

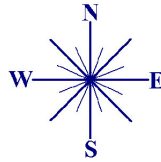
CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE COUNCIL

CONSTITUTED 1 MAY 1959
ABN: 65 061 502 439

E-MAIL: council@centraldarling.nsw.gov.au
WEBSITE: www.centraldarling.nsw.gov.au

PHONE: (08) 8083 8900
FAX: (08) 8091 5994

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL
CORRESPONDENCE TO:
THE GENERAL MANAGER
PO BOX 165
WILCANNIA NSW 2836



COUNCIL CHAMBERS
21 REID STREET
WILCANNIA NSW 2836

25 January 2019

To Whom It May Concern

Issues which Central Darling Shire is currently facing in the short term

- 1. Water Treatment Plants** - Quality of water that Council and Essential Water Treatment Plants are producing meets all Australian and World Health Standards, however consumers do not want to drink the water because of the taste and smell of the water. Consumers rather purchase or receive donated bottle water than drink water being from our town supply. Council is using contractors to cart water to rural and station properties in ridge trucks (10,000lts) and road-trains (45,000lts) throughout the Shire. With past and current temperatures and the carting of treated water to rural and station properties, our water treatment plants are struggling to produce enough water and currently operate 24 hours, 7 days a week. Our treatment plants are about 40 years old and are struggling to cope with the current demand for water; with the weather forecasted to continue to be hot and dry, there will be further demand from more rural and stations properties as their water sources are depleted.
- 2. Increasing demands for water** - Central Darling Shire has been carting treated water to rural properties around the Menindee area that were reliant on the Darling River, since November 2018, when the first outbreak of Blue-Green algae was reported. Late December 2018, water carting to Station Properties commenced, and to date we have carted 12 road trains of water to different properties in the northern parts of the Shire. We are now getting requests from Station Properties just beyond our Council boundary situated in the Unincorporated Areas for water deliveries. I believe this demand will increase in coming months in other areas throughout the Unincorporated Areas, where there will be a need for coordination by the State Government. Council has allocated \$400k from the Federal Government \$1m Drought Relief package to cart water, with the remaining allocation to be spent on the installation of bores to source water and grants for community social activities throughout the Shire. Council works on the allocation for the distribution of water of 140 litres per person for one day, this is according to Department of Health NSW and World Health Authorities. Local residents are finding the allocation of 140 litres/person/day difficult to manage with the current heat we are experiencing, the use of evaporative air-conditioning using more water due to the excessive heat, and age of the occupants being either elderly or young. Council receives regular requests from residents to have their water delivery allocations increased, refer to attachment. White Cliffs water supply comes from dams, which is filled during heavy rain events - this hasn't occurred for some time. Current White Cliffs water supply from these dams is 60 days, water will need to be carted in for domestic supply.
- 3. The general state of Wellbeing and Mental Health throughout the Shire** - During the past 9 months as General Manager of the Shire and particularly within the recent 2-3 months I have seen a progressive deterioration in community wellbeing and mental health, with issues starting to appear. Whilst there have not been any major incidents that have occurred, I get the feeling the state of wellbeing among residents has declined due to the lack of water, heat we have experienced in the past 2 months and recent fish kills that have occurred at Menindee. Added to this, other sections of the community dealing with different external pressure which contribute the abovementioned issues with out of the ordinary events / out of characters behaviours are now starting to appear:

- Lifeguards at community swimming pools - we have very limited number of lifeguards to operate our swimming pools, in some case pools are closed on extreme hot days due to the lack availability of lifeguards. Council would like to increase opening hours but doesn't have the resources to manage this.
- Constant request for improve drinking water - bottled water to be supplied through the Shire. Council doesn't have the resources to manage the distribution of bottled water.
- White Cliffs Dugout licencing - some residents of dugouts are refusing to sign new Licencing agreements with Crown Land, there is a community meeting with Crown Land in mid-February hopefully to resolve this issue.
- Menindee Mobile Phone Service - shuts down on extreme hot days, this occurred this week for 2 days.
- Applications and permit for drilling Bores take 3-4 months - Council need to drill an additional domestic water bore at Wilcannia, and other bores throughout the Shire to maintain its road network.
- Increase water allocation delivery of 140 litres/person/day, as mentioned above.

Below is a message from Council's Facebook account which was received today raising concerns of the quality of water being supplied.



I was wondering if the shire has tried to get state assistance to buy water for Wilcannia, Menindee, Tilpa and White Cliffs. We also need a better Water Filtration Plant Here in Menindee, The water in our taps is a discrase. May be the Shires Health Dept can advise Essential Water on how to obtain a suitable filtration

Recently there has been a number of announcements by the State Government for infrastructure spending in the Wilcannia area for a new Weir and the Baaka Project (formally Knoxs and Downs Culture Centre). Whilst this expenditure may be valued up to \$40m as combined projects, both projects having been in discussion with various governments for some time; Wilcannia Weir since 1980s and Baaka Project since the early 2000s. There is a general feeling throughout the Shire there hasn't been the investment in the past committed by either State and Federal Governments funding to improve public amenities and facilities.

If further information is required, please do not hesitate in contact me to discuss.

Regards

Greg Hill
GENERAL MANAGER

CENTRAL DARLING SHIRE COUNCIL

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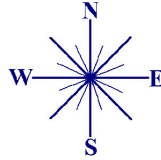
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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Menindee and Surrounding Areas

The Central Darling Shire Council has little or no jurisdiction over river matters in the Menindee area, however it has been working closely with its community in Menindee to manage the clean up after the fish kill events and to generate some ideas to bring the Menindee community and its surrounding districts back to some form of prosperity once this current emergency is over.

The following improvements have been generated by the community for when the Menindee Lakes System and the Lower Darling River are replenished with water to recover its economy and revitalise its community spirit.

1. Pooncarie Road- Bitumen Sealing the remaining 70kms of unsealed sections of Pooncarie within the Shire, at a total cost of \$25 million. Currently an application has been submitted to NSW Government's Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Stronger Communities Fund.
2. At Menindee, the establishment of a Native Fish Hatchery to restock as well as ensure the continuation of fish breeding in the Darling River and the Menindee Lakes system. This will provide employment opportunities for local residents including the indigenous community and ensure the continuing legacy of the native species within the environment.
3. A national media campaign to promote Menindee township, the Lakes and the lower Darling River system, that water has returned and these areas are thriving, to encourage tourists from other regions and capital cities. This will reinvigorate the tourism market and other small businesses which have been decimated by drought, previous river water management practices and the recent fish kills.
4. Funding for the employment of a full-time employee as Tourism Officer to be located at the Menindee Tourism Office. This position will liaise with visiting tourists, promote Menindee and The Far West and manage any media campaign for the region (reference to item 3).
5. Mobile Phone Coverage - rid the Menindee district of Mobile Phone Black spots. Allow mobile phone coverage for other mobile phone providers / carriers to provide a service to the area. Improvement to NBN service to increase internet speed and further distribution of the service.

ENDS

Media Contact: Greg Hill, General Manager – 08 8083 8900

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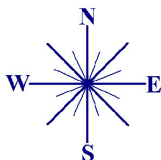
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21 REID STREET
WILCANNIA NSW 2836

1 February 2019

John Barilaro MP
213 Crawford Street
PO Box 998
Queanbeyan NSW 2620
Email: monaro@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Our reference: GF18/372

Dear John Barilaro MP

Thank you for meeting with Council and the Menindee Regional Tourism Association.

Following our fruitful discussion and as discussed on behalf of the Menindee Regional Tourism Association I submit the following submission:

1. \$15,000 for Dancing on the Darling at Menindee, a countryfolk music/festival to be held 25-26 May 2019, Menindee Regional Tourism Association requests another \$15,000 for the support of festival for the mental health and wellbeing of the Menindee township and surrounds area following the latest fish kill and drought conditions. This money would match the money provide by the Central Darling Shire Council and would be spent on the following:
 - Security
 - Insurance
 - Advertising/promotional merchandise
 - Stage/sound
2. \$11,000 to assist final payment on the outstanding money owing on the Menindee Regional Tourism Information Centre.
3. \$15,000 to assist in the upgrade of the Menindee Regional Tourism Information Centre for the shop fit out and painting.
4. Relocating a Park Ranger from Kincheega National Park to Menindee Regional Tourism Information Centre to man the office during business hours and assist our Tourism Volunteers to ensure the facility is open full business hours.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hill'.

Greg Hill
General Manager

CC: James Jooste, Greg Wright, Bob Stewart, Graeme McCrabb, Rob Gregory

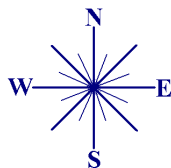
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COUNCIL CHAMBERS
21 REID STREET
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25 January 2019

Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'ICE'
C/-GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

Email: tracey.howe@cso.nsw.gov.au

Our reference: GF18/446

Dear Professor Dan Howard SC,

Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'ICE' – limited preliminary consultation under the terms of reference -invitation to respond

Thank you for the invitation to respond to the "Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug 'ICE'".

Central Darling Shire is in the Far West of New South Wales (NSW) and is the largest Shire/Council in the state, comprising of 50,000 square kilometres (the size of Tasmania). The Shire has four major towns and a population less than 2,000 people. Our local industry is mainly pastoral grazing of sheep and cattle, and government agencies to service the Shire's population. The population is mixed 50/50 with aboriginal and other European Nationalities, with the township of Wilcannia population being 60/40, Aboriginal and European Nationalities.

The unemployment rate in the Shire is high and the township of Wilcannia has been considered as having the highest unemployment rate in NSW. There are drug and alcohol problems in Wilcannia, this is reflected in the large number of domestic violence incidents reported to the police regularly. There is overcrowding of people in dedicated aboriginal housing which can be linked to drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. In this instance, children are exposed to drug and alcohol environments; which encourages them to engage in the same activities as the people they are living with. There are numerous

abandoned and dilapidated buildings/dwellings which are a haven and invitation for people to use as place to “shoot up” or hang out while high.

Accompanying my letter is another letter from Foketi Thornycroft who works at the Wilcannia Community Restorative Centre as a Senior Transition Worker. Foketi has dealt with individuals who have been under the influence of the drug ICE and had to console their families during these times; I urge you to read Foketi’s letter to gain a better understanding of our situation in Wilcannia and how ICE affects our community.

If you wish to discuss the matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Wilcannia Office during normal business hours.

Yours sincerely



Greg Hill
General Manager

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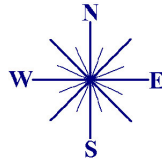
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COUNCIL CHAMBERS

21 REID STREET

WILCANNIA NSW 2836

12 February 2019

Mark Coulton MP

Suite R1 44

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Email: mark.coulton.mp@aph.gov.au

Our reference: GF18/730

Dear Mark

Thank you for arranging the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister and yourself to visit Menindee on Thursday, 7 February 2019. As you and the Deputy Prime Minister experienced in the Public Forum, Menindee Locals are very passionate about their Darling River and the Menindee Lakes System and are devastated with the current state of these waterways. There is a consensus by Government, there isn't water in the upper section of the Darling River to put water back in the Menindee Lakes System and the Menindee Weir Pool. However, we all recognise that other things can be done to keep Menindee and the surround district alive during this crisis. This was evident in our meeting at the Menindee Transactional Centre where several community representatives from the Menindee Regional Tourism Association, Menindee Water User Group, and local aboriginal representatives met with you and the Deputy Prime Minister to discuss:

- Public Statement Menindee and Surrounding Areas 5 Point Plan - Central Darling Shire and Menindee Regional Tourism Association
- Options for improvements of Management of Menindee Lakes System - Menindee Water User Group
- Cultural, social and environmental issues - Local Aboriginal Representatives

From this meeting there was several recommendations, or offer of assistance to help that can be provided or implemented by either State and Federal Governments:

1. Pooncarie Road - possible funding for sealing of the road as a joint venture between the Federal and the State Government to bolster tourism to Menindee and the Far West.
2. The Murray Darling Basin Authority and Menindee Water User Group to meet and discuss further the Management of Menindee Lakes System plan being proposed. MDBA to investigate employing Basin Representative in Menindee.
3. Mobile Phone Coverage - Central Darling Shire to forward onto Mark Coulton MP and location plan of Black Spots or where locations of towers should be located. This will be provided to you in coming weeks.
4. Dancing on the Darling at Menindee Community Event - Menindee Regional Tourism Association have asked the Federal Government to match the \$15k, which the NSW Government and the local Council have already contributed.
5. Further investigation into a Federal grant valued at \$5 million could be used to support a fish hatchery at Menindee.
6. Assistance for funding Barkandji Native Title PBC to travel to Canberra to the Water is Life National Gathering and Action to represent the Darling Baaka River.

7. Wilcannia Weir - at the announcement of funding the construction of the weir, it was portrayed that construction of the weir would be completed by December 2019. Recent discussion with the DPI Water and the consultant; the construction completion will not be December 2019, but more likely another 2 years beyond this given date. Can you please confirm which is going to be the actual completion year?

Once again, I would like to thank you on behalf of the Menindee Community and surrounding district for taking the time and effort to travel to Menindee to speak with us. Hopefully in coming months we may see some progress with outcomes achieved in the abovementioned items discussed.

Regards



Greg Hill
General Manager

CC: Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack MP, Deputy Premier John Barilaro MP, Minister for Regional Water Niall Blair