

Attachments

UNDER SEPARATE COVER ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

6:00PM, TUESDAY, 31 MARCH, 2020

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CGRC INTERNAL AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

Meeting held 2:15pm Thursday, 12 March 2020, Alby Schultz Meeting Room, Cootamundra

1. Welcome and Apologies

PRESENT:

Tony Donoghue (Chairman, Coolamon Shire Council), Courtney Armstrong (Coolamon Shire Council),

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cr Abb McAlister (Mayor CGRC), Phil McMurray (General Manager CGRC) and Greg Briscoe-Hough (Relief Governance Officer CGRC), Mr Ian Roberts (Blackadder & Associates)

APOLOGIES: Cr. David Graham and Cr. Doug Phillips, Susan Gheller (Manager Business), Tim Swan (Manager Finance and Customer Service)

2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes (7 November 2019)

RESOLVED on the motion of Tony Donoghue (2nd Courtney Armstrong) that the minutes of the Internal Audit Committee held on 7 November 2019 be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

3. Audit Methodology and Internal Audit Report – S355 Committees

RESOLVED on the motion of Courtney Armstrong (2nd Tony Donoghue) that the Committee note that CGRC accepts the recommendations of the audit and will take appropriate action as required.

4. Audit Methodology – Records Management

RESOLVED on the motion of Courtney Armstrong (2nd Tony Donoghue) that the Committee note that CGRC accepts the recommended approach of the proposed audit of records management procedures.

5. Internal Audit Recommendations and Management Actions

RESOLVED on the motion of Courtney Armstrong (2nd Tony Donoghue) that the updated *Internal Audit Recommendations and Management Actions register* be received and noted.

6. Notification of Incidents - It was noted that none were identified.

7. Other Business – **RESOLVED** on the motion of Courtney Armstrong (2nd Tony Donoghue) to receive and note:

- a) Additional *Internal Audit Recommendations and Management Action* pertaining to Council staff reaffirming commitment to Code of Conduct as part of performance reviews.
- b) Tabling of CGRC's audited annual accounts.

8. Next Meeting

June or July 2020, date to be confirmed.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES

AT

COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI
REGIONAL COUNCIL



COOTAMUNDRA-
GUNDAGAI REGIONAL
COUNCIL

March 2020

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



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COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL – SECTION 355 COMMITTEES

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



01 Introduction

As provided by Section 355 of the Local Government Act 1993, a Council may exercise its functions in a number of ways. One of those is by way of Committees.

Councils will often establish Committees comprising representatives of the Council and members of local communities to operate facilities such as showgrounds, sporting fields or community halls or to provide advice on such issues as heritage, the environment or youth.

These Committees are generally referred to as Section 355 Committees.

The Committees exist for the life of the Council and are therefore dissolved at the end of the Council term but may be re-appointed by the incoming Council.

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02 Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit of Councils' Section 355 Committees will examine the following, but not limited to:

- The Section 355 Committees established by Council;
- The Terms of Reference for each Committee;
- How community representatives are appointed to each Committee;
- How often each Committee meets;
- How the Council supports these Committees;
- Whether the Council delegates any powers and authorities to these Committees;
- What training is provided to Committee members;
- The minutes of meetings of these Committees; and
- How Council reviews the performance of these Committees.

During the audit and particularly during the associated field visits it is expected that the internal auditor will need to speak with the General Manager, Director of Corporate Services and other relevant staff.

The audit will confirm whether Council has developed an Operational Manual for Section 355 Committees.

As well as the issues raised in the above Scope, the auditor will review any such Operational Manual and any policies and procedures related to these Committees and how these are communicated to members of these Committees.

To achieve this, the auditor will, by way of emails and during field visits:

- Make appropriate enquiries of the General Manager, Director of Corporate Services and any other relevant staff who are maybe involved with the Council's Section 355 Committees;
- Review any appropriate policy or governing documentation that the Council may have adopted.

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03 Approach taken during 2020 Audit of S355 Committees at CGRC

The auditor contacted staff via email and obtained various related documents. Additionally, the auditor conducted a field visit and met with relevant staff of Council on 6 February 2020 during which Council's Section 355 Committee regime was discussed.

In response to enquiries made via email and during the field visit the internal auditor formed opinions about the operation of the Council's Section 355 Committees and these are set out in the observations below.

It is understood that Council forms Section 355 Committees to assist in managing its facilities and functions. It was noted that the Council had the following 10 Section 355 Committees:

- Cootamundra Showground Users Group
- Cootamundra Heritage Centre Management Committee
- Stockinbingal Ellwood's Hall Committee
- Wallendbeen Memorial Hall Committee
- Muttama Memorial Hall Management Committee
- Tourism Action Group (Gundagai)
- Cootamundra Tourism Action Group
- Muttama Creek Regeneration Group
- The Arts Centre Cootamundra
- Cootamundra Beach Volleyball Festival Committee

Operational Manual for Section 355 Committees

Individual Councils use different terms to describe their Section 355 Committee Operational Manual.

It was noted that the Council has an adopted Section 355 Committees Management Manual which appears to cover those issues relevant to these Committees. A copy of this Manual, dated December 2017, had been provided to the internal auditor. It was pointed out that Council staff are currently looking at reviewing this document.

It was explained that all members of Council's Section 355 Committees are provided with copies of this document and would also be provided with any amendments. It was also explained that they are not required to sign an acknowledgement to the effect that they have received and read it.

The Internal Auditor is of the view that, ideally, any Operational Manual for Section 355 Committees (a document which is arguably a policy of Council) should be reviewed at least once during each Council term.

Given that, in the usual course of events, Section 355 Committees potentially operate somewhat remotely from the Council, the Internal Auditor is also of the view that all members of Council's Section 355 Committees should have a copy of this Operational Manual or have access to it (via electronic means) and to provide an assurance to the Council that they do in fact have it, either in hard copy or electronically, and have read it, and they should sign an acknowledgement to this effect.

COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL – SECTION 355 COMMITTEES

REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC

**Terms of Reference for each Section 355 Committee**

The Terms of Reference defines the purpose, objectives and structures of the Committee and any delegations to the Committee. It should clearly differentiate one Committee from all others.

It is noted that there are no Terms of Reference as such for each Committee; rather the Council has a Charter (amounting to a one or two paragraph statement) effectively setting out the objectives of each Committee. These Charters are contained in a document which is attached as an Appendix to the Section 355 Committees Management Manual.

It was explained that Council staff are looking at reviewing these every 2 years, including after every election.

Like the Operational Manual it is considered that the Terms of Reference should also be reviewed at least once during the Council's term and copies should be provided to all Committee members who should be required to sign to acknowledge that they have received and read it.

Appointment of Community Representatives to each Section 355 Committee

The Internal Auditor understands that the members of Section 355 Committees, being appointed by the respective Councils, effectively cease to hold that office within 3 months of the end of the Council term but may seek to be re-appointed.

It was explained that the community representatives on each Section 355 Committee are appointed by Council resolution following the general Council elections. It is understood that the Committees are dissolved after the election with advertisements placed inviting expressions of interest. It is noted that the Management Manual sets out how persons should go about becoming members of these Committees.

In the view of the Internal Auditor it is essential that the members of Section 355 Committees are appointed by the elected Council following consideration of nominations received in response to an invitation that was advertised publicly, as well as writing to organisations. This would seem to be the fairest method of selecting the preferred candidates.

Meetings of Section 355 Committees

In the opinion of the Internal Auditor, minutes must be taken of all meetings of Section 355 Committees with these minutes being submitted to a formal Council meeting for either notation or adoption. That way, the elected Council can be aware of the activities of the Committee.

It was explained that there is no set number of meetings that the Committees must hold each year and other than an AGM, it would be up to individual Committees to determine how many meetings were necessary.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



It was pointed out that the community is made aware of when meetings of the Section 355 Committees will be held with notices appearing in Council's newsletter. Also the public are entitled to attend these meetings.

It was also pointed out that minutes are made of these meetings and these are sent to Council. Upon receipt a report is prepared by a member of staff which would include comment on any recommendations by the Committee. This would be presented to the first available Council Meeting at which Council might either receive and note or make a decision depending upon the content of the report.

Section 355 Committee Member Training

It was explained that when the Council's Section 355 Committees are first appointed an induction session is conducted in-house with all community representatives invited to attend. As well as outlining their responsibilities there is training provided on the Code of Conduct. It was pointed out that there would be one of these sessions conducted each Council term.

It is up to Council what level of training is provided to members of Section 355 Committees, however, as a minimum, the Internal Auditor considers that after these Committees are re-appointed at the commencement of the Council term, a briefing should be scheduled for all Section 355 Committee members to provide guidance on the operation of the Committees and to confirm the Council's expectations for the Committees.

Administrative Support for Section 355 Committees

It was explained that no administrative support is generally provided by Council to Section 355 Committees excepting in those instances where an issue may arise upon which the Committee required advice.

It was noted that Council audits the books of all Committees annually.

The Internal Auditor does not have a firm view on what level of administrative support to Section 355 Committees is the most appropriate. From experience, some Councils provide staff to take the minutes while others allow the Committees to run their own operation with minimal interference. Importantly, whatever approach, the Council should have an "open door" policy so Committees feel that can readily approach the Council for advice or guidance at any time. In this regard, it is suggested that an appropriately experienced Council staff member should be nominated as the point of contact for Committees.

In relation to those Committees that operate financial accounts in respect of Council facilities, these need to be submitted to Council, either audited or for audit to facilitate lodgement of Council's BAS and for inclusion in Council's financial statements.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC

**Section 355 Committees and Council policies and procedures**

It was explained that copies of the Council's Code of Conduct and any amendments that are made to it are provided to all community representatives on Section 355 Committees and they are required to sign off that they have received it and will abide by it.

It was pointed out community representatives on Section 355 Committees are not generally provided with copies of relevant Council policies and procedures, however apart from the Code of Conduct, the Section 355 Committees Management Manual specifically lists the following as being of relevance:

- Alcohol & Other Drugs Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Internal Reporting Policy
- Media Policy
- Digital Media Policy and guidelines

The Internal Auditor considers that all members of Section 355 Committees must be provided with a copy of (and received training on) Council's current Code of Conduct as well as any amendments which occur to this, either in hard copy or electronically. Additionally, it is considered that an acknowledgement should be provided to Council by each Committee member that they have received and read the Code.

In the same vein, Committee members should have access to Council policies and any relevant procedures particularly those that have a direct bearing on the Committee. It is suggested that this could be achieved either by providing hard copies or access electronically. Ideally, members should also be required to sign to acknowledge that they have received these documents.

Noting the comments made by Council staff during the field visits, the Internal Auditor is aware from personal experience the difficulties that can be encountered in getting some Section 355 Committees to provide information for inclusion in the annual budgets of Councils.

Accordingly, the Internal Auditor is also of the view that Councils need to impress upon those Section 355 Committees that operate Council facilities of the importance for them to promptly provide advice on suggested amendments to the fees and charges in respect of these facilities in sufficient time for Council staff to be able to include this information in the Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges when the Council's Annual Budget is being formulated.

Section 355 Committees and conflicts of interest

It was pointed out that the members of Section 355 Committees are subject to Council's conflicts of interest disclosure regime and are required to complete Pecuniary Interest Returns. The comment was made that if a Section 355 Committee member had an interest in a matter that was being discussed by the Committee then it would be expected that person would declare that interest and comply with the Code of Conduct.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



It is for each Council to determine whether the members of its Section 355 Committees are classified as designated persons and/or if they are required to complete and lodge pecuniary interest returns.

Of more importance is the need for these Committees members to be aware of their obligations about conflicts of interest and to declare any interests when they may arise.

Section 355 Committees Performance Review

It was noted that there is no formal process to review the performance of Section 355 Committees and that this would only occur if an issue arose.

It is suggested that a good time to review the performance of Section 355 Committees is when the Committees are appointed at the beginning of each Council term and at the Council meeting each September when Councillor delegates are generally appointed to the Committees for the forthcoming year. How each Council conducts such a review is up to the respective Council.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



04 Conclusion

The Internal Auditor is aware, from experience, that Councils sometimes appoint community based organisations as Section 355 Committees for reasons such as to either assist the group in accessing funding or to provide cover under the Council's insurance policies for the group.

At this point, it would be worthwhile to quote Section 355 of the local Government Act 1993:

"355 HOW A COUNCIL MAY EXERCISE FUNCTIONS

A function of a Council may, subject to this Chapter, be exercised--

- (a) by the Council by means of the councillors or employees, by its agents or contractors, by financial provision, by the provision of goods, equipment, services, amenities or facilities or by any other means, or
- (b) by a Committee of the Council, or
- (c) partly or jointly by the Council and another person or persons, or
- (d) jointly by the Council and another Council or Councils (including by means of a joint organisation or a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils of which the Councils concerned are members), or
- (e) by a delegate of the Council (which may, for example, be a joint organisation or a Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils of which the Council is a member)."

This seems to suggest that unless the Committee is carrying out a Council function, or providing advice about or related to a Council function, then it cannot be a Section 355 Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

1. The Council's Operational Manual for Section 355 Committees Handbook and the Terms of Reference for individual Committees be reviewed at least once during each Council term.
2. When copies of the Manual and Terms of Reference are provided to community members of these Committees, an acknowledgement be provided to Council to attest to the fact that the community members have received these documents.
3. At the expiration of the Council term, review operations of all Section 355 Committees to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose, and their functions and expenditures align with the goals of the incoming Council's Delivery Program.
4. At the expiration of the Council term and upon the community members of Council's Section 355 Committees ceasing to hold office, Council publicly invite expressions of interest from persons interested in becoming members of these Committees with the decision on who to appoint to these Committees being made at an open Council Meeting.

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REPORT INTO SECTION 355 COMMITTEES AT CGRC



5. The proceedings of meetings of all Section 355 Committees be minuted with copies of the minutes of all of these meetings being presented to the Council at a formal Council Meeting.
6. A briefing be scheduled preferably soon after the appointment of community members of the Council's Section 355 Committees to provide these community members with guidance on the operation of the Committees and to confirm the Council's expectations for the Committees with particular emphasis on the Code of Conduct.
7. An appropriately experienced staff member be nominated as the point of contact for Section 355 Committees.
8. In relation to those Section 355 Committees that operate financial accounts in respect of Council facilities
 - (a) procedures be implemented to ensure that these documents are submitted to Council, either audited or for audit, to facilitate lodgement of Council's BAS and for inclusion in Council's financial statements; and
 - (b) Council impress upon these Committees the importance for them to provide advice of any proposed amendments to their fees and charges in sufficient time for Council staff to be able to include this information in Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges when the Council's Annual Budget is being formulated.
9. Copies of Council's Code of Conduct and any other relevant Council policies and procedures be provided to all community members of Council's Section 355 Committees with these community members to provide an acknowledgement that they have received these documents.
10. The community members of Council's Section 355 Committees be reminded of the need for them to appropriately declare any conflicts of interest that may occur during meetings of these Committees with the minutes of those meetings to record any such disclosures.
11. Appropriate arrangements be introduced by Council to enable it to review the performance of its Section 355 Committees.



Ian Roberts
Audit and Governance Associate
March 2020

COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGIONAL COUNCIL – SECTION 355 COMMITTEES

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Office of
Local Government

Circular to Councils

Circular Details	20-10 / 25 March 2020 / A696536
Previous Circular	20-06 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Development Updates
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / All council staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information

Postponement of the September 2020 Local Government Elections

What's new or changing?

- The Minister for Local Government has announced that the September 2020 local government elections will be postponed to address the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus.
- The *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) has been amended to confer on the Minister, a time-limited power to postpone council elections.
- The amendment, which operates for only a limited period of 12 months, allows the Minister by an order published in the Gazette, to postpone elections for 12 months from the date of the order. The order may be extended for an additional period to 31 December in the year after the order is made.
- The postponement of the next election will not change the future schedule of council elections, and the subsequent election will still proceed in September 2024.

What this will mean for your council

- Where the Minister exercises the power to postpone elections under section 318B, the election requirements of the Act are suspended for the period specified in the order and current councillors will continue to hold their civic offices.
- Popularly elected mayors will continue to hold their office until an ordinary election is held. In the case of mayors elected by councillors, mayoral elections will need to be held for mayors elected in September 2018 when their two year-terms expire. Mayors elected in September 2019 will continue to hold office until September 2021, once the election date is determined.
- The composition of joint organisation boards may need to change if mayors of member councils elected by councillors are not re-elected.
- The postponement of elections will have implications for the activities councils may be required to undertake in the current and next integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) cycles. In general, OLG will seek to extend the current IP&R cycle for 12 months, with a next cycle to be truncated to 3 years. The Office of Local Government will be providing further detailed guidance on this and other changes to statutory timeframes that may become necessary as a result of deferring elections.

Where to go for further information

- For further information please contact the Council Governance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.

Tim Hurst
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3/25/2020

COVID-19 council update 25 March 2020 (PM)

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Office of Local Government



COVID-19 COUNCIL UPDATE

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25 March 2020

Council elections postponed to reduce the risk of COVID-19

To provide certainty to councils, communities and potential candidates, the NSW Government has made the decision to postpone the September local government elections in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.



The decision to postpone the elections is necessary to ensure the health and safety of voters, NSW Electoral Commission staff and election candidates.

It follows Parliament passing amendments to the Local Government Act last night to provide the Minister with the power to postpone the elections for 12 months with a possible further extension to 31 December 2021 should the need arise.

The Minister intends to make an order which will be published in the Government Gazette to postpone the 2020 local government elections. It is the Government's intention that these council elections will be held in September 2021.

Current councillors and popularly elected mayors will continue to hold their civic offices until the rescheduled local government elections are held.

<http://info.olg.nsw.gov.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz5e7aeef9373e8896/print/1/>

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3/25/2020

COVID-19 council update 25 March 2020 (PM)

Mayoral elections will need to be held for mayors elected by councillors in September 2018 when their two-year terms expire this year. Mayors elected in September 2019 will continue to hold office until September 2021 once the new election date is gazetted.

The postponement of the next elections will not change the future schedule of council elections, and the subsequent elections will still proceed in September 2024.

The Office of Local Government has issued a [circular](#) to provide further information to councils.



Councils can now hold meetings remotely

Amendments have now been made to the Local Government Act to allow councils to meet remotely to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and ensure compliance with the [Public Health Order](#).

The amendments take effect immediately and will operate for six months.

This means that councillors can now participate in meetings by an audio-visual link instead of attending in person.

Council meetings can be held entirely remotely by audio-visual link.

Alternatively, where councils continue to meet in person, individual councillors are permitted to participate in the meeting by audio-visual link.

Requirements for members of the public to be permitted to attend meetings can now be satisfied by livestreaming the meeting using an audio-visual link.

The Minister for Local Government can approve other arrangements for satisfying the requirements for councillors and members of the public to "attend" meetings, but only if audio-visual links are not reasonably available.

The Office of Local Government has issued a [circular](#) containing further technical advice to councils about meetings.



Information and resources

New restrictions announced by National Cabinet
National Cabinet last night announced new restrictions and measures to combat COVID-19. This includes additional prohibited activities and

<http://info.olg.nsw.gov.au/pub/pubType/EO/pubID/zzzz5e7aeef9373e8896/print/1/>

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3/25/2020

COVID-19 council update 25 March 2020 (PM)

venues to apply from 11.59pm today. Councils can access further information [here](#).

New Ministerial Order power

Changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act have been made to allow the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to make an Order for development to be carried out without the normal planning approval in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. Councils can access the Ministerial Orders currently in force [here](#). They include changes to retail trading, waste and home businesses.

Webinar for councils

You can now access a recording of a council webinar held by the Office of Local Government from the State Emergency Operations Centre on 23 March 2020. The recording of the webinar can be accessed [here](#).

Local Emergency Management Committees

A number of councils have sought NSW Education Department representation or input into Local Emergency Management Committees. All requests for Education input into Local Emergency Management Committees should be sent to edu.lo@det.nsw.edu.au.

Find the facts

Councils can access facts about COVID-19 on the NSW Government website [here](#).

Template emergency plans

Councils can now access template emergency plans to help them manage COVID-19. The following templates have been provided by the City of Sydney for use by all councils:

- Pandemic Sub Plan
- Business Continuity Plan
- Cleansing and Waste Business Continuity Plan
- Business Continuity Recovery Team Plan

Quicklinks

Councils can access the latest information and resources about COVID-19 on the NSW Government, NSW Health and Commonwealth Government websites. The Office of Local Government has also set up a COVID-19 page on its website.

Please click [here](#) to unsubscribe from our mail list.



Office of
Local Government

Circular to Councils

Circular Details	20-10 / 25 March 2020 / A696536
Previous Circular	20-06 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Development Updates
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / All council staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information

Postponement of the September 2020 Local Government Elections

What's new or changing?

- The Minister for Local Government has announced that the September 2020 local government elections will be postponed to address the risks posed by the COVID-19 virus.
- The *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) has been amended to confer on the Minister, a time-limited power to postpone council elections.
- The amendment, which operates for only a limited period of 12 months, allows the Minister by an order published in the Gazette, to postpone elections for 12 months from the date of the order. The order may be extended for an additional period to 31 December in the year after the order is made.
- The postponement of the next election will not change the future schedule of council elections, and the subsequent election will still proceed in September 2024.

What this will mean for your council

- Where the Minister exercises the power to postpone elections under section 318B, the election requirements of the Act are suspended for the period specified in the order and current councillors will continue to hold their civic offices.
- Popularly elected mayors will continue to hold their office until an ordinary election is held. In the case of mayors elected by councillors, mayoral elections will need to be held for mayors elected in September 2018 when their two year-terms expire. Mayors elected in September 2019 will continue to hold office until September 2021, once the election date is determined.
- The composition of joint organisation boards may need to change if mayors of member councils elected by councillors are not re-elected.
- The postponement of elections will have implications for the activities councils may be required to undertake in the current and next integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) cycles. In general, OLG will seek to extend the current IP&R cycle for 12 months, with a next cycle to be truncated to 3 years. The Office of Local Government will be providing further detailed guidance on this and other changes to statutory timeframes that may become necessary as a result of deferring elections.

Where to go for further information

- For further information please contact the Council Governance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.

Tim Hurst
Deputy Secretary
Local Government, Planning and Policy

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Office of
Local Government

Circular to Councils

Circular Details	20-09 / 25 March 2020 / A696524
Previous Circular	20-06 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Development Updates
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / All council staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Council to Implement

Compliance with social distancing requirements to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus at council and committee meetings

What's new or changing?

- The Minister for Health and Medical Research, the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, has issued the *Public Health (COVID-19 Gatherings) Order 2020* (the Public Health Order), restricting gatherings in indoor spaces exceeding 100 persons. Further information about the new Public Health Order is available [here](#).
- Meetings of councils and committees of councils are **not** exempted from the order as “essential gatherings”, and councils **must** comply with the order.
- Amendments have been made to the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) allowing councils to meet remotely to assist them to manage the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus at their meetings and to ensure compliance with the Public Health Order. The amendments take effect immediately.
- The amendments will operate for a period of six months, but may be extended to 12 months by regulation if required.

What this will mean for your council

Council and committee meetings can be held remotely, and individual councillors can participate in meetings remotely

- An amendment has been made to the Act providing that any requirement that councillors attend a meeting is satisfied if the meeting is held remotely using audio-visual links.
- This means that councillors can now participate in meetings by an audio-visual link instead of attending in person.
- Council meetings can be held entirely remotely by audio-visual link. Alternatively, where councils continue to meet in person, individual councillors are permitted to participate in the meeting by audio-visual link.
- Where councillors participate in meetings remotely by an audio-visual link, they continue to be obliged to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at meetings. Councillors continue to be obliged to remove themselves from the consideration of matters in which they have a pecuniary or significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest.
- Where councillors participate in meetings remotely by an audio-visual link, they continue to be obliged to protect any confidential information considered at the meeting. Where meetings are closed to the public under section 10A of the Act, councillors should ensure that they participate in the meeting in a location where it cannot be seen or heard by anyone else.

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Attendance of members of the public at meetings

- The amendment to the Act also provides that the requirement under section 10 of the Act that members of the public be permitted to attend meetings is satisfied if the meeting is held remotely using audio-visual links. The amendment also provides that the requirement under section 10 for meetings to be open to members of the public is satisfied if a webcast of the meeting is made public.
- This means that the requirement under section 10 of the Act for members of the public to be permitted to attend meetings can now be satisfied by livestreaming the meeting using an audio-visual link. Where meetings are livestreamed in this manner, members of the public can be excluded from the chamber.
- All councils have been required to webcast their meetings since 14 December 2019 and the Office of Local Government (OLG) has recently issued a *Guide to webcasting council and committee meetings*. The Guide is available [here](#). Among other things, the Guide provides information on how councils can livestream their meetings using audio-visual links, including technical guidance based on the experiences of councils that currently livestream their meetings using audio-visual links.
- Councils continue to be permitted to close their meetings to the public on the grounds specified under section 10A of the Act. Where councils livestream their meetings, they should ensure that the webcast is stopped while the meeting is closed to the public and resume it when the meeting is reopened to the public.
- Where councils continue to permit members of the public to physically attend meetings, the numbers of members of the public present in the chamber can and should be limited to comply with the Public Health Order and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's (AHPPC) recommendations on indoor gatherings (see below).
- Where the number of people seeking to physically attend a meeting exceeds the numbers permissible under the Public Health Order or would prevent compliance with the AHPPC's recommendations on indoor gatherings, councils may consider accommodating excess numbers of people wishing to attend the meeting in another indoor or outdoor space and broadcast the meeting's proceedings to that space.

Public forums

- Requirements for the holding of public forums prior to or at meetings will vary from council to council depending on the provisions contained in their adopted codes of meeting practice.
- Under the provisions contained in Part 4 of the *Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW* (the Model Meeting Code), public forums are discretionary.
- To ensure compliance with the Public Health Order, public forums should only be held in a manner that is consistent with the Public Health Order and the AHPPC's recommendations on indoor gatherings. Where this is not possible, public forums should not be held, or alternative arrangements should be made for the making of public submissions to councillors. For example, submissions could be made to councillors via an audio-visual link or in writing instead of in person.

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Delegations

- As previously advised in [Circular 20-06](#), councils should review their delegations as a matter of urgency to ensure that decisions can be made quickly in response to any developments outside of the normal council meeting cycle. Councils' functions (other than those specified in section 377 of the Act) can be delegated to the general manager, the mayor or another body such as a committee.

Cancellation of meetings

- If councils consider that the holding of a meeting will pose a risk to those attending the meeting, the meeting can be cancelled.
- If adopted by councils, clause 5.14 of the Model Meeting Code provides that where it becomes apparent prior to the commencement of a meeting that the safety and welfare of councillors, council staff and members of the public may be put at risk by attending the meeting, the mayor may, in consultation with the general manager and, as far as is practicable, with each councillor, cancel the meeting.
- Where a meeting is cancelled, notice of the cancellation must, at a minimum, be published on the council's website. Councils should also take additional steps to communicate the cancellation to ensure as many people know about it as possible.
- Where a meeting is cancelled, the business to be considered at the meeting may instead be considered, where practicable, at the next ordinary meeting of the council or at an extraordinary meeting.

Other measures

- The amendment to the Act allows the Minister for Local Government to approve other arrangements for satisfying the requirements for councillors and members of the public to "attend" meetings, but only if audio-visual links are not reasonably available.
- If councils are not able to comply with any of the above requirements, they should advise OLG in writing so that alternative arrangements may be considered for approval. In doing so, councils should advise:
 - why they are not able to comply with any of the options outlined above
 - what alternative arrangements are being proposed
 - how the proposed arrangements will ensure any members of the public wishing to attend a meeting can view the meeting in real time
 - arrangements for ensuring that conflicts of interest are appropriately disclosed and managed
 - arrangements for ensuring that confidential information is protected.

Key points

- The AHPPC has made recommendations on risk mitigation measures to be applied to indoor gatherings. The recommendations are available [here](#).
- The AHPPC recommends the following risk mitigation strategies:
 - In a given occupied space, there must be a density of no more than one person per four square metres of floor space.
 - Availability of hand hygiene products and suitable waste receptacles, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.

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- Promotion of the Department of Health recommendations for unwell individuals to isolate at home and not attend.
 - For settings where there is ongoing movement and an increased number of interactions between individuals, an individual's attendance should be less than two hours in duration.
 - For settings that are primarily static, an individual's attendance should be limited to four hours in duration.
- Councils should apply these measures when holding council or committee meetings and any other indoor gatherings.

Where to go for further information

- See OLG's *Guide to webcasting council and committee meetings* which is available [here](#).
- If councils require assistance to identify and procure technical solutions to allow councillors to participate in meetings by audio-visual link or to livestream their meetings by video, the Local Government Procurement (LGP) ICT Panel Contract (LGP115) has a variety of providers who can deliver video collaboration solutions. For more information see the LGP website [here](#) or contact Luke Kenny, Chief Executive Officer, on 0421 059 172 or at lkenny@lgp.org.au.
- For further information please contact the Council Governance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.



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COVID-19



**COOTAMUNDRA-
GUNDAGAI** REGIONAL
COUNCIL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Coronavirus – General

What is a coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new coronavirus originated in Hubei Province, China and the disease caused by the virus is named COVID-19.

How is this coronavirus spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth, nose, eyes or face.

All information supplied in this booklet has been sourced from [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au)

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other colds and flus and include:

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Difficulty breathing

**National Coronavirus Help
Line on 1800 020 080**

While COVID-19 is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying these symptoms are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19.

What do I do if I develop symptoms?

Call the National Coronavirus Help Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

Who needs to isolate?

All people who arrive in Australia from midnight 15 March 2020, or think they may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Someone I live with is getting tested for COVID-19. Should I self-isolate and get tested as well?

If a household member is a suspected case, you may need to be isolated. This will be determined by your public health unit on a case-by-case basis. Your public health unit will contact you if you need to isolate. For more information, read the NSW Health fact sheet on home isolation.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is one way to help slow the spread of viruses such as COVID-19. Social distancing includes staying at home when you are unwell, avoiding large public gatherings if they're not essential, keeping a distance of 1.5 metres between you and other people whenever possible and minimising physical contact such as shaking hands, especially with people at higher risk of developing serious symptoms, such as older people and people with existing health conditions. There's no need to change your daily routine, but taking these social distancing precautions can help protect the people in our community who are most at risk.

How is social distancing implemented in the workplace?

- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Stop handshaking as a greeting.
- Hold meetings via video conferencing or phone call.
- Defer large meetings.
- Hold essential meetings outside in the open air if possible.
- Promote good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and use hand sanitisers.
- Take lunch at your desk or outside rather than in the lunch room.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly.
- Limit food handling and sharing of food in the workplace.
- Avoid non-essential business travel.
- Reschedule, stagger or cancel large gatherings.

Who is most at risk of a serious illness?

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly. The people at most risk of serious infection are:

- People who have been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed as having coronavirus.
- People with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer).
- Elderly people.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness.
- People with diagnosed chronic medical conditions.
- People in group residential settings.
- People in detention facilities.
- Very young children and babies.*

*At this stage the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children, relative to the broader population.



If you develop flu like symptoms, call your GP or **healthdirect (1800 022 222)**, or visit your local **Emergency Department**

How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and keeping your distance from others when you are sick is the best defence against most viruses.

You should:

- Stay at home if you feel unwell or have cold or flu like symptoms to avoid contact with others.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay more than 1.5 metres from people.
- Exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures.

My workplace has more than 500 people. Can I still go to work?

Yes, you can still go to work. The Government currently recommends that organised, non-essential gatherings be limited to a maximum of 100 people indoors and 500 people outdoors. This advice does not include workplaces, schools, universities, shops, supermarkets, public transport and airports, as they are deemed essential.

If you are unwell, you should stay home to avoid spreading your germs to others.**Should I wear a face mask?**

You do not need to wear a mask if you are healthy. While the use of masks can help to prevent transmission of disease from infected patients to others, masks are not currently recommended for use by healthy members of the public for the prevention of infections like coronavirus.

Is the flu vaccine effective in combatting COVID-19?

While the vaccine won't combat COVID-19, it will help reduce the severity and spread of underlying flu viruses. The NSW Health Department has advised that receiving a vaccination from April provides optimal protection from the flu ahead of the peak period, which typically occurs from June to September. Research has shown that the effectiveness of the vaccination begins to wane after three to four months, so timing is very important.

If you are or someone you know is feeling mentally distressed and need to contact someone urgently, please call Murrumbidgee Local Health District Mental Health AccessLine on 1800 800 944.



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

25 March 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE 25th March 2020 – Playground equipment off limits. Funeral Numbers Restricted.

The announcement last night from Prime Minister Scott Morrison, regarding a nationwide crackdown on social gatherings has prompted Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) to take the decision to close the regions recreational equipment. This includes playground equipment, skate and pump track parks, outdoor gym equipment. CGRC staff will be erecting signage today advising the general public that this equipment is no longer available for public use. The decision was taken to discourage social gatherings following on from the Prime Ministers announcement.

Council will be upscaling cleaning regimes in the regions public toilets and public spaces where possible, and urges all residents to practice increased hygiene levels when coming into contact with hard surfaces.

All residents are urged to limit visits to public places, maintain social distancing measures and be vigilant with hygiene.

CGRC mayor Cr Abb McAlister said Council was taking advice from the appropriate health authorities and making decisive decisions.

"We have been meeting regularly, and making decisions based on directives from State and Federal Governments, accessing risk based strategies and making logical decisions for the safety and wellbeing of our staff, residents and the community as a whole," Cr McAlister said.

Council's customer service areas, in both centres will have strict social distancing measures in force.

"I can't reiterate this enough, if you don't absolutely need to come into our offices, please don't. Almost all transactions can be done using other methods, our customer service teams are on the front line in regards to dealing with the general public, if you are feeling unwell, or have the ability to pay Council fees and charges on line or by phone, please don't come into the office," Cr McAlister added.

Residents can access a host of information and forms on the Council website, including

- Your Council
- Rates Information
- Rating Information and forms

Forms include:

- Pensioner Concession Form
- Change of Details form
- Request for Rating information
- Direct Debit Request
- Payment Arrangement Form

The Prime Minister announced further restrictions on public gatherings. Funerals will be restricted to 10

people. Council will be informing local funeral directors, of the new restriction.

Residents can stay updated on the COVID-19 situation by visiting www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au or NSW Health, www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx. Customer Service can be contacted on 1300 459 689 or email mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

Photo and caption:

Council has taken the decision to close the regions recreational equipment. This includes playground equipment, skate and pump track parks, outdoor gym equipment.

-END-



Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

For further media information contact:
Maxine Imrie Media Officer 1300 459 689
Maxine.Imrie@cgrc.nsw.gov.au



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

20 March 2020

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council's response to managing the risk of Coronavirus – Update at 20 March 2020

The COVID-19 outbreak has been declared a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organisation and it continues to create massive disruption across the world.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) continues to take advice and guidance from the New South Wales Government (NSW Health) and the Federal Government (Department of Health) which are the lead agencies in this situation. Council is monitoring the situation to ensure an adequate response plan is in place for the community. Council is aware that information should weigh up the need to protect individuals from infection but also ensure essential services, business and communities can still operate on a viable level. Residents will be informed about any changes regarding the availability to Council services and facilities if and when the need arises, and as decisions are made in response to the evolving situation.

"Although there has been no confirmed cases in the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council local government area at this stage, rest assured, we have the safety of our people and our residents in the forefront of our response to this challenge" said Mayor Abb McAlister.

For accurate and consistent information on COVID 19 please refer to NSW Health - www.health.nsw.gov.au

We'll keep you updated with any Council related matters on our website – www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au and through our media outlets.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you believe you may have contracted the COVID-19 virus (returned travellers/had contact with a confirmed case/showing symptoms: fever, sore throat, dry cough and shortness of breath) you should:

- call HealthDirect 1800 022 222 or
- call the Murrumbidgee COVID-19 Hotline 1800 831 099 or
- contact/phone your GP, advise them in advance if you have symptoms
- If you are sick – stay away from others.

We can all help to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Australia, and residents are reminded of what they can do:

HYGIENE

Practice food, hand and sneeze/cough hygiene;

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, and
- if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective measure, but it is recognised that it cannot be practised in all situations and the aim is to generally reduce potential for transmission.

While practising social distancing, people can travel to work (including public transport). For non-essential activities outside the workplace or attendance at schools, universities and childcare – social

distancing includes:

- avoiding crowds and mass gatherings where it is difficult to keep the appropriate distance away from others
- avoiding small gatherings in enclosed spaces, for example family celebrations
- attempting to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and other people where possible, for example when they are out and about in public place.
- avoiding shaking hands, hugging, or kissing other people
- avoiding visiting vulnerable people, such as those in aged care facilities or hospitals, infants, or people with compromised immune systems due to illness or medical treatment

BULK-BUYING

There is no need to bulk-buy products at supermarkets including toilet paper, paracetamol and canned food.

It is prudent for households to have a small stock of non-perishable groceries to cover the event that in the coming months the household has been asked to self-isolate for 14 days. However, it's important to note the role of family and friends in supporting those in isolation.

SELF-ISOLATION

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must stay at home to prevent it spreading to other people.

You will be directed to stay at home if you may have been exposed to the virus - Recently travelled from overseas, or been in contact with someone who has the virus.

Staying at home means you:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in — only people who usually live with you should be in your home
- You do not need to wear a mask in your home. If you need to go out to seek medical attention, wear a surgical mask (if you have one) to protect others.
- You should stay in touch by phone and on-line with your family and friends.

WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR COUNCIL

Residents are requested to rethink whether they need to come into Council offices for day to day transactions such as payments of rates, applications and general requests. Online options are available via Council's website or Council can be contacted by phone 1300 459 689 or email mail@cgrc.nsw.nsw.gov.au during office hours. For out of hours emergencies, residents can still contact Council by phone 1300 459 689.

If you are ill, please do not visit a Council venue.

WHAT COUNCIL IS DOING NOW

Work Health and Safety is paramount and must be at the forefront of everyone's mind when responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. As far as reasonably practicable, workers, contractors, and other persons at the workplace are not to be put at risk from work carried out as part of the business of Council. Appropriate provisions for the management of our employees are being considered where necessary including special leave, workplace flexibility, exclusions, workplace closures, and redeployments. Should the need arise then Council is implementing plans to ensure the continuous delivery of essential services such as water supply, sewerage services and garbage collections.

Part of that plan has been the identification of critical staff and seeking agreement to work from alternate

locations, in the event that a Council office needs to be shut down. Council is also ensuring that critical staff have the capacity to work from home if the need arises.

Council staff have implemented good personal hygiene practices.

Council staff are sanitising benches, keyboards and counters in public facing areas including customer service areas as appropriate.

Council staff have implemented additional cleaning within touchpoints of all public spaces.

Council will put into place enhanced handwashing reminders in all public facilities.

Council staff will be wearing gloves and/or using hand sanitiser when handling cash.

Councillors and Council Staff are not attending work related conferences or gatherings or participating in non-essential face to face meetings.

Council's Health Officer will be contacting local cafes, eateries and food handlers to pass on advice regarding hygiene and safe food handling practices. For example outlets will be encouraged in the use of take away cups to limit the amount contact with customers. Contact details can be updated on these visits so that information received by Council from appropriate peak bodies is distributed to them as soon as possible. Street stalls and markets will be allowed to continue on a case by case basis, but will be subject to similar good practices being introduced or observed.

Council will relax regulations on outdoor dining spaces to enable restaurants and cafes to spread out tables and chairs to extend space and allow for social distancing. Food outlets are encouraged to contact Council Health Officer for more information.

CHANGES TO BUSINESS OPERATIONS – SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS

It is noted that the latest directive from Government is that indoor gatherings are not to be held when exceeding 100 people, and outdoor gatherings are not to exceed 500 people.

Council is required to abide by this determination. Cancelling events and use of facilities is necessary, but it is better to be safe than sorry.

Council encourages all community, social, cultural and sporting organisations that use Council facilities, to abide and suspend non-essential meetings and such gatherings until further notice.

Council are taking measures to reduce the risk to our most vulnerable members of the community. The elderly and frail. Council recognises that many of our volunteers across the region are in this high risk group and are working within our visitor service areas. Council is taking precaution, to protect our valuable volunteer workforce by temporarily closing these facilities immediately until further notice.

Facility closures include:

Bradman Birthplace

Cootamundra Heritage Centre

Gundagai Museum

Events cancellations include:

ANZAC Day services across the region

The Gundagai Cup - Ladies Day

Cootamundra Vintage car event

Postponed Events:

Gundagai Community Wellbeing Day
Bling it On Charity Ball
Seniors Week activities
Youth Week activities

POOLS

Council's Outdoor Swimming Pools in Gundagai and Cootamundra are closed for the season. Cootamundra's heated pool will be closing to the public effective Monday 23rd March until further notice. The venue has been determined as a high risk area to control due to the large number of visitors and interaction with aged user groups.

LIBRARIES

Libraries in both centres will remain open at this stage, however some programs have been cancelled. Residents are reminded that a home delivery service is available. More information can be obtained by contacting the Libraries – Cootamundra on 6940 2200, and Gundagai on 6944 0270.

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES

The visitor information centre at Gundagai remains open to the general public at this time, as staffed by Council employees. Online options are available for most services. Please use the website where possible -

<http://www.visitgundagai.com.au/>

The visitor information centre at Cootamundra is closed, as staffed by volunteers. Please use the website -

<https://www.visitcootamundra.com.au/>

For more information please visit the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Website or NSW Department of Health

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

-END-

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

For further media information contact:
Maxine Imrie Media Officer 1300 459 689
Maxine.Imrie@cgrc.nsw.gov.au



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

23 March 2020:

COVID-19 UPDATE 23RD MARCH 2020 – HOW OUR RESIDENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The COVID-19 outbreak has been declared a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organisation and it continues to create massive disruption across the world. Australian Health Authorities and Governments both Federal and State are issuing directives and guidelines on community behaviour daily.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council mayor Cr Abb McAlister said he wanted to encourage residents to follow the social distancing and hygiene announcements.

"We are in uncharted waters, daily the situation evolves and we all have to take measures to combat this virus," Cr Abb McAlister said.

"The CGRC team, are working on advice from Health authorities and looking at what Council can do to make our region as safe as it can be. We can't do that, unless our residents take this seriously and follow the social distancing and hygiene strategies put forward by the health authorities. I urge all residents to think about their safety and the safety of others," Cr McAlister added.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council requests that face to face contact with our Customer Service Team be kept to essential contact only. For day to day transactions such as payments of rates, applications and general requests online options are available via Council's website or Council can be contacted by phone 1300 459 689 or email mail@cgrc.nsw.nsw.gov.au during office hours. For out of hours emergencies, residents can still contact Council by phone 1300 459 689.

If you are ill, please do not visit a Council venue.

We can all help to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Australia. If you believe you may have contracted the COVID-19 virus (returned travellers/had contact with a confirmed case/showing symptoms: fever, sore throat, dry cough and shortness of breath) you should:

- call HealthDirect 1800 022 222 or
- call the Murrumbidgee COVID-19 Hotline 1800 831 099 or
- contact/phone your GP, advise them in advance if you have symptoms
- If you are sick – stay away from others.

HYGIENE

Practice food, hand and sneeze/cough hygiene;

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, and
- if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective measure, but it is recognised that it cannot be practised in all situations and the aim is to generally reduce potential for transmission.

While practising social distancing, people can travel to work (including public transport). For non-essential activities outside the workplace or attendance at schools, universities and childcare – social distancing includes:

- avoiding crowds and mass gatherings where it is difficult to keep the appropriate distance away from others
- avoiding small gatherings in enclosed spaces, for example family celebrations
- attempting to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and other people where possible, for example when they are out and about in public place.
- avoiding shaking hands, hugging, or kissing other people
- avoiding visiting vulnerable people, such as those in aged care facilities or hospitals, infants, or people with compromised immune systems due to illness or medical treatment

SELF-ISOLATION

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must stay at home to prevent it spreading to other people.

You will be directed to stay at home if you may have been exposed to the virus - Recently travelled from overseas, or been in contact with someone who has the virus.

Staying at home means you:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in — only people who usually live with you should be in your home
- You do not need to wear a mask in your home. If you need to go out to seek medical attention, wear a surgical mask (if you have one) to protect others.
- You should stay in touch by phone and on-line with your family and friends.

BULK-BUYING

There is no need to bulk-buy products at supermarkets including toilet paper, paracetamol and canned food.

It is prudent for households to have a small stock of non-perishable groceries to cover the event that in the coming months the household has been asked to self-isolate for 14 days. However, it's important to note the role of family and friends in supporting those in isolation.

Residents are encouraged to keep up to date by checking the CGRC website regularly. www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au or www.health.nsw.gov.au

Photo and Caption:

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council requests that cash transactions be kept to a minimum, and encourage the use of online payments or EFTPOS.

-END-



Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

For further media information contact:
Maxine Imrie Media Officer 1300 459 689
Maxine.Imrie@cgrc.nsw.gov.au



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

23 March 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE 23RD MARCH 2020 – LIBRARIES OFFER SUPPORT.

The libraries in Cootamundra and Gundagai are stepping up to the challenge of offering library services to the residents across the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council area.

From Wednesday both libraries will be increasing their home delivery service and introducing a take away facility to library members.

CGRC mayor Cr Abb McAlister said it was a necessary measure to scale back direct access to our library buildings.

"Our libraries are for many in our community a vital resource, the decision to reduce public access hasn't been made lightly, we have taken advice from the peak body, the Riverina Regional Library, in regards to the sanitisation of library articles. We will offer from Wednesday a phone in service where library members can phone in and have the option of either a take away service or home delivery service within the town boundaries," Cr McAlister said.

The towns' libraries will close the doors for public access on Wednesday 25th March, however access to resources will still be available through the take-away or home delivery methods. Library patrons are encouraged to phone the libraries on Cootamundra on 6940 2200, and Gundagai on 6944 0270, or via email, Cootamundra.Library@cgrc.nsw.gov.au or Gundagai.Library@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

-END-

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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

23 March 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE 23RD MARCH 2020 – WHAT COUNCIL IS DOING

Facility closures this week within the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council area include:

The Cootamundra Indoor Stadium.

Visitor Information Centres – Cootamundra and Gundagai

Gundagai Gymnasiums – both of which are operated from Council facilities (Gundagai Swimming Pool complex and Tigers dressing shed at Anzac Park)

The Council libraries in Cootamundra and Gundagai will be closed to public access with home delivery and take away services offered to library patrons.

Cootamundra Aerodrome events set for 3rd and 4th April, 8th and 9th May and 22nd and 23rd May are postponed due to being non-essential gatherings.

Council will be redeploying staff to assist with increased cleaning regimes across the regions public facilities and facility maintenance.

CGRC mayor Cr Abb McAlister said we are taking the directions from the NSW and Federal Government Health authorities seriously.

"We are constantly being updated and are meeting regularly to discuss what we need to do to keep our residents and visitors safe," Cr McAlister said.

"We want to keep our people working, and we have increased challenges, the extra cleaning of public facilities needs to be more rigorous and more often than in the past, our challenge is to meet public expectations and reassure our staff and residents that Council is doing all it can in these testing times," Cr McAlister added.

Residents are encouraged to keep up to date by checking the CGRC website regularly. www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

-END-

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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

24 MARCH 2020:

SALEYARDS TO REMAIN OPEN

The Cootamundra Saleyards will remain open as an essential service. Following discussions with Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council staff and Associated Agents, the next Cootamundra Sheep Sale scheduled for Wednesday 1 April 2020 commencing 8.30am will take place as planned.

With the evolving COVID-19 threat Council and Agents request, if possible, vendors not attend the sale. Agents, buyers, transport drivers and Council staff in attendance will be required to adhere to Good Hygiene practices and Social Distancing principles. The canteen will not be operating.

Stock agent Andrew Adams from Delta Ag said "In these uncertain times we have to expect to make some sacrifices, it is great that Council is doing all it can to keep the sale yards operating."

CGRC mayor Cr Abb McAlister said the operation of the sale yards is essential.

"Council, in conjunction with local Agents, is dedicated to ensuring the Cootamundra Saleyards continues operation and I ask Saleyard users to assist us in ensuring this remains possible," Cr McAlister said.

Photo and caption

Cootamundra Saleyards to remain open, with strict social distancing, increase hygiene and reduced attendance practices put in place.



-END-

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-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

24 March 2020

CGRC encourages residents to utilise online methods.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council is encouraging all residents to use the online options available for most Council based transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In an effort to reduce the amount of face to face contact Council's customer service team deal with on a daily basis. Council is constantly managing and updating information and services available for residents seeking information through Council's website: www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au.

Payment of rates and other Council fees can be made via BPay (reference numbers are included on all notices), Telephone 1300 276 468 (credit card only), Online www.bpoint.com.au (credit card only), or by post PO Box 420 Cootamundra 2590 (with cheque or money order). Should residents absolutely need to pay in person at the Council offices, please ensure social distancing (1.5metres) is practiced. If you are feeling unwell, please do not enter the building.

If you're seeking council approval on a new build or renovation, you can now submit development applications (DA) online – anywhere, anytime, with the online DA lodgement service. These applications can be submitted online through the NSW Government Planning Portal <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/onlineDA>. The portal does have a 'Your guide to the Development Application process' information pack to guide applicants through the process. Council staff are also able to assist with questions over the phone or via email.

Residents are also able to access library facilities, via the Home Delivery (town boundaries) or Take Away services. Up to 30 items can be borrowed at each transaction. Books, magazines, DVD's and CD's are available. Residents can also download the free apps to take the library with you, wherever you are. For more information on these free apps, visit the Riverina Regional Library website <https://rrl.nsw.gov.au/library-apps/>. Most products including BorrowBox require your member number followed by a Password/PIN. These apps include ULibrary, BorrowBox which allow users to borrow, browse, read and listen to eAudiobooks and eBooks. Rb digital allows reader to access digital magazine collections and Kanopy is a streaming service for films and documentaries.

Photo and caption:

A list of Free Apps available to library members.

-END-



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For further media information contact:
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3/23/2020

President's Message 20 March 2020 | LGNSW

[Home](#)

President's Message 20 March 2020



Related Links

[Latest News](#)[President's message](#)

[Economic Stimulus for Local Governments, join us to take action](#)

Join Local Government NSW in calling for the Federal and State Governments to [direct economic stimulus packages](#) to local governments.

Local councils are best placed to deliver locally led solutions, including recovery efforts and economic stimulus in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic – as demonstrated during bushfires, drought and floods.

We know economic stimulus provided to local governments during the Global Financial Crisis were effective at generating significant local economic recovery for Australia.

Further NSW government stimulus packages must include substantial funding and resources for councils to help drive local economic recovery for every corner of the state, ensuring local employment and support for local businesses across NSW, as well as ongoing investment in public infrastructure and community services for the public good.

But what works in the City of Sydney may not work in Cobar. We need the NSW Government to support local economic development strategies to boost jobs and the resilience of every community across NSW. We know Councils can deliver this.

Please join LGNSW in calling for economic stimulus for NSW councils by passing a motion, writing a letter to your State and Federal MPs and undertaking local media about this issue.

This week we have successfully secured you:

- **Progress towards legislative change needed to enable councils (as democratically-elected bodies) to meet via phone or video-conference** facilities as a social distancing measure. Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock has advised this change is imminent. For further information, email Senior Policy Officer [Elizabeth Hayes](#).
- **Advocacy for certainty on local government election dates.** While LGNSW does not have a policy position on whether to delay local government elections, we've called on the NSW Government to provide certainty for councillors, candidates and communities. LGNSW will continue to liaise with the NSW Government on this matter as a priority. For further information contact Strategy Manager Damian Thomas on 02 9242 4063 or by [email](#)
- **Clarification on the delivery of grocery and other supplies to supermarkets and retailers.** We're proud to note the acknowledgement from Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes MP that councils and retailers have been working well together to allow greater flexibility in delivery hours already. Nevertheless, [the introduction by the NSW Government of a new SEPP](#) to lift curfews under a COVID19 State Environmental Planning Policy is now in place until October and it will potentially ease some of the administration burden on Councils. Contact

<https://www.lgnsw.org.au/news/publication/presidents-message-20-march-2020>

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3/23/2020

President's Message 20 March 2020 | LGNSW

Strategy Manager Jane Partridge on 02 9242 4093 or by [email](#) should you have any ongoing issues.

- **Clarification on the Joint Workplace Response to COVID-19** by LGNSW, the United Services Union, Local Government Engineers Association and Development and Environmental Professionals Association on how councils and their staff should respond from a workplace relations perspective. Whilst this is an advisory guide only, it is imperative councils uphold their legal and other obligations to balance budgets, occupational health and safety obligations and moral obligations to continue to employ people where we can to provide council's essential services, during challenging times. For further information, [email](#) LGNSW Workplace Relations Unit or call (02) 9242 4142.

WINS!

- **NSW Government-funded rates relief for properties destroyed beyond repair by bushfire:** We welcomed the government's announcement of six months of council rates relief, including the land rates component and fixed service charges such as waste, water and sewerage.
- **Council of Australian Governments review of Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements:** Leaders agreed to review and, if necessary, update and streamline arrangements following the experience of the national-scale bushfire disaster. They also agreed to take immediate action to improve the resilience of the national telecommunications network and consider how to adapt the built environment to future climate and hazard conditions.
- **Bridges renewal program:** We welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister's [announcement this week](#) that applications are now open for the federal government [Bridges Renewal Program](#), Round 5, and the Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, Round 7. Councils affected by bushfires will be assessed as a priority, but all councils are able to apply. The total available funding across the two programs is \$300m.

HELP AMPLIFY OUR SECTOR'S ADVOCACY WORK

Good communication is critical during emergencies like the COVID-19 outbreak. LGNSW is monitoring and responding to latest developments and assessing and addressing any potential impacts of State and Federal government measures on local government. However, we'd appreciate your help.

- **Tell us what you need and the issues you are experiencing in relation to COVID-19.** It's important to acknowledge a lot of what is happening is unprecedented. These circumstances demand flexibility from all of us. Please let us know if we can support you should service delivery be potentially impacted by this pandemic or you have issues or concerns in relation to the confirmed cases in your communities.
- **Help us secure funding and action to Save our Recycling.** The NSW government must set aside extra funding in this year's state budget for recycling glass and other waste ahead of an export ban in July. We need fast tracked funding for council-led recycling measures. Please resolve the Save our Recycling Mayoral Minute. For further information, call 9242 4080 or email Susy Cenedese, Strategy Manager - Environment.
- **Promote the importance of superannuation for Councillors** by moving a resolution at your council, ensuring your council is sharing your views with the Office of Local Government, or by contributing to the LGNSW submission via email to the [Workplace Relations Unit](#).

REMINDER:

All employers covered by the Award are to provide the Industrial Relations Commission information relating to casual, labour hire and fixed term contract employees by no later than 4pm on 30 March 2020.



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

25 March 2020:

BOUNDARIES COMMISSION SUBMISSIONS INVITED

Residents across the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council local government area (LGA) can make submissions to the Boundaries Commission in relation to the de-amalgamation of the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council from Tuesday 24th March 2020.

The Boundaries Commission has determined that public notices of the proposal and a call for submissions will be advertised in local and national newspapers. The notices will also appear on CGRC and Office of Local Government websites from Tuesday 24th March.

Residents can also access a "Frequently Asked Questions" document from Councils website www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au/boundaries-commission-inquiry or www.olg.nsw.gov.au/lgbc

Council has engaged Professor Joseph Drew to develop a series of short (5 minute) videos explaining various important concepts. Dr Drew's video on lodging submissions can be viewed on the CGRC Website by following the link <https://www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au/boundaries-commission-inquiry>. This video encourages residents to write a submission even if they have already done so, and gives a clear and concise message on what the submission should contain.

Other videos are included that give residents an explanation of other important concepts such as rate harmonisation and harmonisation of fees and charges such as waste, water and sewerage.


Submissions will be close on Friday 24th April 2020.

-END-

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www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au

For further media information contact:
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Maxine.Imrie@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

29/01/2020



Cootamundra Flood Study

Model Build & Calibration


Floodplain Management Committee Meeting #2
29th January 2020

www.wmawater.com.au


1

Meeting Overview

- Flood Study Process Recap
- Work to date
 - Community Consultation
 - Data Collection
 - Model Build
 - Calibration
- What's next?
- Project Timeline



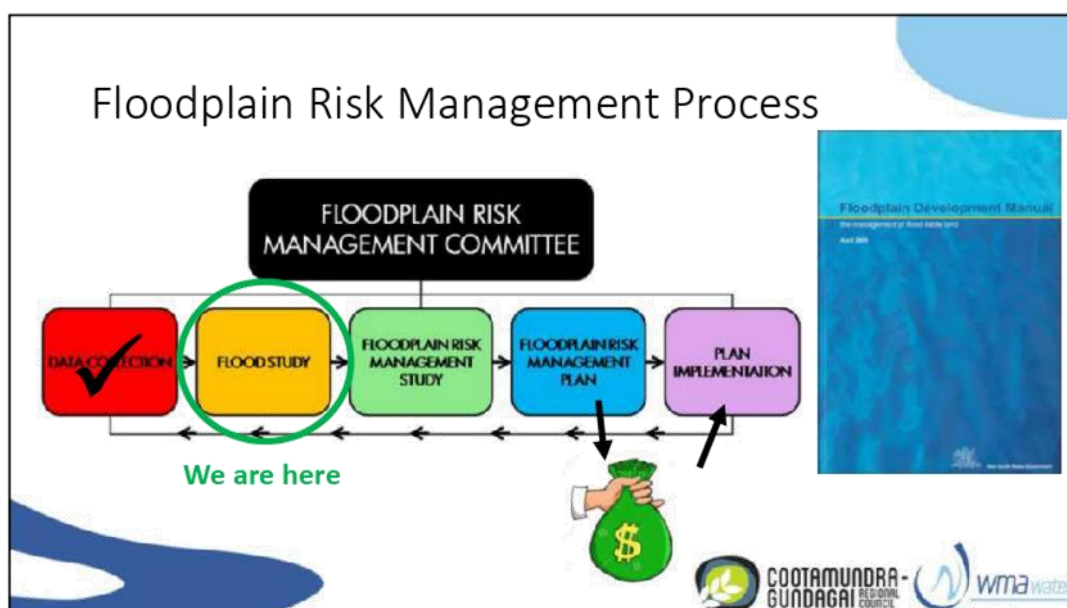
Muttama Creek at Thompson Street, Sept 2016



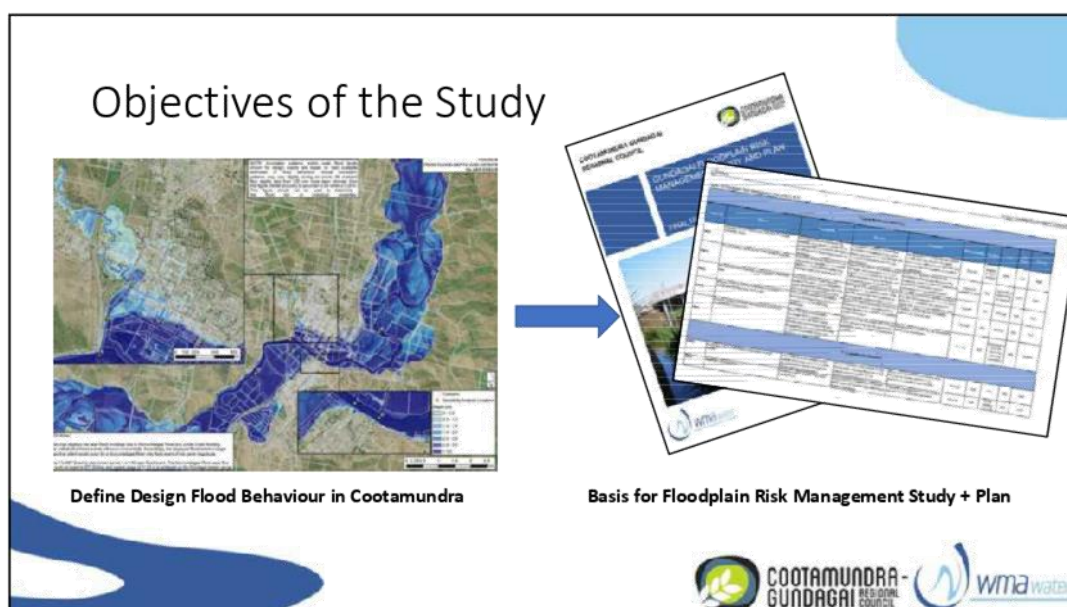

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29/01/2020

Flood Risk in Cootamundra

Mainstream Flooding:

- Muttama Creek
- Jindalee Creek
- Cootamundra Creek

Flood Risk
Map

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

wma water

5

Flood Risk in Cootamundra

Overland Flow



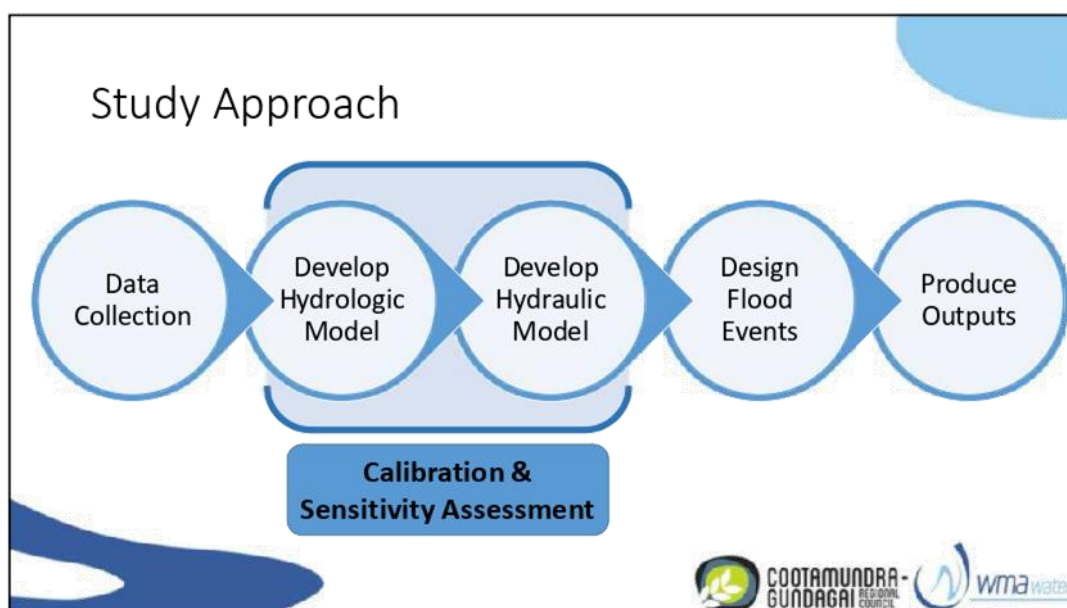

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

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Data
Collection

Community Consultation

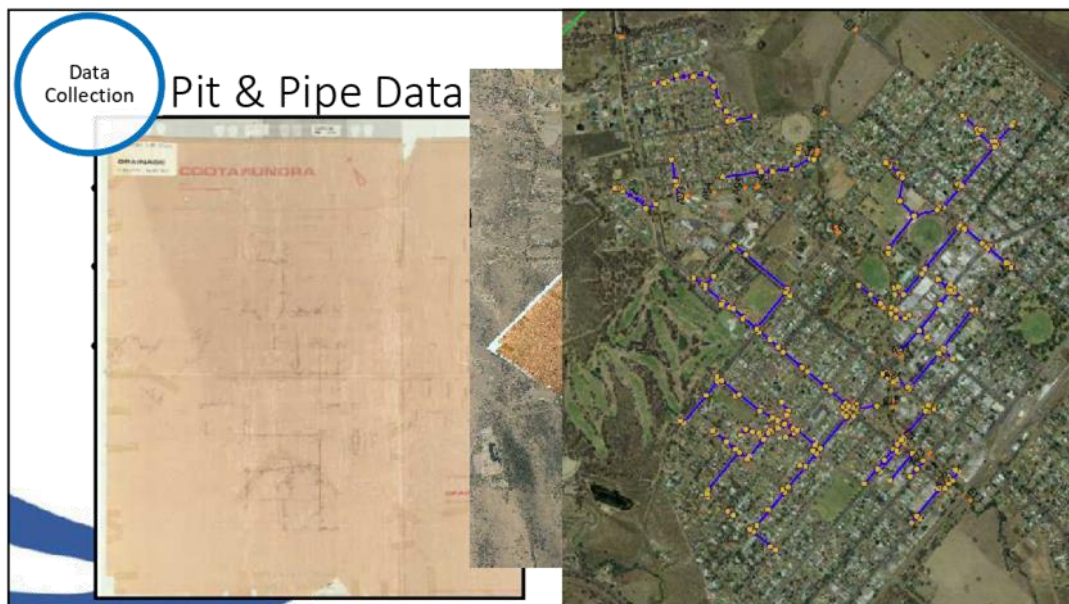
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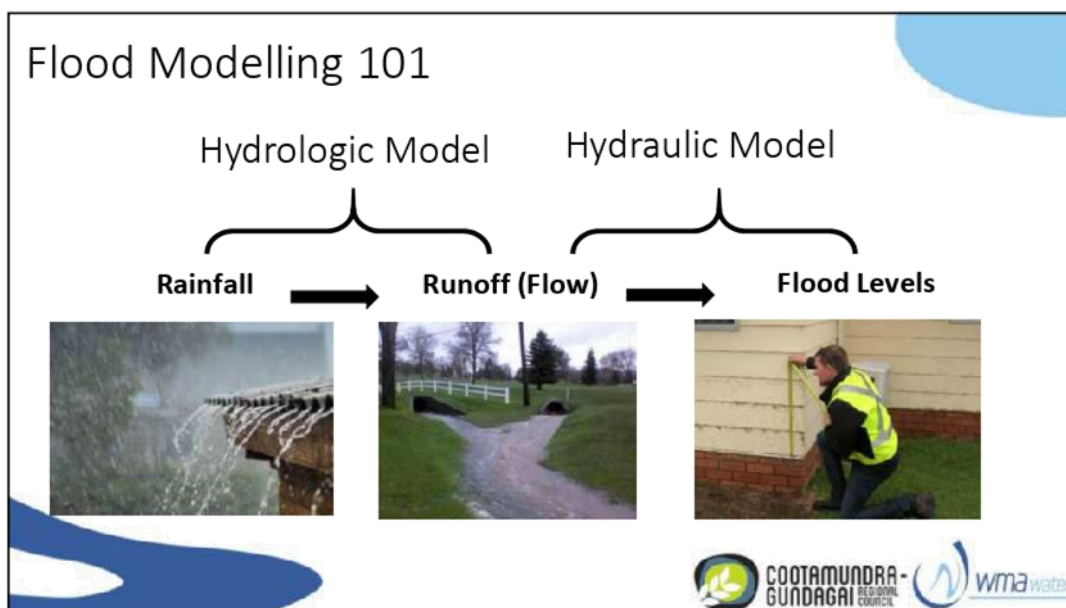
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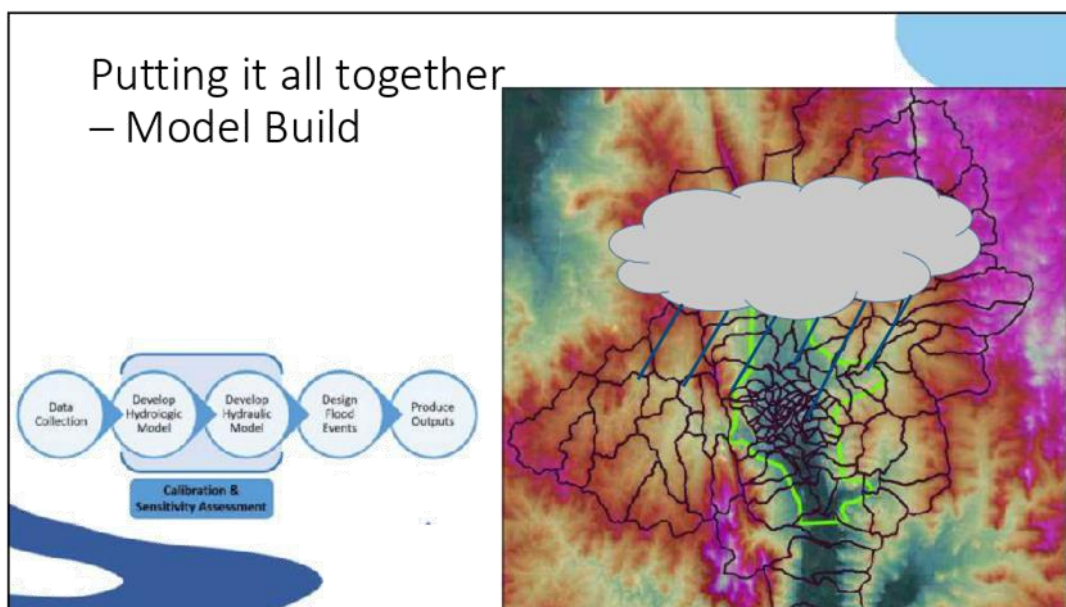
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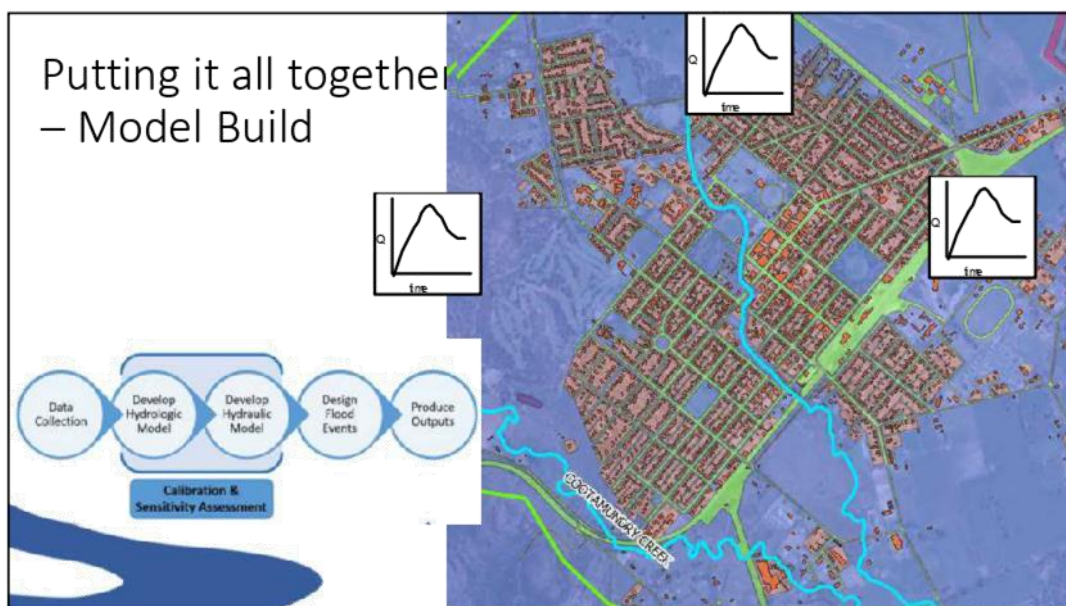


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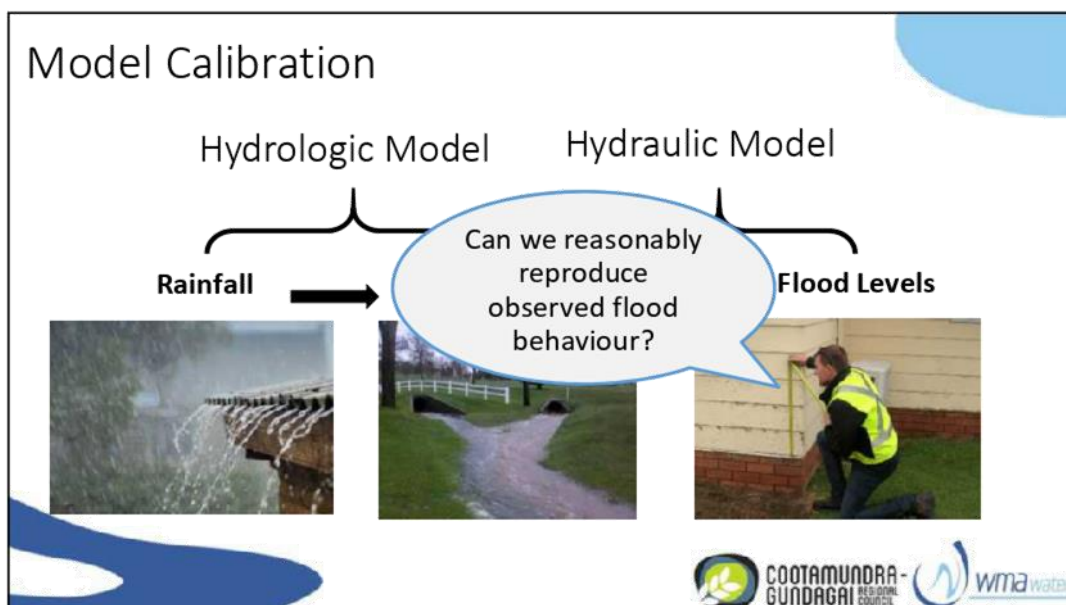


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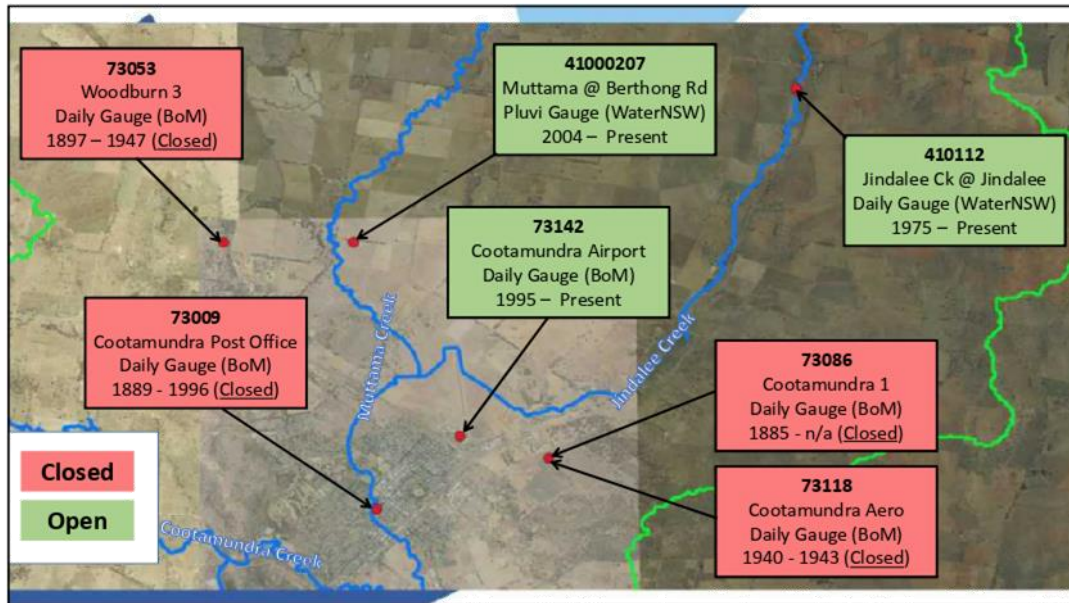


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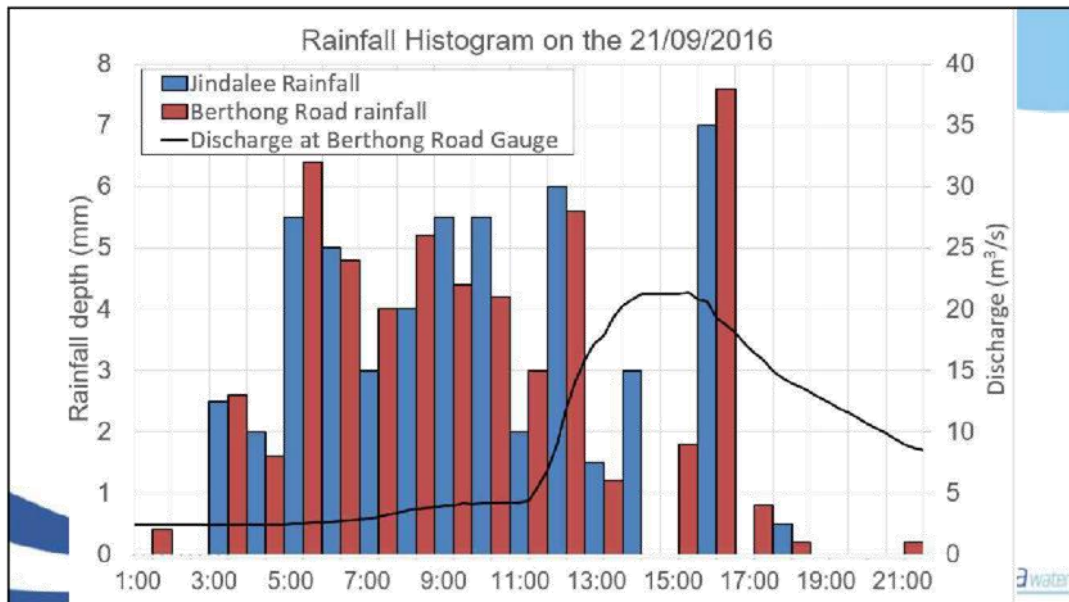


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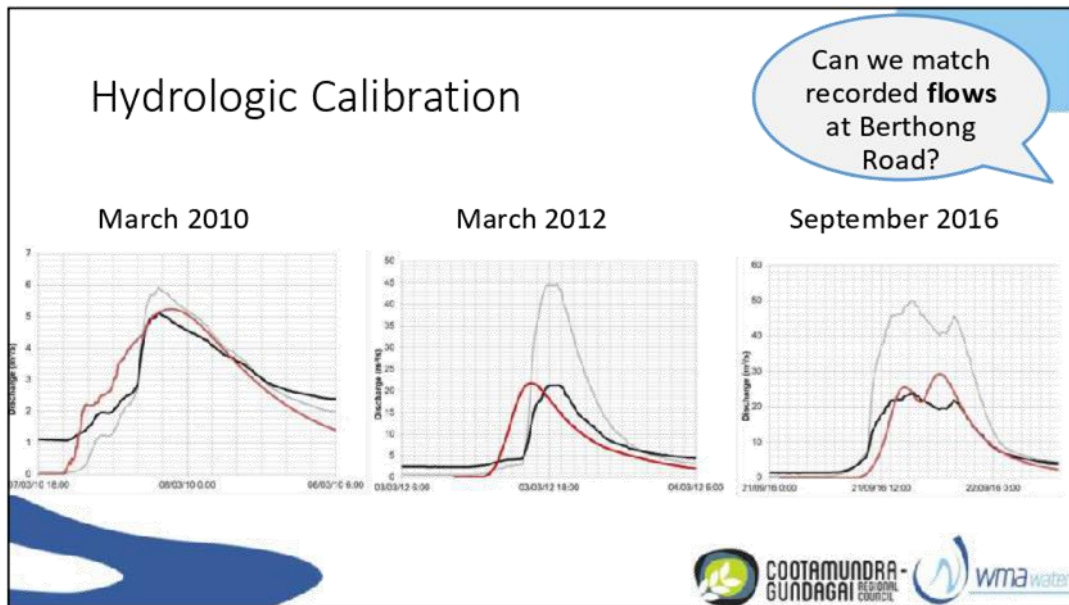


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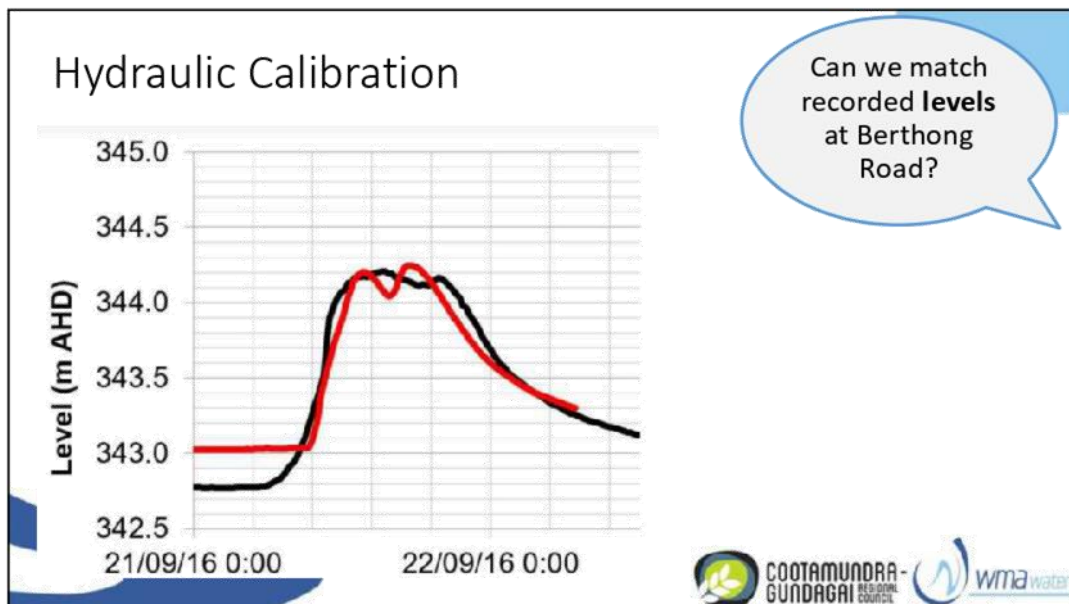


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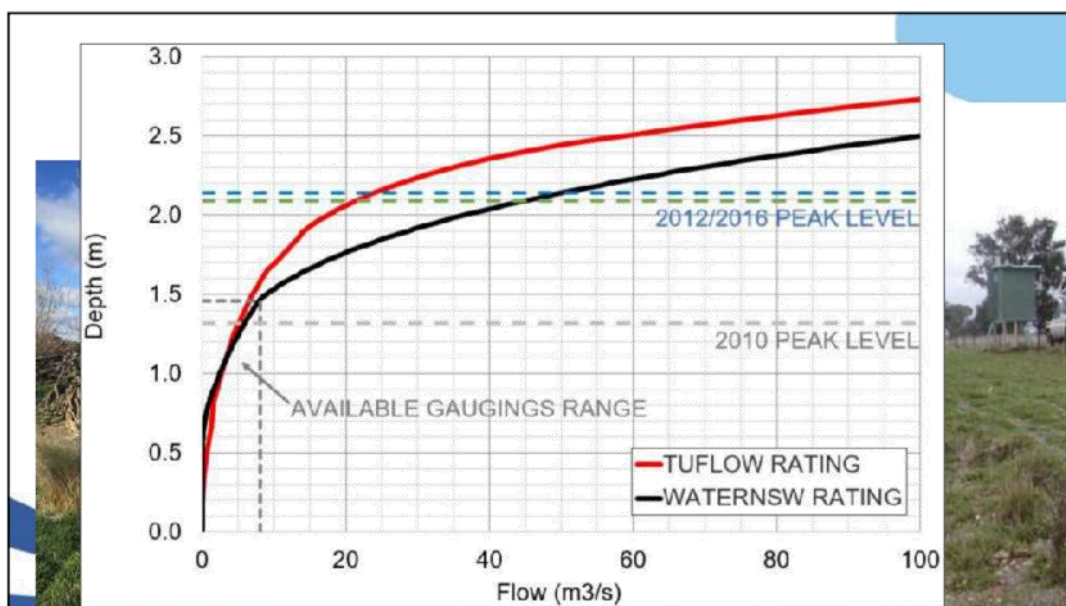
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Hydraulic Calibration



Can we match recorded levels through town?




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29/01/2020

Calibration

January 1974 Flood event:




Data available:

- 6 Flood Marks
- Daily Rainfall: 132 mm over 2 days at Cootamundra Post Office

1986 Flood Study estimated the peak flow of 76 m³/s at a point where the flow was confined (location not specified)

➤ Not appropriate for this study

Can we use any older flood events?




29

Calibration

Not enough available data for calibration on other flood events:

August 1983 and January 1984 flood event:

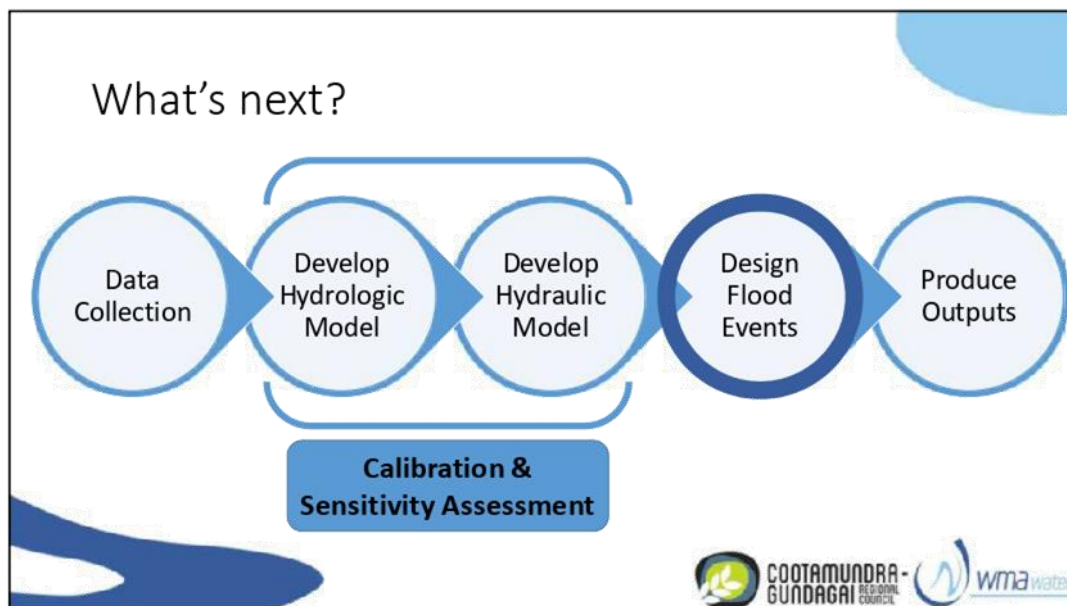
- Jindalee pluviometer available
- no flood marks available
- no stage hydrograph available

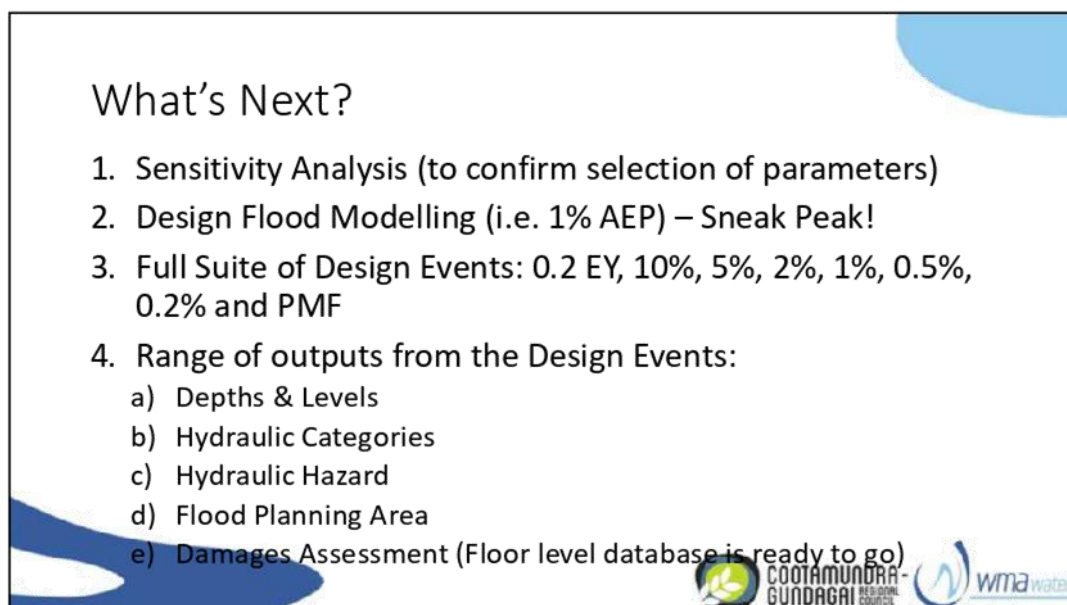
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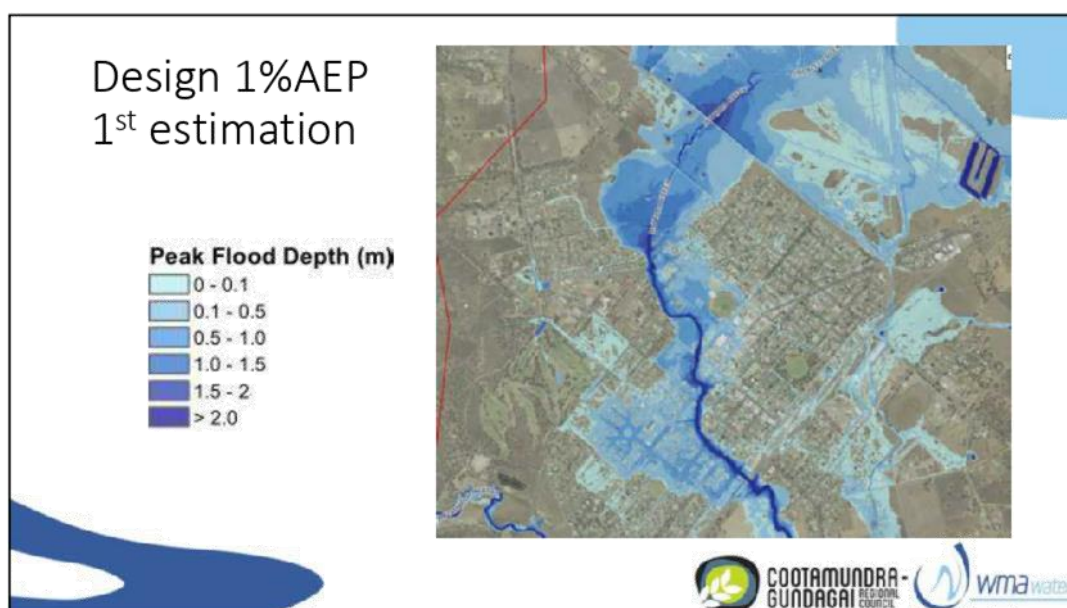


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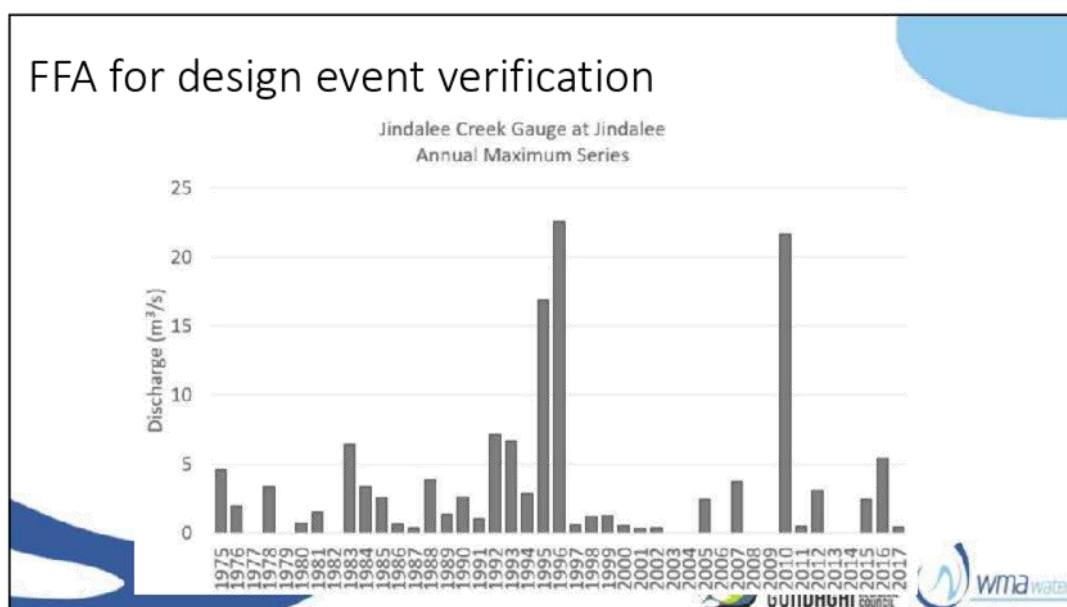


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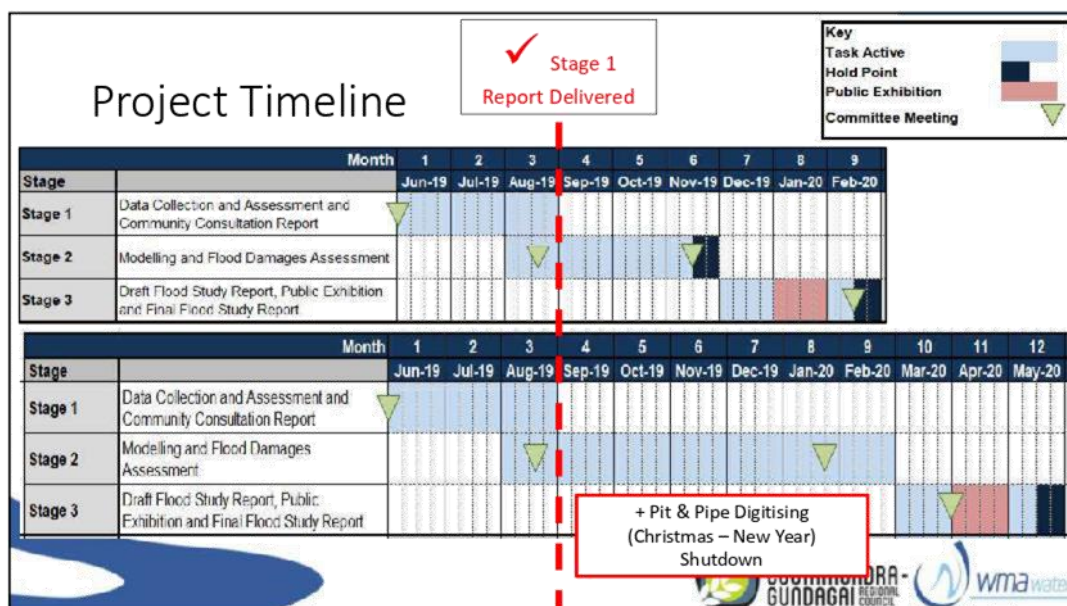


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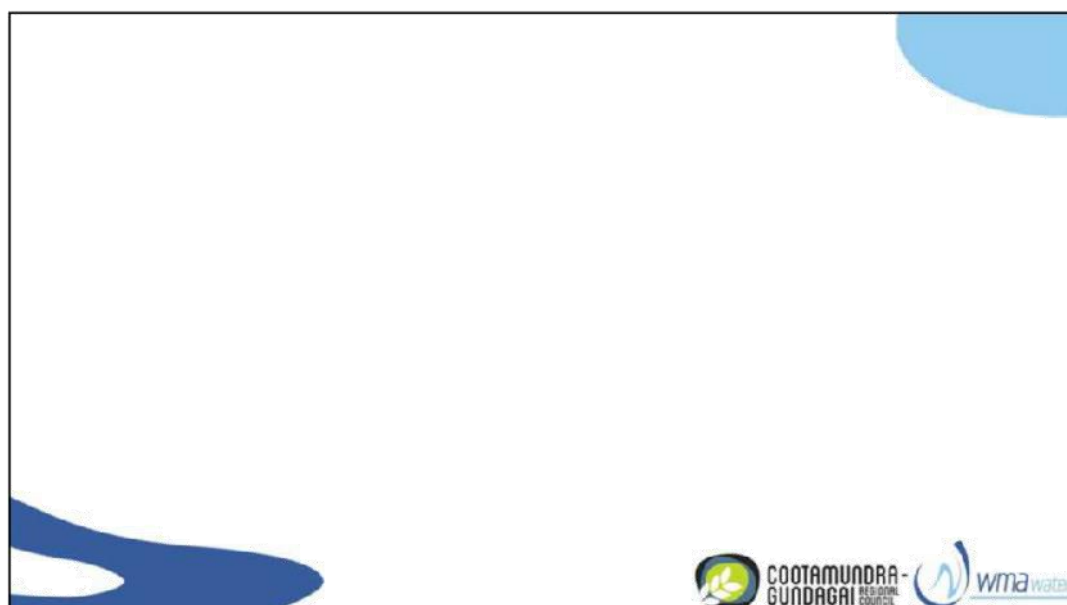


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G P S Y N E R G Y

ABN 62 099 141 689
ACN 099 141 689

10 February 2020

Mrs Katrina Humphries
Chairwoman
Attention Country Mayors' Association

Council@mpsc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Katrina

ATTRACTING DOCTORS TO RURAL TOWNS

Further to our conversation last month, I am writing to ask if the Country Mayors' Association members could nominate a staff member per town that could be a 'go to' person for potential rural doctors to meet and speak with when visiting rural centres with a view to future work.

GP Synergy is the largest federally funded GP training provider in Australia and is contracted to deliver the Australian General Practice Training (AGPT) program for whole of NSW and the ACT. As part of my role, I directly place Rural Generalist registrars with procedural skills such as anaesthesia, obstetrics and emergency medicine into towns where their skills are needed and can be used. GP Synergy also actively incentivises our trainees to go rural.

I have found during the seventeen years I have been involved in GP training that registrars who spend time with locals when visiting potential towns are more likely to move to those towns for their future practice. Those that do, talk about how they appreciated someone taking the time to meet with them over coffee or a meal and discuss the opportunities their town could offer. GP Registrars tend to want to know about the town's facilities, schools, transport, real estate and recreational opportunities which all factor into their decision regarding location of future placements.

Could the Country Mayors' Association please consider providing me with the contact details of a staff member per town that could meet with potential GP Registrars who wish to visit?

This list would be for our internal use only and not distributed more widely without express permission.

Yours sincerely

Ms Felicity Gemmell-Smith
Special Education Programs Manager

P 1300 477 963 F +61 2 9756 5755 E info@gpsynergy.com.au A PO Box 3398 Liverpool Westfield NSW 2170 W gpsynergy.com.au

ALEXANDRIA ARMIDALE BALLINA CANBERRA DUBBO LIVERPOOL NEWCASTLE WAGGA WAGGA WOLLONGONG

GP Synergy acknowledges the traditional owners of country. We pay our respects to them, and their cultures, and to their elders both past and present.



Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was established in response to the extreme bushfire season of 2019-20 which resulted in loss of life, property and wildlife; and environmental destruction.

Sometimes known as the 'Bushfire Royal Commission' it will examine how Australia is prepared and coordinated across the Commonwealth, States and Territories to respond to bushfires and other natural disasters as well as mitigation and recovery.

Submissions

The Commission is now receiving public submissions. Individuals, organisations, community groups and the broader community can make submissions on the 2019-20 bushfire season.

To make a submission visit naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au or call 1800 909 826*. **Submissions will close on Friday, 3 April 2020.**

Hearings

The Commission will hold formal hearings in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT from April. The Royal Commission wants to speak to people who were affected by the recent bushfires. Further information about the hearings will be announced in late March 2020.

Community Engagement

The Royal Commission is taking expressions of interest to attend community forums in March 2020. Commissioners will meet with small groups who are representative of fire affected communities.

Further information about the Royal Commission and its work is available at:
naturaldisaster.royalcommission.gov.au

Email rcnda.enquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

Public information line 1800 909 826*

*Monday-Friday (except public hols) 8.30am-5.30pm
(Australian Central Daylight Time)

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Office of
Local Government

Circular to Councils

Circular Details	20-04 / 21 February 2020 / A692152
Previous Circular	<i>If applicable</i>
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / Council Land Use Planning staff
Contact	Bushfire Response Advice Line on 13 77 88 or codes@planning.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information

Land use planning changes to assist communities recover from NSW bushfires

What's new or changing

- Due to the recent bushfires and the number of homes and properties damaged and destroyed the NSW Government has introduced several changes to planning rules to make it easier for people to recover and rebuild.

What this will mean for your council

- The NSW Government is committed to managing timely rebuilding processes for councils and their communities.
- Changes to planning rules have been made to ensure more people impacted by the bushfires are able to clean up and make safe their property and allow bush fire affected people to establish temporary accommodation, without the need for council approval.
- From 4 February 2020, the applicable government planning fees – BASIX Certificate and the Planning Reform Fund fees – will be waived on all development applications related to homes damaged or destroyed in the recent bushfires.
- From 5 February 2020, councils have the flexibility to modify conditions applying to a primitive camping ground, provided the council is satisfied it is necessary for the purposes of accommodating people who have lost their homes in the bushfires.
- Council staff should ensure they are aware of the regulatory changes and ensure relevant guidance is updated as necessary.

Key points

- Amendments to the [State Environmental Planning Policy \(Exempt and Complying Development Codes\) 2008 \(Codes SEPP\)](#) allow a range of low impact works to be carried out as exempt development. These works need to meet the relevant development standards in order to be carried out without council approval, including:
 - Temporary repairs and non-structural permanent repairs to damage caused by a declared state of emergency in relation to the bushfires can be carried out as exempt development. The repairs need to be carried out within two years of the state of emergency being declared
 - People will be able to temporarily put a shipping container on private land affected by the fires for storage purposes, where a state of

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E olg@olg.nsw.gov.au W www.olg.nsw.gov.au ABN 44 913 630 046

- emergency, in relation to the bushfires, has been declared, for up to two years
- People impacted by bushfires will be able to demolish buildings that have been substantially damaged by bushfire. People will also be able to partially demolish buildings to make them safe.
 - These changes commenced on 31 January 2020.
 - Amendments to the *Local Government (Manufactured Homes Estates, Caravan Parks, Camping Grounds and Moveable Dwellings) Regulation 2005* assist in the provision of emergency accommodation for persons affected by bushfires. These changes include:
 - People who are unable to return to their homes as a result of a bushfire will be able to stay in a moveable dwelling, such as a caravan, in a caravan park or camping ground for an extended period of up to two years without the need for council approval
 - People whose homes have been badly damaged in a bushfire can install a moveable dwelling, such as a caravan, on land without council approval for up to two years. If a person wishes to stay in the moveable dwelling beyond two years, council approval will be needed.
 - These changes commenced on the 5 February 2020.
 - Affected property owners can contact the Department to arrange for a BASIX Certificate to be issued free of charge. Councils can refer applicants to the dedicated BASIX bushfire recovery hotline. The contact number is 1300 054 464.
 - The NSW Government has been working in partnership with bushfire-affected councils on the new planning provisions.
 - The NSW Government is continuing to work with councils and state agencies on what else is needed to support the recovery and rebuilding effort.

Where to go for further information

- Further information on the changes is available at <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Bushfires-recovery>

Tim Hurst
Deputy Secretary
Local Government, Policy and Planning

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3 March 2020

Mr Phil McMurray
General Manager
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
PO Box 420
COOTAMUNDRA NSW 2590

Also via email: mail@cgrc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr McMurray

Building stronger partnerships with local councils

Essential Energy is focused on improving strategic relationships with local councils. We recognise we need to offer local councils safe, reliable and affordable services that meet the changing needs of councils, whilst facilitating new energy solutions to deliver the network of the future. We also recognise that electricity is a non-discretionary purchase and is a critical enabler of economic activity.

Our current focus is on improving streetlighting service levels to enhance public safety and wellbeing and automating our network connections process to better support regional development. To facilitate these and other opportunities for operational improvement, I am looking to strengthen Essential Energy's relationship with local councils through a series of actions. These actions are outlined below.

- **Focusing on council relationships at an Executive level**
As part of my Executive responsibilities for asset management and engineering, I am focused on driving improved relationships with local councils.
- **Establishing a new, dedicated role to build stronger relationships**
A new Head of Strategic Council Partnerships will report directly to me and drive a whole-of-business approach to engaging with councils to ensure that our strategic planning reflects the needs of local councils. The new Head of Strategic Council Partnerships is Geoff Burgess.

Geoff Burgess

Head of Strategic Council Partnerships
Mobile: 0408 259 518
Email: geoff.burgess@essentialenergy.com.au

- **Piloting a joint strategic planning initiative**
On 7 February 2020, we piloted a joint strategic planning approach with Tamworth Regional Council, aiming to building linkages between our systems, processes and future energy needs planning. We shared information on some of the renewable energy trials we are working on and canvassed opportunities for Essential Energy to assist Tamworth Regional Council's future energy sourcing strategies. Future workshops with other local councils will be based on learnings from this pilot
- **Engaging with all Councils on a regular basis**
A few months ago, we invited all regional local councils, in groups of five to six, to attend a series of video conferences on streetlighting. Of a total of 86 councils in our electricity distribution area, more than 60 attended. Feedback from the sessions was highly positive. We are holding video conference engagements during February/March 2020 and have expanded the agenda to cover streetlighting, connections, strategic planning, easements, development applications, vegetation management and more. Contact has been made with councils to nominate the relevant attendees from their councils for these sessions.

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3 March 2020
Building Stronger Partnerships with local councils

Page 2 of 2

Essential Energy has been transforming its business over recent years. Our core business has transformed from being a distributor and retailer, supplying electricity to residential and business customers through our network of poles and wires as well as retailing electricity, to becoming a network-only business, responsible solely for distributing electricity. We distribute electricity to around 855,000 customers across regional, rural and remote areas of NSW.

How we operate has been influenced by a number of regulatory changes. These changes include the introduction of competitive market protections through national Ring Fencing Guidelines and a Competition in Metering Rule Change under 'Power of Choice', strengthening of laws around vegetation in proximity to the network and maintenance of private assets in relation to bushfires.

The industry in which we operate is also undergoing a fundamental transition to decarbonisation, decentralisation and digitisation that will, in time, result in lower cost, more reliable and less carbon intensive energy.

I look forward to working with all local councils to support regional growth and opportunity through the measures outlined above.

In the meantime, if you would like to discuss any aspect of our operations, please do not hesitate to contact me either by phone, on 02 6589 8619, or e-mail via david.salisbury@essentialenergy.com.au.

Yours sincerely



David Salisbury
Executive Manager Engineering

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Australian Government
Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency



3 February 2020

Cootamundra Gundagai
Regional Council
Document Received

Ref: 2020/00283

10 FEB 2020

Cr Abb McAlister, Mr Phil McMurray
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
PO Box 34
GUNDAGAI NSW 2722

File No.....

Initials _____

Re: Public concern around 5G mobile networks and impact on people and the environment

Dear Cr McAlister and Mr McMurray

I am writing to you with information about the new generation of mobile phone technology - 5G. In recent months, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) has received a growing number of enquiries from local governments around Australia with respect to 5G mobile networks and concerns about the impact on the health of individuals or the environment. As such, I wanted to take the opportunity to provide you with some technical information that may assist should you receive similar enquiries.

ARPANSA is the Australian Government's primary authority on radiation protection and nuclear safety. This includes electromagnetic radiation, including from radio waves like those used in wireless communications, such as 5G mobile networks. In order to provide the best advice on the protection of the Australian public from the effects of radiation, ARPANSA undertakes its own research and reviews relevant scientific research. This includes research and reviews of exposure to radio waves from telecommunications sources such as mobile phone base stations – sometimes called 'towers'.

ARPANSA has no role in promoting the deployment of the 5G network, and no decision-making role regarding the regulatory arrangements. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) regulates radio waves from mobile phone base stations and other communications installations. The ACMA's regulatory arrangements require base stations to comply with the exposure limits in ARPANSA's *Radiation Protection Standard for Maximum Exposure Levels to Radiofrequency Fields - 3 kHz to 300 GHz* ('ARPANSA RF Standard'). The ARPANSA RF Standard is designed to protect people of all ages and health status against all known adverse health effects from exposure to radio waves.

Exposure to sufficiently high levels of radio waves can heat biological tissue and potentially cause tissue damage. However, the amount of environmental radio waves routinely encountered by the general public from telecommunications sources is far too low to produce significant heating or increased body temperature. At low levels of exposure to radio waves (that is, intensities lower than those that would produce measurable heating) the evidence for harmful health effects is ambiguous and unproven. Although there have been studies reporting a range of biological effects at low levels, there has been no indication that such effects might constitute a hazard to human health or the environment.

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In a 2016 measurement survey that ARPANSA conducted on radio wave levels in the environment, we found that exposure to traditional radio broadcasts, particularly AM radio, continues to be the most dominant source of background exposure for radio waves, with exposure 50,000 times below the safety limit in the ARPANSA RF Standard. Deployment of technologies to support 5G mobile networks including small cells in close proximity to people's homes is unlikely to change this situation, with the radio wave exposure from current mobile networks currently being on average 500,000 times below the safety limit.

The 5G mobile networks in Australia will initially use frequencies in the current mobile phone network, then move to higher frequencies in the future. It is important to note that higher frequencies do not mean higher exposure. It's not expected that the higher frequencies from 5G technologies, where they are still below the limits of the ARPANSA RF Standard, will cause any health effects or impact to the environment.

Authorities around the world including ARPANSA and the World Health Organization have examined the scientific evidence regarding possible health effects from base stations and mobile phones. Current research indicates that there are no established health effects, including cancer, from the low exposure to radio waves from mobile phone base station antennas.

ARPANSA continues to review the research into the potential health effects of radio wave emissions from base stations and other sources in order to provide accurate and up-to-date advice to the Government and the Australian people. Further information or fact sheets on this and other topics can be obtained from the ARPANSA website (<https://www.arpansa.gov.au>). We also operate a Talk to a Scientist program that provides a unique opportunity for the public and community to talk directly with our scientists on issues about radiation exposure and protection in Australia. You are welcome to refer any individuals seeking information on 5G technologies to this program via the details on the ARPANSA website (<https://www.arpansa.gov.au/talk-to-a-scientist>).

You may also be aware that the Commonwealth Government recently announced a \$9 million program over four years¹ to provide additional funding for research and to deliver accessible information to communities about the safety of regulated radio waves from telecommunications facilities. Relevant departments and agencies including ARPANSA are working on the detail and deployment of this program, and I expect further information will be provided in future.

I hope this information provides some assurance around the state of the science, and assists you with managing any concerns raised in your local government area.

Yours sincerely




Dr Gillian Hirth
Chief Radiation Health Scientist
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency

¹ <https://www.minister.communications.gov.au/minister/paul-fletcher/news/building-community-confidence-5g-safety>



Australian Government
**Australian Radiation Protection
and Nuclear Safety Agency**





5 facts ON 5G

- 1** 5G is the **5th generation** in mobile phone technology.
- 2** 5G emits radio waves, also called **radiofrequency electromagnetic energy (RF EME)**.
- 3** There are **no established short term or long term health effects** to people or the environment from radio waves at the power levels used for 5G.
- 4** 5G will initially use the same type of radio waves as 4G. In the future, 5G will use '**millimetre waves**'. Millimetre waves cannot travel as far as those used in 4G, so **more small cell base stations are required**.
- 5** ARPANSA maintains the health standard for all RF EME. The Standard is consistent with **international best practice** and is reviewed regularly as new research emerges.

For more information visit [arpansa.gov.au](https://www.arpansa.gov.au)



BSP: 019 - 162
Mr Phil McMurray
General Manager
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
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**Cootamundra Gundagai
Regional Council**
Document Received

18 FEB 2020

File No.

Initials _____

Dear Phil,

As Executive Director Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience (AIDR), I am pleased to provide you a copy of our 2018-19 *Year in Review*.

The current bushfire crisis has shown that Australia's hazards are becoming more severe and stretching the capacity of our emergency management systems and the resilience of our communities.

As Australia moves from bushfire response into relief and recovery with impacted communities, we know from previous disasters that a long-term approach to recovery is needed. Now more than ever we need to place resilience at the centre of everything we do. We have an opportunity to build knowledge and resilience into the recovery process and to think about how we can build back better to mitigate against future disasters.

Since 2015 AIDR has been developing, maintaining and sharing knowledge and learning to support a disaster resilient Australia. This exchange of knowledge is critical to Australia's ability to reduce disaster risk and enhance disaster resilience.

As demonstrated by our *Year in Review*, AIDR continues to deliver a program of work aligned to its core purpose of enabling disaster resilience. Through themed knowledge products, services and capability development events, AIDR facilitates professional and community development to support shared responsibility in a more disaster resilient Australia.

We are here to support and assist governments of all levels, communities, NGO's, not-for-profits, research organisations, education partners, volunteers and the business community, by connecting you to knowledge and resources to assist you in your work with communities.

Please get in touch if we can assist your organisation in any way in 2020.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Leck", is positioned above the printed name and title.

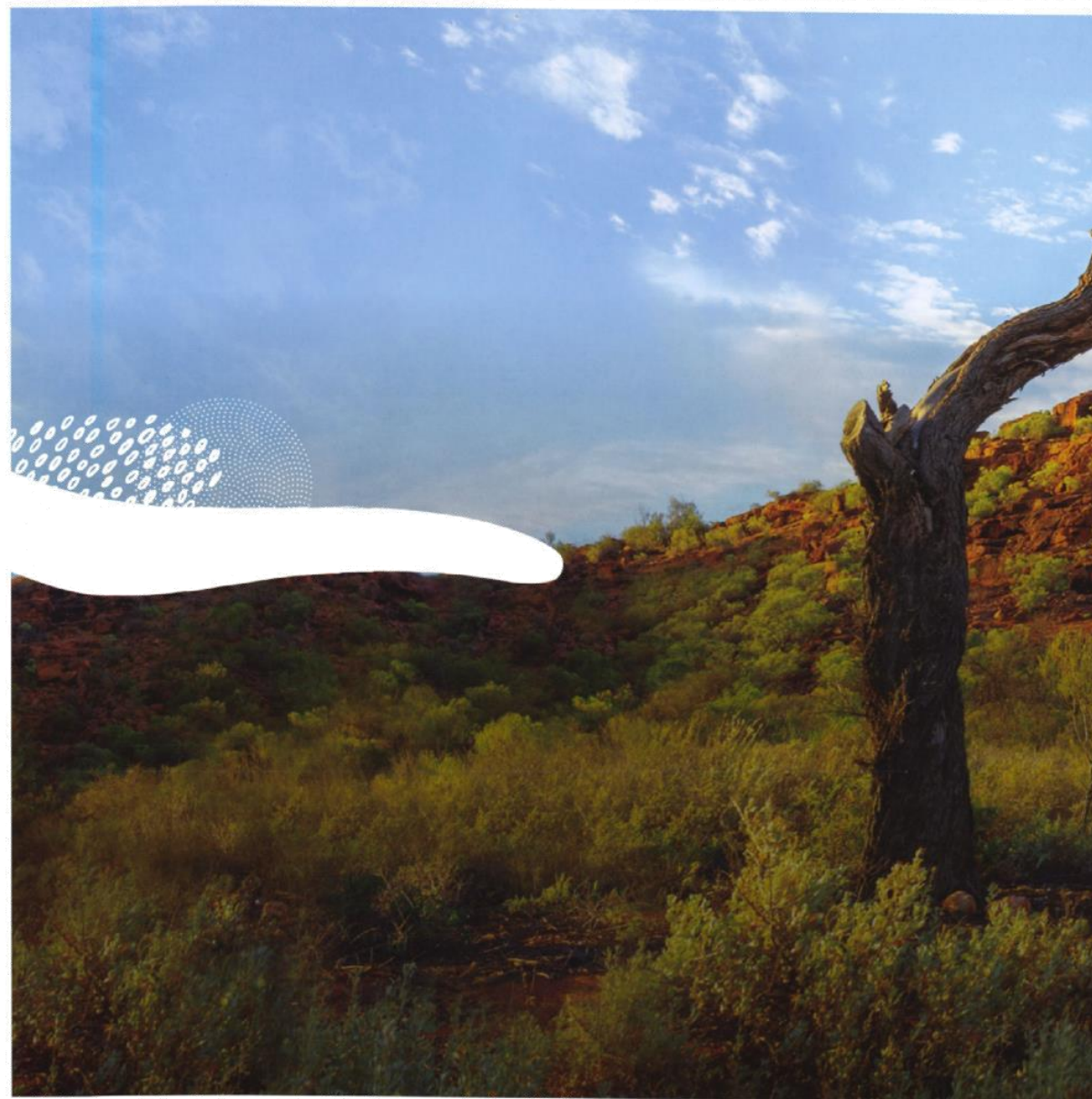
Amanda Leck
Executive Director
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

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Rob Cameron OAM

Director-General
Emergency Management Australia

As 2019 draws to a close, Australia's hazards are setting precedents and stretching the capacity of our emergency management systems, and the resilience of our communities. The fires in New South Wales and Queensland in August, September and October clearly demonstrate the lengthening of the traditional 'summer' season of hazards that Australia faces and our evolving exposure to sources of risk. Bushfires are getting starts in winter and are occurring in areas with little or no recorded history of burning.

The exchange of knowledge is critical to Australia's ability to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from this changing and escalating disaster landscape. The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience – funded by EMA, our national disaster management organisation – continues to successfully serve in its role of facilitating this knowledge management for Australia.

AIDR, through its broad engagement with Australian volunteers, fire and emergency services authorities, private sector organisations, academia, and the not-for-profit sector, provides world leading emergency management doctrine. The ongoing lessons management process that AIDR leads through doctrine development and maintenance, enables the environment in which evidence-based decisions and actions can be taken to improve the safety of our communities. As we confront a changing climate, complex systemic, societal and economic interdependencies, and increasing vulnerabilities, the importance of this work is self-evident.

In close partnership with EMA, AIDR recently delivered a national series of Understanding Disaster Risk workshops that explored contemporary thinking and guidance on how we understand our relationship with hazards, vulnerability, risk and the reduction of those factors. These forums introduced discussion on perhaps the least understood dimension of disaster risk – vulnerability – to the Australian community. Further exploration of vulnerability will allow us to better understand and address the underlying causes of disaster risk.

I also want to acknowledge the good work AIDR has delivered this year in supporting Australia's emergency management volunteers. Our volunteers are critical members of our communities who routinely



sacrifice precious time away from families, responsibilities and jobs for our safety and security. Again, in close partnership with EMA, AIDR has delivered scholarship and development programs that support emergency management volunteers to contribute in ever greater ways to their organisations and the communities they serve.

This past year has again demonstrated how critical it is that all sections of Australian society work together to improve Australia's disaster resilience. EMA and the broader Department of Home Affairs looks forward to informing the way ahead in continuing a close partnership with AIDR.

Amanda Leck

Executive Director
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

As the Executive Director of AIDR I am delighted to report that it continues to deliver a program of work aligned to its core purpose of enabling disaster resilience. An independent evaluation of AIDR this year found it delivered considerable value for money and overachieved in several areas. Through themed knowledge products, services and events, AIDR facilitates professional and community development to support shared responsibility in a more disaster resilient Australia.

AIDR's role in knowledge management is reflected in the growing wealth of resources on the Knowledge Hub, including the Australian Journal of Emergency Management, the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection, the National Disaster Recovery Monitoring and Evaluation Database and the Australian Disaster Resilience Glossary.

AIDR's Professional Development Program is sharing knowledge among emergency management agencies, volunteers, teachers and educators, researchers and community groups. Working closely with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, AIDR facilitated the delivery of the High Consequences Decision Making and Leadership in Disaster Crisis and Adversity professional development modules, which were very well received.

In 2019, AIDR delivered new events and attracted a record number of abstracts, applicants and registrants for existing events, including the Resilient Australia Awards, the Lessons Management Forum and the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference.

The Emergency Management Scholarship Program has completed its fifth and final round, with scholarships awarded to volunteers from all jurisdictions across a wide range of volunteer agencies. The Volunteer Leadership Program also continued across regional locations in all jurisdictions.

Recognising young people as active participants in disaster resilience, DRANZSEN has engaged with an increasingly diverse network, including local government and youth-focused organisations such as Scouts and Save the Children, to bring new perspectives to light.

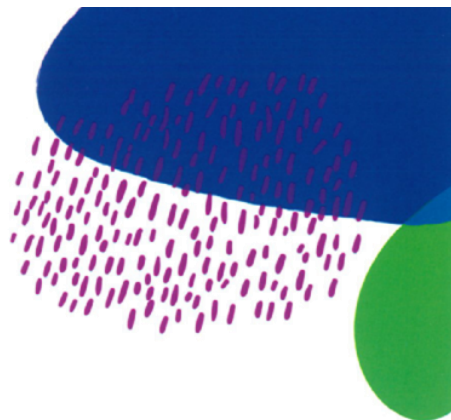


The Centre of Excellence for Prescribed Burning continues to promote a holistic approach to prescribed burning for ecological, cultural and community safety outcomes. In 2019, it delivered resources and field trips and established the inaugural Excellence in Prescribed Burning Award.

AIDR would like to thank its partners: the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs, AFAC, Australian Red Cross and the Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC for their support in the development and delivery of knowledge products and services for a more disaster resilient Australia.

7





Knowledge management

The Australian Disaster Resilience Knowledge Hub continues to grow as a key platform to share disaster resilience knowledge. It is home to curated collections of knowledge and resources, as well as the Australian Journal of Emergency Management and the Australian Disaster Resilience Handbook Collection. An important part of the Knowledge Hub is the DisasterMapper, enabling everyday Australians to learn more about disaster events that have occurred in the past.

In 2018–19, AIDR published five new collections on the Knowledge Hub and significantly updated two others.

The **Lessons Management Collection** highlights key resources, information and examples to guide a consistent approach to lessons management in Australia.

The **Black Saturday Collection** commemorates the ten year anniversary of this highly significant event, bringing together a range of information, research and recovery resources.

The **Warnings Collection** hosts key guidance material and research on public information and warnings, and professional development resources for practitioners.

The **Disaster Risk Reduction Collection** is home to critical national resources for disaster risk reduction, including the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, Profiling Australia's Vulnerability report, and Guidance for Strategic Decisions on Climate and Disaster Risk.

The **Disaster Resilience Directory** provides a central point to access international, national and jurisdictional strategies, frameworks, plans and major reports that frame disaster resilience in Australia. It also brings together a directory of key high-level organisations and groups.

Knowledge management and professional development go hand-in-hand, and AIDR has been working to curate content so that the knowledge generated through events continues to benefit the disaster resilience sector going forward.

The **Australian Disaster Resilience Conference Collection** was developed to house conference proceedings and the significant knowledge products that are created in association with the annual conference.

The **Professional Development Collection** bridges knowledge management and professional development, by outlining available professional development offerings as well as hosting the proceedings from past events.



Education for Young People

The Education for Young People Program supports learning about natural hazards in Australia and highlights initiatives that enable young people to take part in building community resilience before, during and after an emergency or disaster.

The program is guided and supported by the Disaster Resilience Education Strategy Group (DRESG) and Disaster Resilient Australia–New Zealand Schools Education Network (DRANZSEN). Both the strategy group and the education network have continued to grow and diversify, with a shared focus on partnerships for learning and youth participation.

The strategy group of 13 members includes experts in teaching, community engagement, emergency services and research. The group maintains an overview of program activities and events, helping to align the program with the priorities of our stakeholders, especially young Australians in schools and other educational settings. *Disaster Resilience Education: Young Australians for a disaster resilient future* was published in November 2018 to communicate the group's strategic vision for the Education for Young People Program in more detail.

AIDR education network (DRANZSEN) membership has increased by 50 per cent in 12 months to more than 600 members. Key stakeholders in emergency services continue to provide strong leadership in extending the reach of the network and identifying new partnerships. A strengthened presence from local councils, for example, introduced the network to a range of projects undertaken in partnership with schools

and young people around the country to reduce the risk of disaster in a changing climate.

Active network members worked collaboratively to shape the program of successful state DRANZSEN events in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia followed by the National Forum in Melbourne, with over 200 participants overall. Presentations from education representatives, including teachers and students, enabled the network to develop a better understanding of what works best for today's students and facilitated dynamic cross-sector dialogue.

Additional engagement with the education sector was pursued through Education for Young People Program presentations at two of the largest geography teacher association conferences in Australia. The conferences were attended by hundreds of educators responding to a demand for better understanding of the link between climate change, natural hazards and local disaster risk.

The audience for the Education for Young People newsletter, launched in 2018 to support the network and celebrate good practice in disaster resilience education, has grown to 750 subscribers. The newsletter provides access to all DRANZSEN event materials for those unable to attend, as well as linking to case studies, news and resources from around the country to inspire subscribers to engage with young people as learners, innovators and important members of the community.