

Introduction to the 2008/09 Annual Management Plan by Mayor Cr Ian Tiley

On behalf of my fellow Councillors I present the Draft Annual Management Plan for the 2008/09 fiscal year. The Plan also includes the indicative Annual Management Plan for the two succeeding years, 2009/10 and 2010/11 as well as a ten year financial plan. The picture painted by the various management plans is one demanding of ongoing efforts to do more with less in the face of costs rising faster than the Consumer Price Index, and income remaining largely static.

The Draft Annual Management Plan for 2008/09 represents a year of ascertaining the needs and aspirations of the community and a vigorous process of attempting to meet those demands while resisting increasing revenue from general rates above the Minister's rate-pegging limit. Councillors and staff have participated in many workshops, between November 2007 and April 2008 in an effort to deliver a management plan that represents an equitable distribution of the somewhat scarce resources across the diverse valley communities.

The Plan is presented knowing that there will be some community aspirations that won't be met. I commit the Council to continuing to strive to meet those needs over the years ahead. As the Plan goes on exhibition with an invitation for citizens of the Valley to lodge submissions, I acknowledge the level of stress between the State Government and local government on issues including the proposed reforms to land use planning and development control, which is being driven by NSW Planning Minister Sartor. Whilst some aspects of the proposed reforms are welcome others are not, and the Council will be striving to convince this Minister of the best outcome for the citizens of the Valley. On another front the Inquiry into the sustainability of non metropolitan sewerage and water supply services, having been initiated by Minister Nathan Rees, is moving to a new phase in preparation of the conclusion of this Inquiry by November this year.

Ownership and operation of the Regional Water Supply, which is anticipated to be completed in the 2008/09 fiscal year, could be at stake. Similarly, the intention of the Council to invest heavily in the amplification of sewerage systems, including the provision of sewerage to areas where it has not been available, such as Iluka and Lawrence, could also be under threat. Council will continue to work to protect the investment and the interests of the citizens of the Valley in these important areas.

Relationships with the Federal Government, on the other hand, are dramatically improved, with the promised injection of substantial funds into projects that the citizens have identified as high priorities. Of particular interest will be the \$2m promised for the Yamba Indoor Sports and Recreation Centre and the major rejuvenation works in South Grafton.

On behalf of Council I commend this Draft Annual Management Plan to you and will welcome your comments.

Ian Tiley
Mayor
30th April 2008