

445 Wollombi Road

Bellbird NSW 2325

10 October 2018

The General Manager

WARRUMNUNGLE SHIRE COUNCIL

I was a Councillor on Warrumbungle Shire Council at the time land was purchased for building of the new Council Chambers and an equal dollar per population calculated cash award was designated to each smaller township in the Shire to be spent on any project or improvement within the area of the Councillor so delegated. I was the Councillor for Binnaway and received a number of requests including Binnaway Pre School and Binnaway Race Track, but I chose the Binnaway Caravan Park, which was a long wanted facility for the community and would enhance the town by cleaning and tidying the entire length of Castlereagh River Bank and also provide some form of income toward, maintenance and upkeep of the facility. Few would argue the improvement of town appearance or of the lifeblood the project has injected into Binnaway, which was a town dying at best.

Gary Andrews, a businessman of Binnaway and long time advocate for a Caravan Park in the town was appointed by me and approved by the Shire to both handle finances and fully build the facility. Upon conclusion of the project Gary gathered a number of volunteers who carried out all maintenance, upkeep and financial collections, but he stated he would prefer Binnaway Progress Association bank and caretake finances collected from the park, to avoid forming of yet another committee.

A couple of years of excellent work was carried out by the volunteers, when a few troublesome people joined Binnaway Progress which resulted in Gary and the volunteers ceasing their work with the caravan park. Since that time I have seen a decline in the upkeep of the facility. On the 8 & 9 September, 2018, I stayed in the park and it rained 17mm overnight. The result was a six inch deep puddle of mud and water stretching the entire frontage of the toilet, shower and BBQ areas, totally blocking access between caravans and facilities. I entered the toilet/shower area and the floors were saturated and flooded with filthy water on the male side coming partly from a broken rubber connection between cistern and toilet bowl and also from an overflowing toilet, which has been ongoing for years. There were also two pieces of wooden dowel, which are there to be poked up holes in the wall to flush toilets. This would amount to a health hazard for those

who were able to puzzle out the manner they are meant to operate the toilet flush and even more so to those who could not. The constantly saturated floor has potential to rot up all floor tiles and keeps the bottom section of the zincalume walls wet which, coupled with a build up of particles, has already started corrosion or rust. The overflowing male toilet dates back to the original plumber connecting to the septic tank with right angle bends in the pipeline. This section of work has for ten years needed to be redone using less sharp or gentle bends to allow free passage through the pipes into the septic tank. The septic tank itself is probably some of the cause of the blockages as it needs periodic pumping in a caravan park. The ground generally is also haywire, with half the designating pegs knocked down and lying out of the ground leaving campers no idea where to park or pull up.

At commencement of the Binnaway Caravan Park Gary Andrews and his volunteers agreed through myself and Warrumbungle Shire Council that it would be maintained and managed through finance collected from the donations received, which were substantial. This would result in the caravan park being totally cost negative to Council and ratepayers.

A considerable amount of money was spent establishing this park for Binnaway, not to mention the work by volunteers. This was not done to see an unwilling or incompetent group organisation allow it run down to the point of total closure and then present Council with upkeep and maintenance costs for payment, rather than using their own collected finances. I feel that quotations for environmental septic tanks and dump points relate to Capital Works programmes and would be a total waste at this time with Binnaway almost certain to be forced to Sewage connection in the very short term.

I ask that Council call a cease upon the Binnaway Progress Association to operate the facility and possibly designate it to another organisation or call tenders for a voluntary group, similar to the original operators, and on a cost negative basis to Council or Ratepayers. To allow Binnaway Progress to continue in the current manner is simply prolonging matters to the next serious concern or problem and have them again run to Council to resolve. I also fail to see how or where they were ever designated charge or control of the Caravan Park as they were nowhere to be seen during construction and were never of my choosing.

I have spoken with Gary Andrews and he informs me that he would be prepared to reform his volunteer group to manage the park and again get it up and running at a minimal cost which could be recovered by him from donation collections but, he is not prepared to do any of this under control of Binnaway Progress Association.

I request that a copy of my letter be provided to each Councillor and that this matter be set

down for urgent discussion at the next meeting of the Warrumbungle Shire Council as there are many more serious matters requiring attention, such as road resurfacing. There are a number of Councillors who were serving at the time of this event and they would well remember the circumstances of the town grants, as some were themselves, placed in charge of the money provided as compensation for the money spent in Coonabarabran. Nonetheless, Council also continues to drag their feet on this issue, destroying the good reputation and expectations the park has earned itself over the years of operation. A similar event would not remain unresolved in any of the Shire's larger towns.

R C Egan

MOB. 0409076347