

# President's Report

It is with pleasure that I present my President's report for the year 2004/2005.

## **REGIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

No doubt many of you will have heard and read the recent publicity regarding the North Midlands Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (NMVROC) proposal to form a Regional Council. Council's participation in the Regional Council is in the endeavor to deliver greater efficiencies and cost savings in the delivery of services and facilities to the Shire of Coorow and its residents. These can better be achieved in co-operation with our neighbouring Councils and should be beneficial to all participants. I stress this is not an amalgamation of Councils. Whilst this proposal is dependant upon a favourable reception and funding from the State Government, should it proceed, it will in no way reduce the autonomy of the Shire of Coorow. Council has financially committed to participate for a period of 4 years to endeavour to adequately gauge if such benefits can be achieved.

Council will keep the Community fully informed on the process and outcomes.

## **YOUR COUNCIL**

2005 has seen the retirement from Council of Jim Ovens and Brian McTaggart, taking with them in excess of 30 years experience on Council. I wish to thank both gentlemen on their dedication to the Shire of Coorow.

With the 2005 Local Government elections two new Councillors have joined, Cr Susan Murray and Cr Trevor Pethick, both of Leeman. Welcome to you both and congratulations to Crs Belinda McDonald,

Sue Beswick and Jan Waite on your election and re-election respectively.

Council is now made up of four coastal based representatives and four inland based representatives. This balance is proving to be very workable with all Councillors taking a keen interest in all matters relating to the entire Shire. Councillors have been very receptive to undertaking training sessions to enable them to better serve the Community and I commend them for this attitude.

Cr John Stacy was elected Deputy Shire President at the May 2005 meeting and I personally congratulate this outstanding community member on his election and thank him for his sage advice.

## **EXECUTIVE STAFF**

Council's executive staff continues to serve both Council and the Community at an excellent level effectively bridging the gap between the two administration centres and the diverse communities that make up the Shire of Coorow. This is not an easy task and I commend the staff on the efforts they have made in this area.

Mr Gary Sherry, Council's Chief Executive Officer presents an extremely professional approach to all matters of Council business and I believe that his professionalism has greatly contributed to the executive staff's cohesiveness. I would like to thank Mr Sherry for not just the efforts he puts into his work but to the whole Community. For a person with a young family he certainly gives a great deal of his free time to Community matters and groups. I should therefore also be thanking his wife Natalie and his family for their support of him.

Mr Sherry has continued to give myself in my role as Shire President outstanding support and I sincerely thank him for this.

There is seldom, if ever an issue of Council or the Community that I have not been fully briefed upon and I believe this shows the effective communication between Mr Sherry and myself. Given that I reside 40 km from the Coorow Administration Centre these communications form an essential part of my being able to effectively perform my role as Shire President. Thank you Gary.

Mr Peter Gillis Council's Manager Works and Services continues to manage the very visual part of the shire's infrastructure to a high standard. His technical advice to Council is much valued and I firmly believe that his efforts have generated more grant and outside work revenue than neighbouring municipalities. Both Peter and his wife Maxine are valued members of our Community. Thank you Peter for your efforts.

Welcome to Mr John Randall who has joined us as Manager of Community Development. Perhaps more so than any other member of the executive staff John has to deal directly with the public and is not always able to 'tell them what they want to hear'. I have noted with pleasure John's professional and very well informed performance of his duties during the short time he has been in Council's employ. I am sure both Council and the Community will benefit from John's professionalism.

Mr Dacre Alcock Council's Manager of Finance and Administration has over the past year continued in the highly enthusiastic and efficient way he started out with Council. Councillors and myself have benefited greatly from Dacre's concise, but much more understandable, Financial Reports. Testament to Dacre's effectiveness in his role is borne out in our Audit Report, which is greatly improved on previous years. I would on behalf of the entire Council, wish Dacre and his

fiancé Gemma every happiness for the upcoming nuptials and also to thank them for becoming an integral part of the Coorow Community.

#### **ADMINISTRATION STAFF**

Council's Administration Staff present an efficient and friendly face at the front counters in both Leeman and Coorow Administration Centres and also on the phone. Their performance is commented upon very favourably on many occasions and I thank them for their efforts. The administration staff couldn't better assist Councillors and myself and I congratulate them on their dealings with Councillors, the public and myself.

#### **WORKS CREW**

Council's Works Crew under the capable direction of Works Supervisor, Mr Kelvin Bean continues to maintain the infrastructure of the Shire of Coorow to a high standard. Theirs is the job to do the works budgeted for by Council and they have many factors outside of their control to contend with, illegal loads and inclement weather conditions to name two. The Shire of Coorow maintains some \$30 million in assets and the care and maintenance of a large portion these assets is reliant upon an efficient works crew. Their efforts are much valued by Council and myself.

#### **FINANCE**

Council has continued to prioritize the maintenance and upgrading of the shires extensive infrastructure and necessary plant.

The Shire of Coorow covers in excess of 4,000 sq km. It is a diverse shire and it is Council's and my responsibility to provide for all our communities with the best possible management and development of

infrastructure and facilities. Council has the responsibility of balancing 'wants' and 'needs' never an easy task. While this will not always make for popular decisions Councillors always give careful consideration to proposals put to Council and our deliberations take in many factors, principally the benefit and cost effective delivery of project / items the wider community. In setting the 2005/2006 Budget Council has I believe, has set a fair and balanced Budget with responsible attitude in reducing borrowings.

Over the last year Council has entered into a period of consolidation and the reduction of our debt level. Our auditors have commented favorably on areas in our financial operations that needed to be and were changed for the better management of the shires financial resources and to meet our legislative requirements. We are now also progressing along the path of establishing 'cash backed' reserves.

In a developing shire such as Coorow there will always be an increasing list of expenditure requirements. I feel that your Council does its best to address these requirements in a timely and efficient manner given the available time and financial resources.

Overall the Shire of Coorow has fared well with increased funding from the Grants Commission, Regional Road Group and other grants. This increased funding coupled with sound financial management has enabled Council to consolidate its financial position without having to resort to previously budgeted for loans.

## **COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS/VOLUNTEERS**

Where would we be without the wonderful generous people who make up the Shire of Coorow's Community Groups and Volunteers? They are the mainstay of the entire Community and on behalf of

Council and entire Community I would like to thank you all for what you do to make the Shire of Coorow the great place it is.

Council endeavours to give support to any project deemed worthy by the Community. This may be a cash contribution or 'works in kind'. Your Council welcomes proposals from Community groups, but please remember that Council has a legislative requirement to set and work to a Budget. If your time frame does not always fit within Council's, it doesn't mean Council are being negative about your particular project, just that they need to have an eye on the overall picture. Each and every one of your Councillors is here to serve the best interest of the entire Community regardless of their personal interests.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion I would like to personally thank my fellow Councillors and their dedication to the Shire of Coorow and its communities. The wider Community is admirably represented both at Council and on the various external committees on which they represent the Shire of Coorow.

I continue to greatly enjoy my role as Shire President and thank my fellow Councillors and the wider Community for the support they have given me, it is an honor to represent you. I will continue to give my utmost for the Community and the Shire of Coorow. Please feel free to contact me should you wish to discuss any matter relating to Council and the Shire.



**Moira J Girando**  
**Shire President**