



New CEO's Vision for Orange City

I write these columns to help Bob Holland with his vision of making Orange an even better place and to help bring our Community and our Council both onto the same page over important issues more often. Council and certain parts of the Community are often on different pages, so to speak. In many cases, this is probably due to one or both parties not having all the facts or information about a particular issue, and then firing off through the media, on social media or through some other means that simply stirs people up unnecessarily and divides our community. We, the community, can do a lot more to help our Councils to serve us better, and through this column on 'How to get the best out of our Councils' I aim to provide and explain facts.

David Waddell became Orange City Council's Chief Executive Officer in September 2019 and I asked him if he would set out his vision for Orange City, which he was pleased to do.

'My focus in 2020 is setting up Orange for the future population to 2036; to some extent modernising the city and infrastructure, including social infrastructure, will have a big focus in 2020. We will do everything in our power to facilitate business and economic development within the constraints on us. Some of those constraints, of course, being water, water, water.' David said.

'Openness and transparency has been a big focus of mine since taking the job. I am focussed on making progress towards the Community Strategic Plan, which sets out the community's priorities. Council has held forums on water and business and a housing one was held on Monday as we are in the process of developing a Housing Strategy for 2020 - 2036, and have serious issues with affordable housing. We are also developing an Industrial and Employment lands Strategy through to 2036. 2020 is an election year, so we will usually see some aspirational ideas and thinking coming out of the Council. Council's Procurement Strategy to increase local purchasing is

open for community comment until the end of January 2020.'

'Orange needs an additional 250 houses a year. The Shiralee estate is taking off and North Clergate has been approved by council for 450 houses. For Industrial Land we are master planning the saleyards and have bought land on Clergate Road to serve as another industrial estate. We are planning for the expansion of the North Orange shopping precinct and are looking at the concepts of Food processing Hubs and Tech Hubs for start ups.

My priorities are: CBD Plan and general City Beautification

'We have been working on a CBD Masterplan for our Future City to refresh the CBD for some time and that will go out for community engagement early in 2020. We have been upgrading the lighting and this will continue. We are looking at how we link the new Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to the CBD, and the use of the western end of the old hospital site for medium density housing, which we have already consulted the community on. There is interest in the old Department of Primary Industries building, and it looks as if car dealers may move to the Gateway Industrial Estate freeing up

land in the CBD. We are looking at signage for the entrances to our city and more tree plantings although conscious of the water issue. Council recently added a new tree crew to Council staff.'

Tourism

'Orange 360 is very successful in attracting some 1.2 million visitors a year. We are seeing job growth from Newcrest Mining, and have the Day on the Green festival in February to look forward to. Tourism keeps on giving.

Education, Medical and Sporting Infrastructure

'Council is working with CSU on the delivery of the \$22 million Murray-Darling Medical School and with the Department of Education about the need for new schools in Orange. The private hospital at Bloomfield is opening as part of the Life Sciences Activation Precinct and Council is developing masterplans for the whole Bloomfield precinct. Council has recently approved the location of the proposed \$25 million sporting stadium at Bloomfield.

Infrastructure

'There is of course a major emphasis on our water security as we continue to grow. We are working on energy affordability

and greening the City. Roads are always an issue and our priorities are the Southern Feeder Road, William Maker Roundabout and Ploughmans lane.

Social Infrastructure including sport and culture

The Cricket Centre of Excellence at Wade Park will be underway soon. We are building a new animal shelter, redeveloping a scout camp, expanding the Art Gallery and perhaps aquatic centre. Procurement has started for the Robertson Park toilets and Council has received a grant of \$10 million from Federal MP the Hon. Andrew Gee for the new planetarium and conservatorium.

General points

Council is undertaking a review of its own property ownership to see what we should develop and what we should sell. We are looking at a stimulus building program, encouraging buy local and reviewing the levers Council has to encourage business in the CBD.

One of the big issues for Council is recruiting enough planners to process DAs in a timely fashion and we are constantly working on this including using 'para planners' to speed up the processing as well as external consultants.'