

**MEDIA RELEASE:**

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**APPROVING GOOD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS A STRONGER FUTURE FOR THE COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI REGION**

The future of the Cootamundra and Gundagai region depends on encouraging good development outcomes, not simply rejecting poor proposals. By focusing on quality, collaboration and clear planning processes, Council is working to support growth that benefits the entire community.

Mayor of the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Cr McAlister said Council's role is to help shape development so it delivers long term value for residents and businesses.

"Good development is not something to fear. It is something to plan for and encourage," Cr McAlister said.

"Our focus is on approving developments that are well designed, properly located and aligned with community expectations, while maintaining firm standards for those that are not."

Council has recently made significant improvements to its development assessment processes, resulting in more efficient approval timeframes and clearer, more transparent pathways for applicants. These improvements aim to provide greater certainty for developers while ensuring planning decisions remain responsible and consistent.

Interim General Manager Roger Bailey said improving internal processes has been a key priority for Council.

"We have reviewed how applications move through Council and made changes to streamline assessments without compromising quality," Mr Bailey said.

"The result is faster decision making, clearer communication and better outcomes for applicants and the community alike."

A cornerstone of Council's approach is encouraging developers to engage with Council early through pre-lodgement development application meetings. These meetings allow proponents to discuss proposals with experienced Council staff, understand planning requirements upfront and address potential issues before lodging a formal application.

"Early conversations make a real difference," Mr Bailey said.

"When developers talk to us early, we can help identify constraints, provide clear guidance and often avoid delays later in the process."

Cr McAlister said this collaborative approach benefits everyone.

"Approving good development is not about lowering the bar. It is about setting clear expectations and working constructively to meet them," he said.

"By engaging early with Council, developers give themselves the best chance of achieving a timely approval and delivering a project the community can be proud of."

Council remains committed to refusing proposals that fail to meet planning, environmental or community standards. However, by improving approval processes and encouraging early engagement, Council is better positioned to support sustainable growth, boost local investment and enhance liveability across the Cootamundra-Gundagai region.

The focus is not on stopping change, but on shaping it responsibly and ensuring that development across the Cootamundra-Gundagai region supports a strong and resilient future for generations to come.

**ENDS**

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