

CONSTRUCTION MATTERS

RURAL ROADS

Council is continuing to make significant efforts to restore roads throughout the coming year. Construction of the Redlands Road curve at the Buraja Road intersection and construction of Tocumwal Road, east of Savernake Road are expected to be completed by the end of March 2013.

Flood works, grading and culvert replacement have progressed well with dry conditions suited to earthworks. Over 100 road culverts have been replaced. This work will continue for another month and then be scaled back for the winter/spring period.

ROADS TO RECOVERY

Corowa - Survey and detail design for the installation of a roundabout at the Queen Street and Parliament Street intersection is nearing completion. Preliminary construction works and service relocations will commence as resources are available.

Mulwala - Detail design plans and quantities for the installation of a roundabout at the Melbourne Street, Inglis Street intersection have been submitted to Roads and Maritime Services for final approval. Work is expected to commence after Easter.

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

Council has applied to the Independent Regulatory and Pricing Tribunal (IPART) for a Section 508 (2) Special Rate Variation for the 2013/2014 financial year. A copy of the application is available from Council's website.

In June 2012, Council completed all the requirements under Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) which included a Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan as well as Resourcing Strategy consisting of a Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Strategies, Policies and a Workforce Management Plan. As part of Council's Long Term Financial Plan a five year general rate rise of 7% was proposed commencing 2013/2014. Following the September 2012 Council elections, Council is required to again review and adopt the IP&R by the end of June 2013. This review is currently underway. For further information visit www.corowa.nsw.gov.au/csp

In November 2012, IPART announced that the rate peg to apply in the 2013/2014 financial year will be 3.4%. This would raise Council an additional \$140,333 of general rate income. At the ordinary Council meeting held in December 2012, Council resolved to apply for a 3.6% special rate variation for one year. This will raise an additional \$148,588 of general rate income above the rate peg amount. For the average residential property this may mean an annual increase in Council general rates of \$22.86 (Corowa), \$25.58 (Howlong) and \$51.04 (Mulwala). The average farmland rate increase is estimated at \$143.35. The general rate applies to the unimproved land value as assessed by the Valuer General each three years.

Additional income is needed for financial sustainability and infrastructure renewal pressures. Council has ageing infrastructure with current renewal needs costing as much as \$44,000,000 with a key need for road renewal. Each year Council faces increasing cost pressures including an estimated 5% rise in insurance costs, 10% in energy/utility charges and increasing construction cost. Cost shifting from other levels of Government and award increases are among a number of other factors that have placed added pressure.

Corowa Shire Council has one of the lowest general rates in the State. This is shown in a report produced by The Division of Local Government titled "Comparative Information of New South Wales Local Government Councils 2010/2011." The report shows Corowa Shire Council to have the lowest average general rate per residential assessment in its group of like Councils. It shows Corowa Shire's rates to be \$400 less than the State average and \$200 less than the group average. The average rate per assessment for Corowa Shire farmland is \$400 less than the group average and less than the State average. For the average business rate per assessment, Corowa Shire is less than a quarter of the State average and one of the lowest in its group. If approval is obtained from IPART for the Special Variation, the forecasted general rate income for 2013/2014 would be \$4,132,382. The outcome of the application will be known mid June 2013.



Corowa Shire

...your choice

The draft Community Strategic Plan is currently on public exhibition following its endorsement at Council's February meeting.

The Community Strategic Plan was developed after extensive consultation with the community during the second half of last year.

The community is now being encouraged to read the plan and provide feedback to Council for consideration into the final plan.

The draft plan can be viewed at the following locations:

- Council's website

www.corowa.nsw.gov.au

- Corowa Shire Civic Centre

Corowa Shire 2022 and Beyond...

- Howlong Resource Centre
- Mulwala Civic Centre

As part of this process, Council is required to develop a four year delivery program and a more detailed one year operational plan. Both of these documents will be available for public comment in May.

Feedback should be addressed to the General Manager, PO Box 77, Corowa NSW 2646 or emailed to council@corowa.nsw.gov.au. Comments are welcomed until **Friday 6 April 2012**.

The following is a brief summary of the plan.

PRIORITY AREA 1: A DYNAMIC AND VIBRANT COMMUNITY

Outcome 1.1: An inclusive, considerate and welcoming community

- 1.1.1: A community that supports people of all abilities, backgrounds and cultures
- 1.1.2: A place of diverse opportunities and resources for young people
- 1.1.3: A community that embraces and provides for our older residents
- 1.1.4: A community that welcomes new residents and families
- 1.1.5: Strong and vibrant rural communities

Outcome 1.2: A community that supports and provides opportunities for our families

- 1.2.1: A supportive community for our families
- 1.2.2: Opportunities for our families to interact
- 1.2.3: A community that prioritises the protection and growth of our children

Outcome 1.3: Engaging events and celebrations

- 1.3.1: An exciting and diverse calendar of events

Outcome 1.4: A Shire of excellence for sport and recreation

- 1.4.1: Well planned recreation facilities
- 1.4.2: Diverse and sustainable recreation opportunities

Outcome 1.5: A creative community

- 1.5.1: Creative community spaces
- 1.5.2: Opportunities for all community members to participate in and enjoy the arts

Outcome 1.6: An empowered and active community

- 1.6.1: High levels of involvement across our community

PRIORITY AREA 2: EFFECTIVE AND ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

Outcome 2.1: Efficient and high quality service delivery

- 2.1.1: Services that are planned and delivered with consideration to the changing needs of our community
- 2.1.2: Coordinated service delivery
- 2.1.3: Improved understanding and utilisation of available services

Outcome 2.2: High quality education for people of all ages

- 2.2.1: Education that provides opportunities for our children and young people
- 2.2.2: Education options that support a diverse range of skills within our communities

Outcome 2.3: Health services that support a healthy community

- 2.3.1: A range of services that promote a healthy life
- 2.3.2: High quality health services
- 2.4: A community protected and prepared for emergencies
- 2.4.1: Services to protect our community
- 2.4.2: A community that is prepared to respond to crisis

Council thanks all those who have been involved in the development of this plan and looks forward to working with the community to implement some exciting initiatives.

PRIORITY AREA 3: QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Outcome 3.1: Flexible and sustainable community infrastructure

- 3.1.1: Buildings that are well utilised and maintained by our communities
- 3.1.2: Protection and utilisation of our historic buildings

Outcome 3.2: Infrastructure that supports our daily life

- 3.2.1: Responsible waste management practices
- 3.2.2: Well maintained assets for our future

Outcome 3.3: Infrastructure that supports our community identity

- 3.3.1: Exciting community spaces
- 3.3.2: Consistent and complimentary signage throughout our towns

Outcome 3.4: Infrastructure that facilitates growth within our shire

- 3.4.1: A range of housing
- 3.4.2: Infrastructure that supports our ability to grow

Outcome 3.5: A shire with safe and high quality travel options

- 3.5.1: A road network that is safe for our farmers, our community and our visitors
- 3.5.2: Infrastructure that facilitates and supports growth in our public transport options

PRIORITY AREA 4: A PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT ECONOMY

Outcome 4.1: A strong and resilient local economy

- 4.1.1: An economy that is well prepared for the future
- 4.1.2: A prepared and skilled business community
- 4.1.3: Maintaining and establishing viable and long term businesses within the shire
- 4.1.4: A profitable and resilient agriculture sector

Outcome 4.2: A thriving tourist sector

- 4.2.1: A positive visitor experience
- 4.2.2: Continued growth in the use of our natural assets to support our tourist industry

Outcome 4.3: A growing and sustainable business and industry community

- 4.3.1: Attract new industry and business to the shire
- 4.3.2: Strong partnerships that support the business community

Outcome 4.4: A skilled and qualified workforce

- 4.4.1: Improved access to education and training opportunities for our shire's residents
- 4.4.2: Partnerships that support our workforce

PRIORITY AREA 5: A PROTECTED AND VALUED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Outcome 5.1: A community that actively protects its natural environment

- 5.1.1: An environmentally aware community
- 5.1.2: Protection from the impact and spread of weeds and pests throughout our shire
- 5.1.3: Protection of our natural flora and fauna

Outcome 5.2: A Shire that leads in environmental sustainability

- 5.2.1: Innovative environmental practices
- 5.2.2: Environmentally responsible development
- 5.3: High standards in water conservation and protection
- 5.3.2: Protection of our river, lake and creeks

PRIORITY AREA 6: STRONG AND RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

Outcome 6.1: Government that plans for the needs of the current and future communities

- Objective 6.1.1: A community that has the opportunity to be engaged in decision making
- Objective 6.1.2: A strong involvement in state and federal planning for the region

Outcome 6.2: A community that is informed about and engaged in its future

- Objective 6.2.1: Timely and appropriate communication with the community
- Objective 6.2.2: Strong community representation

Outcome 6.3: Productive and beneficial relationships

- Objective 6.3.1: Engaged partners in achieving priorities
- Objective 6.3.2: Strong community based partnerships

Integrated Planning & Reporting

Delivery Program, Operational Plan & Financial Plan

2012/2013 Expenses Snapshot

Expense	Amount
Governance (i.e. Planning, election expenses, office & staff expenses)	\$678,786
Administration (i.e. bank charges, office expenses, website & electricity, asset management, wages)	\$3,153,143
Public Order & Safety	\$641,964
Health	\$167,637
Environmental (i.e. noxious weed control, environmental protection, waste management, street cleaning)	\$2,925,660
Community Services & Education	\$321,686
Housing & Community Amenities (i.e. town planning, cemeteries, street lighting)	\$718,304
Water Supply	\$3,288,014
Sewerage Service	\$3,454,208
Recreation & Culture (i.e. libraries, public halls, swimming pools, parks & gardens, sporting reserves)	\$2,510,357
Mining, Manufacture & Construction	\$297,889
Transport & Communication (i.e. roads, footpaths, aerodrome, signage & beautification)	\$5,531,299
Economic Affairs (i.e. area promotion, tourism, RMS agency, saleyards, caravan parks)	\$1,263,991
Howlong Town Improvement	\$18,000
General Purpose	\$184,000
Capital Works	\$11,379,750
Repayment of Loans	\$197,791
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$36,732,479

A change to the NSW Local Government Act has seen the introduction of a new planning and reporting framework which requires Council to develop a Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy to guide our operation over the next 10 years.

The Corowa Shire Community Strategic Plan and Resourcing Strategy replaces the former Management Plan and Social Plan and has been informed by extensive community engagement over the past 12 months. This process has now been completed and all documents were adopted by Council at a Special Council meeting on Tuesday 26 June, 2012.

These documents set the future direction of Council.

The Delivery Program is a four year plan between 2012/2013 – 2015/2016. The Operational Plan supports the Delivery Program by identifying the actions for the next 12 months. The Financial Plan directly relates to the actions set within the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Further information and copies of the above plans can be found at www.corowa.nsw.gov.au



*Please note, the figures provided include depreciation.

Integrated Planning & Reporting

Delivery Program, Operational Plan & Financial Plan

Operational Plan & Delivery Program Highlights...

- Over **\$6,000,000** capital works on roads and drainage throughout the Shire (2012/2013)
- An annual contribution to the implementation of the Corowa Riverfront Master Plan of **\$50,000**
- Corowa Saleyards redevelopment and expansion at **\$2,600,000** (2012/2013)
- A new Corowa Swimming Pool at **\$4,600,000** (2015/2016)
- A long term savings program needed for new multi-million dollar Sewerage Treatment Plants in Corowa and Howlong
- An annual contribution towards the implementation of the Howlong Lowe Square Recreation Master Plan of **\$58,300**
- Playground improvements valued at **\$150,000** (2015/2016)
- Annual Community Grants Program of **\$35,000**
- Annual Tourism Grants Program of **\$20,000**
- Ongoing tourism, community development and economic development resources and programs totalling over **\$650,000**
- Traffic safety improvements for Howlong Public School at Larmer St to the value of **\$180,000** (2013/2014)

A 3.6% rate increase has been adopted in accordance with the NSW Department of Local Government rate pegging limit. This increase is expected to generate an additional \$151,000 income.

A proposal has been made for a general rate rise of 7% for the 2013/2014 – 2015/2016 financial years (inclusive of the rate pegging limit). A 7% increase is estimated to generate an additional \$273,000 a year.

Some of the considerations given to the rate rise include increased energy costs, unpaid rates and charges, rising insurance costs and additional waste management expenses.

Pensioner Rebates

Pensioners are entitled to receive a rebate of up to \$425 on their rates if they have a pensioner concession card issued by the Commonwealth Government or Veterans Affairs. The concession can be claimed if it is the sole or principle place you live.

55% of this rebate is reimbursed to Council by the State Government. In total, Council contributes over **\$250,000** annually to providing pensioner concessions. For further information or to apply for a pensioner concession, please contact Council.

OUTSTANDING RATES

A total of **\$899,510** is currently owed in overdue rates and charges.

This is a significant community debt that limits Council's ability to deliver essential community services and invest in infrastructure.

Ratepayers having difficulty paying their rates should contact Council on (02) 6033 8970 to discuss a suitable payment plan.

9% interest is charged on overdue rates and charges.

CHANGE TO RATES BILLING FOR DOMESTIC WASTE SERVICES – HOWLONG PROPERTIES

Council have adopted a change to the billing for Domestic Waste in Howlong to bring the billing in line with Corowa and Mulwala.

Howlong ratepayers will now see two entries on their Rate Notice relating to Domestic Waste, the first of which is a Domestic Waste Management Charge of \$40.00 per annum. The second is a Domestic Waste Service Charge relating to the number of services provided at the property. The combined charge for properties with one service will be \$270.00 for 2012/2013.

Ratepayers who have a vacant block of land will now be charged the Domestic Waste Management Charge of \$40.00 per annum. This charge is now consistent with the billing for this service in Corowa and Mulwala.

Integrated Planning & Reporting

Delivery Program, Operational Plan & Financial Plan

In 2011/2012, Council undertook an extensive community engagement process as it worked to develop plans that would guide how it did business. These plans were based on what the community told us was important.

Following the new term of Council, Council is required to complete a review of its Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

As part of this review, it was important that we checked back in with the community to make sure its priorities were still being captured in our Council plans.

Community Surveys were distributed to all residents of Corowa Shire during March 2013 and almost 100 responses were received.

This consultation process has reinforced the things that are most important to the community. In reviewing the feedback, Council found that key priority areas generally remained the same.

The feedback provided by the community has continued to form the basis of Council's plans which have been updated following the review.

Delivery Program 2013–2017 and Operational Plan 2013/2014

The Delivery Program is a statement of commitment to the community from Council and outlines how Council will implement the Community Strategic Plan, 2023 and beyond.

It is the point where the community's strategic goals are translated into actions. The focus is centred on providing services and facilities that deliver the community's priorities.

Incorporated into the Delivery Program is Council's annual Operational Plan. This spells out the details of the Delivery Program – the individual projects and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the commitments made in the Delivery Program.

Council will need to continue to work closely with the community and other government bodies in order to implement priorities outlined in these plans.

Operational Plan & Delivery Program Highlights...

- Almost \$6,000,000 capital works on Roads, drainage and footpaths throughout the Shire (2013/2014)
- Corowa Saleyards redevelopment and expansion at \$2,733,000 (2013/2014)
- A long term savings program needed for new multi-million dollar Sewerage Treatment Plants in Corowa and Howlong
- An annual contribution towards the implementation of the Howlong Lowe Square Recreation Master Plan of \$58,300
- An annual contribution towards the implementation of the Lonsdale Reserve Master Plan of \$45,000
- An annual contribution to the implementation of the Corowa Riverfront Master Plan of \$50,000
- Playground improvements at \$150,000
- Establishment of a Howlong Library
- Approximately \$400,000 towards Sporting grounds and more than \$600,000 towards parks and gardens
- Annual Community Grants Program at \$30,000
- Annual Tourism Grants Program at \$20,000
- Ongoing tourism, community development and economic development resources and programs totalling over \$650,000

OUTSTANDING RATES AND CHARGES

Approximately \$780,000 is currently owed in rates and charges.

This is a significant community debt that limits Council's ability to deliver essential community services and invest in infrastructure.

Ratepayers having difficulty paying their rates should contact Council on (02) 6033 8970 to discuss a suitable payment plan.

Currently, 9% interest is charged on overdue rates and charges.

Integrated Planning & Reporting

Delivery Program, Operational Plan & Financial Plan

Financial Plan 2013/2014

The Operational Plan and Delivery Program include a four year Financial Plan, which was also presented at the May Council Meeting.

The Financial Plan directly relates to the actions set within the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

A key aspect of the Integrated Planning and Reporting process has involved the integration with Council's Asset Management Plans and the significant financial requirements attached to the maintenance of Council's existing infrastructure which includes over 15,000 community assets.

These assets are placing extreme demands on Council's resources, particularly because of the age of the infrastructure. Other limiting factors to Council's operations include:

- Ageing population and large pensioner base which requires Council to provide a significant rebate equating to an annual Council contribution of over \$200,000 per annum
- Unpaid rates and charges of \$780,000 (7.5% of the total)
- Increasing energy costs (annual increase assumed at 10% but a number of reviews are being undertaken to continue to reduce this cost)
- Award wage increases (3.25%)
- Rising insurance costs (annual increase limited to 2.5% as measures are being taken to limit this increase) and increased risk management expenses
- CPI (2.5%)
- Rising construction costs
- Escalating waste management expenses, with a projected loss of \$270,000 during the 2013/14 financial year
- Cost shifting from other levels of Government
- Increasing community expectations

Council has submitted an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Authority (IPART) to raise the general rate above the rate pegging limit to 7.0% commencing from the 2013/2014 financial year. The status of this application will not be known until mid June 2013 and therefore Council have adopted two versions of the Financial Plan for public display.

A rate rise in accordance with the rate pegging limit of 3.4% for the 2013/2014 financial year would raise an additional \$140,501. A further 3.6% rate rise above the rate pegging limit would raise an additional \$148,766, bringing the total additional income estimate to \$289,267.

If Council's application to IPART is not successful, the following expenditure and activities will need to be removed:

Description	Change
Community Grants	Reduced from \$30,000 to \$15,000
Street Cleaning	Reduced by \$10,000
Lowe Square Maintenance	Reduced by \$12,000 (of increased amount)
Parks and Gardens	Reduced by \$20,000
Corowa & Mulwala Pre School Fences	Removed (\$6,000 - \$0)
Public Art	Removed (\$4,000 - \$0)
Community Garden	Removed
Road Safety Officer	Removed (\$16,000 to \$0)
Trees	Reduced by \$20,000
Advertising – Regional Promotion	Removed (\$10,000 to \$0)
Events Support	Reduced further by \$5,000 to \$15,000.
Events Grant Program	Removed (\$20,000 to \$0)
Lonsdale Reserve Master Plan	Reduced by \$5,000 to \$40,000
Lowe Square Master Plan (HTI)	Reduced by \$10,000

The Draft Community Strategic Plan, 2023 and beyond, Draft Delivery Program 2013-2017 and Operational Plan 2013/2014 and Draft Financial Plan can all be viewed on Council's website or at Council's office in Corowa, Howlong or Mulwala. Feedback should be submitted by 5.00pm Tuesday 18 June 2013 in writing to: Corowa Shire Council, General Manager PO Box 77 Corowa NSW 2646 or email council@corowa.nsw.gov.au

2013/2014 Expenses Snapshot

Expense	Amount	Expense	Amount
Administration (i.e. bank charges, employment expenses, office expenses, website, energy, asset management)	\$3,664,955	Governance (i.e. Planning, election expenses, office & staff expenses)	\$628,499
Health	\$272,812	Public Order & Safety	\$625,393
Housing & Community Amenities (i.e. town planning, cemeteries, street lighting)	\$732,034	Environmental (i.e. noxious weed control, environmental protection, waste management, street cleaning)	\$3,409,173
Water Supply	\$3,290,926	Community Services & Education	\$306,174
Recreation & Culture (i.e. libraries, public halls, swimming pools, parks & gardens, sporting reserves)	\$2,715,269	Transport & Communication (i.e. roads, footpaths, aerodrome, signage & beautification)	\$5,502,203
Mining, Manufacture & Construction	\$221,374	Sewerage Service	\$3,543,359
Economic Affairs (i.e. area promotion, tourism, RMS agency, saleyards, caravan parks)	\$1,201,864	Capital Works (i.e. roads, cycleways, aerodrome, building works, swimming pool, saleyards)	\$11,915,586
General Purpose (pensioner concession rebates)	\$202,000	Repayment of Loans	\$209,364
		TOTAL EXPENSES	\$38,440,985

Please note the 2013/2014 Financial Plan is in draft form and is currently on public exhibition until 18 June, 2013. The figures above include depreciation.

Ageing Well Strategy 2013 - 2017

Council has recently completed its draft Ageing Well Strategy after receiving funding from the NSW Local Government and Shires Association.

The initiative was identified as an action in Council's Operational Plan and Delivery Program and will help to achieve the important objective of creating a community that embraces and provides for its older residents.

Funds have also been granted to implement action 1.1.6 of the Ageing Well Strategy which is to 'develop and distribute an age-friendly resource to assist stakeholders and the community to access information related to their specific needs'.

The Ageing Well Strategy will form part of the 2013-2017 Social Plan which is currently being prepared. Other strategies within the Social Plan relate to children & families, arts and cultural, youth, disability, rural and isolated communities.

Council is currently seeking feedback on the draft Ageing Well Strategy from targeted agencies and organisations. For further information, please contact Council's Community Development Officer on (02) 6033 8964.

