visiting Councils throughout the electorate since the beginning of April with the objective being to investigate, and gain an understanding of, the issues facing municipalities in every corner of the huge Murray Darling electorate.

Mr Williams said he had found most Shires to be under-funded, with health and roads being the major issues.

"The reduction in funding to Murray Darling Shires has been nothing short of disgraceful," he told Councillors.

Mr Williams said that a lot of 'catching up' was needed between the Government and Shires, particularly regarding road funding and planning.

"Planning in NSW is a huge problem at the moment," he said.

"The Government's planning department is nothing more than the



Mr John Williams

rubber stamp of bureaucracy that is holding things up.

"Planning issues within Shires should be left to the Shires, with the Planning Department stepping in only in an auditing capacity."

Particular concerns raised by Wentworth Shire Councillors on behalf of their residents included the "long overdue" sealing of the Arumpo Road and the guarantee of water supplies for the Darling from the Menindee Lakes.

Shire contacts

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2648

Telephone: (03) 5027 5027

Facsimile: (03) 5027 5000

email: council@wentworth.nsw.gov.au

Libraries

Wentworth: (03) 5027 5060

Dareton: (03) 5027 4258

Buronga: (03) 5023 3078

**Shire after hours emergency
mobile: 0428 488 862**

**For matters concerning stray stock
telephone
5027 5050**

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