

Letter to the Editor

We the undersigned call upon the Council of Wingecarribee Shire to bring down 'temporary' wage reform to assist the ratepayers of the Shire during the CoronaVirus Pandemic.

Many residents and ratepayers of the Shire are suffering financial distress at this time, due to job loss or being 'stood-down' on leave without pay, suffering financial losses that will have devastating short-term and long-term effects on households.

It is the responsibility of the General Manager (under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993), to manage the functions of the Council ensuring infrastructure is maintained during this period of Federal Government directions to 'stay at home'. Water services, sewer services and road maintenance must be provided by Council's works staff, so as to ensure a safe community existence.

We find it most disturbing however that the General Manager has not seen fit to take the necessary steps to implement a reduction in wages of the 'administrative' staff of the Council; indeed it is even more disturbing that the General Manager has not seen fit to take a substantial 'cut' in her salary for at least the next 6 months. An annual salary of \$330,000 is substantial and should be the subject of a 'temporary' reduction.

The Mayor Councillor Duncan Gair should demonstrate leadership and take action to ensure that the salary of the General Manager is reduced in the short-term, namely 6 months. The General Manager should take similar action with the wages of the two Deputy General Managers, however that is her call, as it falls within the 'Operational' area of council. These actions should be reviewed after the 6 month period and appropriate action taken to extend the wage reduction, should the CoronaVirus Pandemic continue.

The normal level of administration of Council's operations would not be in 'full swing' at present, with administrative staff in the most part, working from home; the likelihood of 'normal' output is unlikely.

Clearly the staff of Council are being paid full salaries whilst the 'less fortunate' are without a job and at best being paid a Job-seeker or Job-keeper allowance, which is minimal having regard to the minimum wage.

These families are under enormous psychological and financial stress during this disastrous set of circumstances and must be supported by the council.

In our opinion it is obscene that the residents and ratepayers of the Shire are expected to 'carry the load', whilst suffering financial losses and associated social disruption, whereas the 'administrative' staff of Council collect their full wages.

In our opinion, it is responsible for the administrative staff of Council to be subjected to a minimum of 25% wage reduction for the next six months (at least) or for the remainder of 2020.

At a time of Social upheaval, it behoves the Council to take measures to ensure that the less fortunate in our community are 'looked after'.

Deputy Mayor Garry Turland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Halstead', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Ken Halstead OAM

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Many residents and ratepayers of the Shire are suffering financial distress at this time, due to job loss or being 'stood-down' on leave without pay, suffering financial losses that will have devastating short-term and long-term effects on households.

It is the responsibility of the General Manager (under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993), to manage the functions of the Council ensuring infrastructure is maintained during this period of Federal Government directions to 'stay at home'. Water services, sewer services and road maintenance must be provided by Council's works staff, so as to ensure a safe community existence.

We find it most disturbing however that the General Manager has not seen fit to take the necessary steps to implement a reduction in wages of the 'administrative' staff of the Council; indeed it is even more disturbing that the General Manager has not seen fit to take a substantial 'cut' in her salary for at least the next 6 months. An annual salary of \$730,000 is substantial and should be the subject of a 'temporary' reduction.

The Mayor Councillor Duncan Gair should demonstrate leadership and take action to ensure that the salary of the General Manager is reduced in the short-term, namely 6 months. The General Manager should also consider action with the wages of the two Deputy General Managers; however that is her call, as it falls within the 'Operational' area of Council. These actions should be reviewed after the 6 month period and appropriate action taken to extend the wage reduction, should the Corona Virus Pandemic continue.

The normal level of administration of Council's operations would not be in 'full swing' at present, with administrative staff in the main part, working from home; the likelihood of 'normal' rates is remote.

Clearly the staff of Council are being asked to do more with the less resources; are without a job and at best being paid a minimal wage, which is minimal having regard to the cost of living.

These families are under enormous financial pressure, during this disastrous set of circumstances.

In our opinion it is obvious that the Council is not expected to 'carry the load', which is expected to be borne by the community, with the risk of social disruption, whereas the Council is expected to pay high wages.

In our opinion, it is reasonable to expect the Council to be subjected to a minimum of 6 months (or for the remainder of the year, if necessary).

At a time of Social upheaval, it is not fair to expect that the less fortunate in our community should be asked to


Deputy Mayor Gary Turford


Councillor Ken Halstead OAM