



# OUR SHIRE

*a great place to live*



## COUNCILLORS ELECT NEW MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Mayor Maurice Collison and Deputy Mayor Kiwa Fisher were elected unopposed at the Upper Hunter Shire Council extraordinary meeting on 16 June 2020.

Both were elected to Council in 2012, and again in 2016.

Cr Collison has been Deputy Mayor for over five years (regularly re-elected to the role by the other councillors). He has been a grazier in Woolooma for many years, and lived in the Upper Hunter Shire region all his life.

This is Cr Fisher's first time serving as Deputy Mayor. He lives outside of Aberdeen having moved to the area in 1999 as manager of a thoroughbred stud. He and his wife are partners in a catering company based in Scone.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected every two years, so there will be a vote in September 2020.

### General Council elections 4 September 2021

Councillors also voted unanimously to recommend to the Minister for Local Government that there not be a by-election for the one vacancy on Council. A factor in the councillors' decision was that a by-election would cost approximately \$150,000. The eight councillors will continue to represent residents and determine Council's direction.



Newly elected Mayor Maurice Collison [left] and Deputy Mayor Kiwa Fisher [right] on the job.

### Council thanks Wayne Bedggood

After serving on Council for nearly eight years and as Mayor for five, Wayne Bedggood resigned for personal reasons on the 9 June 2020.

"On behalf of the organisation I thank Wayne for his diligent service," Cr Collison said.

"Wayne was a brilliant mayor - passionate, hard-working, practical and straight to the point - and he will be much missed."

## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

It's been a challenging few months.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, in April councillors had our first Council meeting via Zoom – with staff and councillors speaking, listening and seeing each other on our screens.

Many things haven't changed - prior to meetings we carefully consider the bulk of business papers that is the agenda. The meeting is a chance to ask questions and debate and then

make our decisions. Ultimately we always try and do what is in the best interests of the shire and according to the many laws and regulations that apply to local government.

### Family and screen time

My wife, Lucille and I are lucky to live on a rural property so we've always spent a lot of time 'socially isolating'.

We had some experience video conferencing by Skype with a son and daughter-in-law in Canada, so we're grateful for the technology.

Our first granddaughter was born in April in Gunnedah, and another granddaughter a few weeks later in Maitland. We desperately wanted to visit, see and hold them, but it wasn't worth the risk. After waiting four weeks for that first cuddle, there were happy tears.

Family is such a large part of my life and probably yours.

New technologies are a challenge for many of us, but worth it.

Stay safe.  
Maurice Collison,  
MAYOR

# BEST REGIONAL LIVESTOCK SALEYARD IN NSW?



Deputy Mayor Cr Kiwa Fisher, Mayor Cr Maurice Collison and Cr Ron Campbell at the saleyards' official opening .

- Tanks collecting water for livestock drinking water, truck wash and dust suppression, reducing costs and reliance on town water
- Walk through cattle scanners, improving cattle management and allowing overnight cattle agistment
- Improved parking, landscaping, and drainage
- A canteen, amenities and office space
- Upgrading of security (including CCTV), power, lighting and IT upgrades which has led to the introduction of online auctions.

Online selling at the saleyards went live on 31 March, making it easier for buyers outside the region to purchase stock from these saleyards. There are registered online buyers from NT, QLD, SA, VIC and all over NSW

“Cattle are being sold for the best price possible benefiting the farmers who are selling their stock through these saleyards,” Cr Collison said.

Mayor Maurice Collison reckons the Scone Regional Livestock Selling Centre may now be the best regional saleyard in NSW.

The state-of-art facility was officially opened on 24 June by New England MP Barnaby Joyce and Upper Hunter MP Michael Johnsen after a multi-million dollar upgrade. The facility continued to operate through the construction and Covid-19 restrictions.

The saleyards recently completed the annual accreditation audit and there has been very positive feedback from agents, vendors and buyers.

Cr Collison said the project has increased the capacity, efficiency and sustainability of saleyard operations, supported local jobs and increased economic activity, as well as improving the welfare of livestock, and safety for those working or visiting there.

“On behalf of the Council, the farmers, agents, transporters and everyone else working in the livestock industry, I thank the Australian and NSW Governments for investing to create a state of the art regional saleyards that will play a vital role in a sustainable, food supply system.”

Scone Regional Livestock Selling Centre has been operating since the 1940s and the facilities were originally established in the mid 1970s.

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“In the long run this is a game changer for agricultural producers in this region, forever.”

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## The upgrade includes:

- Manure management and recycling facilities including a solids separator, which turns manure into dry fertiliser
- New selling pens with soft flooring
- 10,500m<sup>2</sup> of roof covering selling and holding pens, and loading ramps protecting the cattle, and making it easier and safer to load and unload stock



Council staff at the saleyards

The total project value of \$12 million was funded from a \$2,827,248 grant from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund, a \$325,700 grant from the Fixing Country Truck Washes program which is a joint NSW and Australian Government initiative, with the balance funded by Council, which included an \$8.42 million loan facility. At the time of the project design and construction this loan was to be fully serviced by the facility's operations.

Unfortunately due to the sustained drought conditions causing many farmers to de-stock, the cattle numbers that were expected to generate revenue to service this loan have declined by approximately 40%. This shortfall in servicing the loan is being funded through Council's internal reserves in the short term, with the facility to replenish this shortfall when cattle numbers return to normal levels.

## UPDATES ON SOME OF OUR PROJECTS

Construction of a bigger, safer dual-lane **Omadale Brook Bridge** is due to start September 2020. A side track is being constructed in advance. There is \$1.84M in funding from the NSW Government and \$70,000 from Council.

**A village sewerage system for Cassilis** is in concept design, which will go to community consultation before going out to tender for the detailed design. The project has \$1.22M in funds from the NSW Government with Council contributing \$1.47M.

**The Scone to Murrurundi Water Pipeline** opened in May and water restrictions have been reduced to level 2.



The project and concept designs to bring **'town' water to the villages of Blandford, Wingen, Parkville, Middlebrook and Gundy** will go to community consultation this year to gauge interest from property owners. Council received a \$2.6M grant subsidy from the NSW Government toward the water supply systems for Blandford, Parkville and Wingen and a new, larger reservoir for Murrurundi in addition to a \$1.7M Restart NSW Grant.

**Merriwa to Willow Tree road reconstruction** preparation and planning is underway. Sections of the road which passes across the Great Dividing Range, remain single lane with a five tonne load limit. Council is committing more funds – including applying for a loan of up to \$5M - and bringing in the necessary expertise to fix the sections of road not completed to the required standards for

B-Double access. This major road infrastructure project will better connect the west of the Shire - including Merriwa and Cassilis - to the New England Highway.

Community consultation will be held on plans for a new **all-abilities playground at Amaroo Park**, a partnership project with the Scone Neighbourhood Resource Centre funded by a \$120,000 NSW Government grant and \$15,000 from Council. Council has completed an \$85,000 upgrade to toilet facilities for Amaroo Park also funded by the NSW Government.

New equipment for **Bill Rose Sports Complex** - required due to the Scone Bypass – including new cricket nets funded by the NSW Government and NSW Cricket will be installed this year.

The design of the new **campdraft and warm up arena at White Park** is finalised. The canteen and veterinary inspection shed are complete.



Designs for an **upgraded Merriwa skate park** and a new accessible toilet block were put out for community feedback. The \$291,000 project is being undertaken by Council and is funded by the **NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF)**. It is one of 12 SCCF

projects underway across the Shire.

New **Jefferson Park, Aberdeen toilet facilities** are under construction funded by the SCCF.

Designs are being finalised for the **Wilson Memorial Oval's new facilities** including the replacement of the amenities building Council will consult again with user groups to finalise the plans. The \$526,000 project is funded from the SCCF.



Around 300m of **footpath will be replaced in the Merriwa CBD**. The project budget of around \$350,000 is funded with \$196,000 from the SCCF and \$156,000 to be funded by Council. The specs are based on the completed footpath works in front of the Merriwa IGA with a broom concrete finish. The location of the footpath replacement within the CBD of Merriwa will be based on community consultation. Where possible the project will use local contractors and materials.

Council has created a **'buy local' shopping website** [www.welivehereupperhunter.com.au](http://www.welivehereupperhunter.com.au) The project is funded from the



\$100,000 Commonwealth/State Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund. There is also a Facebook page – We LIVE Here Upper Hunter Business Group.



Historic **Junction Bridge** will be protected by Transport for NSW for its heritage value. It is a 1930 Dare Truss Bridge of which only seven across NSW are being preserved.

A new safer **Cameron Bridge** and road alignment is being built over Rouchel Brook. The \$2.51M project is funded from Restart NSW Fixing

Country Roads \$1.74M, the Australian Government Bridges Renewal Program \$700,000 and Council \$70,000.

Council is in negotiations with potential contractors for the \$23.5M **Scone Regional Airport airside infrastructure upgrade, Warbirds Visitor Attraction and Airport Terminal Building.**

A further independent review of the project business case, has run concurrently with the tender negotiations. Council is also seeking to find savings through a solar option for ground lighting. The project is funded through grants from the NSW Government

(\$6.5M from the Drought Stimulus Package and \$6.25M from Restart NSW), \$3 million from the Australian Government's Regional Airports Program for the airside infrastructure upgrade, and a \$7.75M loan taken by Council.



## COUNCIL CONTACTS

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**W: [upperhunter.nsw.gov.au](http://upperhunter.nsw.gov.au)**

**M: PO Box 208, Scone NSW 2337**

## ADMINISTRATION OFFICES:

**Scone | 135 Liverpool Street**

Mon - Fri: 8:30am - 4:30pm

**Merriwa | 34-40 Vennacher Street**

Mon - Fri: 8:30am - 4:30pm

**Murrurundi | 47 Mayne Street**

Mon - Fri: 8.30am - 4.30pm

## WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES:

**Scone | 129 Noblet Road**

Mon - Fri: 8:00am - 4:30pm

Sat & Sun: 9:00am - 4:00pm

**Aberdeen | 45 Wells Gully Road**

Mon, Wed & Fri: 8:00am - 4:00pm

Sat & Sun: 9:00am - 4:00pm

**Cassilis | 9756 Golden Highway**

Sat: 10:00am to 2:00pm

**Merriwa | 96 Depot Road**

Mon & Fri: 9:00am - 2:00pm

Sat: 9:00am - 4:00pm

Sun: 10:00am - 1:00pm

**Murrurundi | 58 Halls Road**

Monday: 10:00am - 3:00pm

Friday: 9:00am - 2:00pm

Sat: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Sun: 10:00am - 1:00pm

## OTHER SERVICES

Early Learning Centre ..... 6540 1345

Family Day Care ..... 6540 1151

SOOSH ..... 6540 1177 / 6540 1140 (office)

Merriwa Community Connect Services (CCS)

and Visitor Information Centre ..... 6521 7046

Murrurundi Community Connect Services (CCS)..... 6540 1336

Murrurundi Visitor Information Centre ..... 6540 1364

Scone Visitor Information

and Horse Centre ..... 6540 1300

Merriwa Youth Centre ..... 6521 7050

Murrurundi Youth Centre ..... 6546 6249

Scone Youth Centre ..... 6540 1108

Upper Hunter Shire Youth Services ..... 6540 1169

Gummun Place Hostel ..... 6521 7010

## Libraries

Aberdeen Library ..... 6540 1303

Cassilis Library ..... 6376 1295

Merriwa Library ..... 6521 7007

Murrurundi Library ..... 6540 1363

Scone Library ..... 6540 1183

## EMERGENCY:

### Council (after hours)

Water, sewerage, landfill, roads, bridges,

and animal control ..... 6540 1199

**NSW Rural Fire Service ..... 1800 081166**

**State Emergency Services ..... 132 500**

### Emergency Services

Ambulance, Fire & Police ..... 000

Crime Stoppers ..... 1800 333 000

Police Assistance Line ..... 131 444

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