



ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS TO FLOW FROM \$9 MILLION STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

Dubbo Regional Council will endorse the allocation of \$9 million provided to the new Council from the NSW Stronger Communities Fund to 10 major projects to kick start new developments in Dubbo, Wellington and surrounding villages.

Dubbo Regional Council Administrator Michael Kneipp and Member for Dubbo the Hon Troy Grant expect the injection of new State Government money will have long term economic and community benefits.

The projects to be funded are:

- Wellington Caves Visitor Experience Centre - \$2,500,000
- Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden Adventure Playground - \$1,300,000
- Dubbo Regional Botanic Garden – Carpark - \$240,000
- Wellington Pool reconstruction - \$3,000,000
- Dubbo Aquatic and Leisure Centre Aquatic Playground - \$800,000
- Cameron Park Regional Playground - \$280,000
- Geurie Multi Court Facility and Playground Equipment - \$245,000
- Installation of a new Gross Pollutant Trap at West Dubbo Main Drain outfall into Macquarie River - \$198,540
- Moxon Park Improvements, Stuart Town - \$85,000
- Euchareena Local Projects - \$84,700
- Funds reserved for contingency/future allocation - \$266,760

The funding allocations were decided by an assessment panel made up of the Member for Dubbo the Hon Troy Grant MP, Council Administrator Michael Kneipp, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Director Greater Western NSW, Alison Morgan and overseen by Michael McKenna from Luka Group Accounting as a probity adviser.

Mr Grant said the Stronger Communities Fund is money that was granted by the State Government to kick start new and improved facilities and services for the Dubbo Regional Council area.

“This new funding is a direct injection to the local economy. The funding was made specifically to assist the merged Council deliver better facilities and better services for the community,” Mr Grant said.

“I congratulate the Assessment Panel and Dubbo Regional Council for developing a thorough process which has resulted in a wide range of projects being funded,” Mr Grant said.

Mr Kneipp said the major projects selected by the Assessment Panel will deliver long-term social and economic returns to the community.

“Projects such as the Wellington Caves Visitor Experience Centre has great potential to add to the visitor economy,” Mr Kneipp said.

“A 15% increase in annual visitor numbers at the Wellington Caves has the potential to generate 5 additional jobs and contribute some \$855,000 to the local economy through salaries and visitor expenditure.

“Similarly creating a new adventure playground at the Dubbo Regional Botanic Gardens will appeal to a wide cross section of the community and create a new visitor attraction with \$ow-on effects to the local economy.”

Mr Kneipp said other approved projects will have direct social benefits.

“The Wellington Pool is in urgent need of a complete reconstruction because of serious structural defects,” Mr Kneipp said. “For a town like Wellington having a safe public swimming pool for sport, recreation and as an affordable summer activity is simply an unquestionable service that must be provided.”

“Installing an additional Gross Pollutant Trap will also have a social benefit by helping protect the health of the Macquarie River by stopping litter and other pollution entering the river,” Mr Kneipp said.

The criteria for the Stronger Communities Fund – Major Projects required allocations to be spread across the new Local Government Area and smaller communities such as Geurie, Stuart Town and Euchareena will receive funding for recreational and public facility upgrades.

“Often it is difficult to source grant funding for projects that have a social benefit for smaller communities and the Assessment panel all agreed these are valuable contributions to these communities,” Mr Kneipp said.

The Grant Assessment Panel selected 10 projects from 33 initially identified as eligible for funding.

Mr Kneipp said the panel deliberated carefully on the final projects but decisions had to be made on what would provide the best, immediate and direct benefit to the community in a sustainable way.

“The Assessment Panel has identified other potential funding programs for unsuccessful projects and Council, with the support of the Member for Dubbo, will vigorously pursue alternative funding sources such as Club Grants, Housing Acceleration Fund and Restart NSW to contribute to remaining projects,” Mr Kneipp said.

Funding allocations will be formally resolved at the Ordinary meeting of Dubbo Regional Council on Monday 19 December 2016.

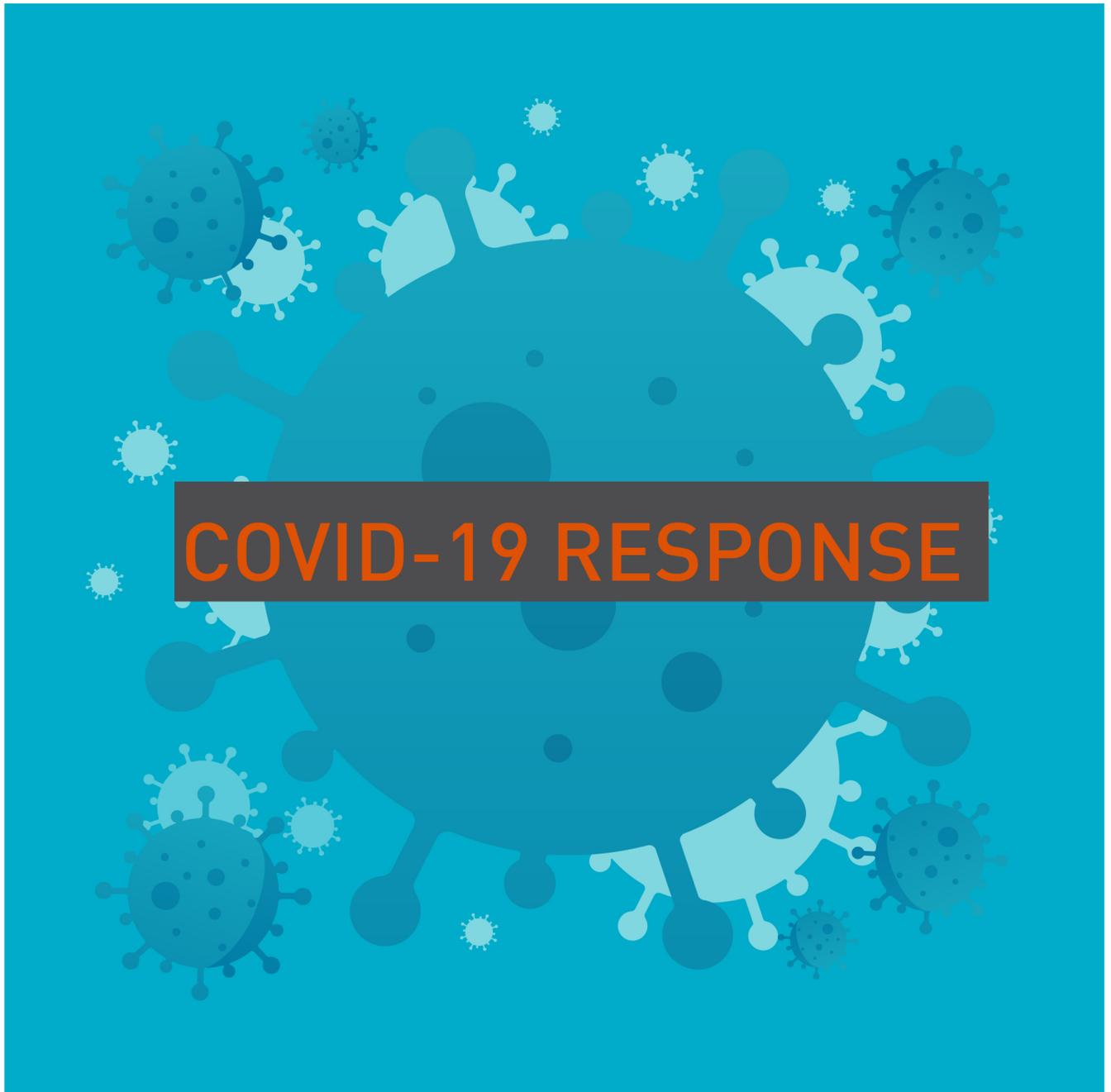
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