Mayor's Message

I have been approached by several concerned ratepayers over the claim made in the Star newspaper of 22 January as follows: "*The previous Council … provided over $30 million for infrastructure in the capital works program for Leongatha*" and "*the current group of councillors has removed altogether or deferred many of these programs years into the future and allocated the money elsewhere.*"

I wish to provide some clarification regarding these remarks. The $30 million to be spent on infrastructure in Leongatha in the 2016/17 budget included $24 million for the municipal precinct project. This project was removed by the current Council in 2017 due to an overwhelming desire by the community not to spend ratepayer funds on such a project. That leaves a sum of $6.5 million that the previous Council was expecting to spend on Leongatha in the years 2018-2031.

As far as I am aware the current Council has not removed any other program from the capital works program other than the municipal precinct project.

In addition to the $6.5 million of infrastructure spending in Leongatha, this current Council has approved an additional $14 million dollars for infrastructure spending in Leongatha during the same period, 2018-2031. The projects approved by the current Council include the following:
- Bair Street revitalisation ($4.55M)
- Library ($2.9M)
- Shire office refurbishment ($2.8M)
- Simons Lane intersection ($1.6M)

Council also spent around $1.6M asphalting the Leongatha Recreation Reserve.

This Council recognises that Leongatha is the largest town in the Shire and requires a suitable level of infrastructure be spent on this township. This Council also appreciates that future spending in Leongatha requires a community plan and vision to be developed and will work with the community to develop such a plan and vision.

Council is also aware of its obligations under the Local Government Act to ensure that services and facilities provided by Council are equitable so other areas of the Shire will not be left out.

Cr Don Hill - Mayor