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MAYORAL MATTERS

Thank goodness for technology. Zoom, Skype, Teams meetings and personal communications have been essential in the last three months during COVID-19 restrictions. Along with email and mobile phones, we have been able to maintain effective communication with various stakeholders. I am not the smartest IT guru going around but I have certainly learnt quickly about the basics, it will be great when we can return to having all meetings in person once restrictions are lifted.

Hindmarsh Shire Council held a meeting on 15 May 2020 in person, whilst adhering to all the Victorian State Government restrictions. This meeting was live streamed for the first time through Council's Facebook page and was well received by those that linked in. The meeting agenda was kept to a minimum to reduce the time everyone was in the same building, one of the items on the agenda was our Draft 2020-21 Budget which was approved by Council for public comment. The final budget will be adopted at the next council meeting on 24 June 2020.

While we are in tough and different times, I would ask the question, 'can we utilise our position? Are we able to innovate and be entrepreneurs so that in three to six months' time there are many avenues open that have never been thought of?' Working from home has highlighted that question. Do we have to live in the large towns and cities or could the rural and regional lifestyle and quality of life be an attraction? Hindmarsh Shire Council has many opportunities and facilities to cater for the many changes that could occur.

There is great news for the Dimboola community with the announcement of funding for a new fire station. Extensive lobbying has occurred over a long time and we thank the State Government for this funding, and the many people involved, including our local state member Emma Kealy.

I would like to encourage our communities to continue supporting their sporting clubs. Again, it is different to past years where there is no activity. Whether football, netball or hockey is played this year, which unfortunately looks unlikely, the social fabric of our communities is the strength of these groups.

Our farming sector has had a great start to the season, but a long way to go yet.

We are on the right track with COVID-19, but do not get complacent, maintain the health advice and we will return to better times in due course.

I would also like to say well done to the TV show Almost Australian with Miriam Margolyes for highlighting our Nhill community and the story of our Karen families. Top job Thablay, Wendy, John and Marg Millington.

Cr Rob Gersch

Mayor