

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

18 DECEMBER 2022:

Bala-yanhi Miya

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) Mayor Charlie Sheahan suspended the standing orders for a short period during the ordinary meeting of Council on Tuesday night, for a special Welcome to Country presented by local first nations leader Mr Peter Beath.

CGRC mayor Cr Sheahan welcomed members of the Cootamundra Aboriginal Working Party (CAWP) to the meeting. Peter Beath, Colina Meadows and Amanda Levett, who were attending the meeting to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Bala-yanhi Miya, (Together We're Working), between CAWP and CGRC.

The purpose of the Bala-yanhi Miya is to formalise the agreement of The Parties to lay founding principles and set out specific commitments for the ongoing relationship and mutual cooperation with CAWP and Council. Both Parties share the desire and goodwill to work jointly to improve the presences and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in planning and services provided by Council with a view to improved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, employment, health, and wellbeing outcomes. Alongside this is the wish for broader understanding and recognition amongst the wider Cootamundra-Gundagai communities of the regions' rich Aboriginal heritage and proud tradition.

The Bala-yanhi Miya is underpinned by strong commitment from both organisations to realising long term benefits for the community through improved understanding and an enhanced working relationship.

Cr Sheahan said the members of CAWP, and Council had established the dialogue so into the future both organisations can grow and learn for each other.

Colina Meadows Chairperson made a statement on behalf of CAWP and said that she has only seen one other Council that has the same working and genuine MoU. Colina congratulated Councillors for taking the MoU onboard and is looking forward to a genuine partnership and working with Council into the future.

Amanda Levett Deputy Chairperson for CAWP spoke and said CAWP appreciated that Council is prepared to work together and learn with them.

"It's an ongoing conversation and an ongoing partnership. We look forward to working together, learning together," Amanda said.

Peter Beath marked the occasion with the presentation to Council of a Message Stick, as a reminder of the commitment made by both parties for this partnership between the two organisations.

Photo and caption

Peter Beath Executive member for CAWP and CGRC Mayor Charlie Sheahan mark the occasion of the signing of the Bala-yanhi Miya Memorandum of Understanding between Council and the Cootamundra Aboriginal Working Party with the presentation of a Message Stick that has unique carvings marking Wiradjuri heritage.



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