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Mayoral Matters

Complacency can be a problem in all walks of life, recent events with our lovely COVID-19 has certainly brought us all back to reality, so devastating for the hospitality and tourism industries.

Having attended the Local Councils Rural summit last week, condensed down to one day because of the outbreak, most of the presenters spoke of a significant increase in population shift from Melbourne to the regional areas. Some statistics mentioned, 10 - 15% will move, 70% will move more than 200km, one in five in the next twelve months. This, in my view, is very exciting stuff, however it will impose huge challenges for our rural and regional communities. Availability of residential land, trades people, building materials and funding for infrastructure for starters.

COVID has brought about these changes a, hopefully, one in one-hundred-year event and I would be fairly sure very few rural shires like ours are investment ready so we will need to adapt to this new normal as quickly as possible to take the best possible advantage of the transition.

Tourism in our rural areas is set to take off, when we get past restrictions at least, and our shire is making some long overdue renovations and improvements to our caravan parks in Nhill, Jeparit and Rainbow.

We have been blessed with some rain recently, while far from enough as always, it has at least reduced some of the stress from the crops and their owners. The big rains are just around the corner, hopefully.

Rural Australia has in the past been boom and bust and the cities have kidnapped our younger people with their mystical lights. I was one who enjoyed the visits to "the big smoke", not any more, the traffic hustle and bustle is terrible. How city dwellers cope with daily traffic chaos consuming so much of their lives is beyond me.

I hope we are witnessing a rural and regional renaissance.

Enjoy your day.

Cr Ron Ismay
Mayor