



ATTACHMENT

2 - QUGGA SUBMISSION

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2017 | YOUR AWARD-WINNING LOCAL NEWSPAPER | \$1.00 (inc GST)

# RURAL RATES SHOCKER

## When your house is not your home

by WENDY CREIGHTON

WHEN Burjurgin grazier, Graham Neilson, opened his rates notice last week he was shocked to find that the property he has lived on for the last 20 years was no longer considered by the Sevier Bush Regional Council as his principal place of residence.

As a result, the rates on his 200 acre property at Behrendorf Road had increased by 8.1%.

And he's worried this year's bill is just the start of an unprecedented escalation in rural rates.

Mr Neilson is one of more than 600 rural landholders in the Sevier Bush whose properties have been placed into the Council's new rural rating category - Rural NPR (Non Principal Place of Residence).

When the new category was announced in the Council's Budget papers it appeared to target land used for agricultural or rural purposes where the dwelling was not the landowner's principal place of residence.

However, as Mr Neilson found on opening his rates notice late last week, it also targets rural properties owned by a company.

"I have lived on my property on Behrendorf Road for 20 years but apparently because it is held in the name of my cattle company it's no longer my home, my so called principal place of residence, and my rates have gone up by more than 8%."

Continues Page 2



Photo: PETER TRUER

Graham Neilson and his partner Amanda at their Burjurgin property which has been Graham's home for 20 years.

ART ACCOUNT 2 - GR 604 SUBMISSION

# When your house is not your home

Continued from Page 1

The rate hike allows the 3% and more, rate rise on rural properties in the 2016-2017 Budget.

"Cattle prices are good at the moment which means you can make a profit of about \$200 per head so to meet my rates bill this year alone I'll have to sell 20 head of cattle."

And he raised concerns about future rural rate rises.

"We've been told by Mayor Greg Christensen that Council's strategy is to shift the rating structure to live with residential rates, so the increases are obviously going to come from."

Mr Neelzen argued that rural

detached properties in town, motor vehicle garages, water and other services as well as infrastructure like street lighting, kerb and channelling, and bin men roads to the front door.

"We do have town water along this road but that's because the property owners all rhipped in to pay for the services to come up here - and then Council sold our pipeline to Queensland Urban Utilities."

Not that Mr Neelzen wants or expects the same amenities as are enjoyed in the Soester Hill's urban centres.

"I don't want them, I chose to live rural but I shouldn't have to pay urban rates."

And he's worried that if rural rates continue to climb at the

same level as this year, farmers and graziers will be priced out of their land.

"Council spends a lot of dollars on attracting tourists to this area and a lot of the promotion is based on the scenic rural farmland and grazing land is what keeps this area rural."

"I was speaking with a boss of hotels from the United States and New Zealand on Saturday - they visited Bussell because it was only an hour's drive from Brisbane and it was a rural country town - it's why they came here."

He argued that rural property owners helped underpin the local economy through supporting services in the town centres.

"I don't employ anyone on my farm but I help keep local people employed - I buy all my irrigation equipment, parts and servicing for my farm vehicles, my fencing, materials and chemicals from local businesses and I sell my cattle locally."

"Landholders like me keep local rural suppliers companies in business and those businesses employ local people."

Mr Neelzen added that his rates had more than doubled since he bought the property.

"That the Council services I receive have not changed - so soon overruns my street or lights my front gate or picks up my rubbish or returns the road."

And not only is the Council

Rural lifestyle farms and farming and grazing land are with keeps this green rural

Increasing our costs, all by stock producers are about to go on a journey with Eco Forest requirements on their properties and many other changes are being talked about to take place in the next 12 months.

"So while profitability is up a the moment, it will only take small drop in the price of our commodities and we will be losing money."



# Pony club reins in the campdrafters

BY WENDY CREGGINGTON

Eight steps in, six steps back, six steps in, four steps back ... horse and rider at a steady rhythm as they make a determined advance into the herd to isolate the beast ... the duo radiate a quiet confidence as they stare down their quarry ... the beast is blocked and roared in the camp ... the rider calls for the gates to be opened ... and the off is on as horse and rider work the oval around the arena's figure-eight arcs before sending it on its way through the final gate ... done and dusted.

It may sound easy. It is not. But intrepid campdrafter, Brett Welsh, fairly made it look easy during his final round in the Maiden Campdraft event on Saturday.

Brett was not the only 'big name' to perform at the Fassifern Horse and Serran at the Fassifern Campdraft at the Bush Showgrounds.

Club President, Peter Wilson, takes the story. "Legendary campdrafter, recent Warwick Gold Cup judge, Greg Sheppard, judged the Maiden Campdraft on Sunday. On Saturday, he judged the Training Campdraft and the Stockman's Challenge with the assistance of Jamie Mileton and Melie Veal.

Melie gave cheerful encouragement and advice to the youngsters trying their hand for the first time in the Maiden Campdraft, and Brett's distinction in winning the Maiden Campdraft on Saturday was purely and simply because he mortals looked on in awe."

The involvement of the two distinguished riders and a full draft for each of the four events rounded out a "superb weekend" for the Club.

In fact, such was the financial success of the campdraft that it is likely to become an annual event.

"For the last three years, the Club has held a 'training campdraft' and this year, the committee decided to multiply the scope of the event by three," Peter says as he explains that the expansion of the event more than tripled the work involved in organising it.

"How naive we were when we made that decision - we certainly didn't realise just how big an undertaking it would turn out to be."

People love to come ... they come because of a shared interest in horses

But as the paperwork and the logistics of organising a Training Campdraft, a Team Penning, a Stockman's Challenge and a Maiden Campdraft across the two days continued to grow, they persevered.

"It was a mammoth task," Peter says, "but we were looking at a fundraising event that would help pay the bills, particularly the \$1,500 which represents our proportion of the rates for the showgrounds."

And the outcome? "Well, it definitely improved the Club's bank balance. It probably took 10 years off the lives of the committee in terms of mental anguish but we would have to judge it a great success," Peter says.

And he added that the Bush Show Society and a lot of people contributed to that success.

"Sponsorship from local businesses was extremely generous and local people also donated the use of their cattle, at no cost."

"And we are so grateful for the unpaid volunteers who helped - without the volunteers and the cattle donors the event would not have happened."

The response to the events by the competitors and their friends and family was also remarkable.

"People love to come and compete with their horses," Peter explains.

"It is quite a phenomenon to see the showgrounds full of floats and trucks."

"They came because of a shared interest in horses - most are just mums and dads with their children - they pretty much all know one another."

"And the horses are looked after like members of the family."

Peter also noted the work of team leaders from within the Club.

"While the prizes rained down like confetti at an Italian wedding on the happy winners, everything was kept running smoothly by campdraft director Phil Gutaka, cattle co-ordinator Glen Stanion, secretary Margaret Harvey, acting Treasurer Tracey Smith and by sixteen co-ordinators Jenny Symott, Alicia Johnston and Justine Stanion who marshalled an army of pony club members and relatives to put the cattle in the yards and to keep the competitors fed."

On an end note, Peter recalls a lighter moment during the weekend: Melanie Veal had to call on all her evasive skills learned in the stock camps of the Northern Territory to dodge a mad steer while judging the stockman's challenge. Melanie escaped without a scratch and said she had seen plenty of mad cows in her time ... this one was no different."

ATTACHMENT (2) P3  
QLGRA SUBMISSION

# QLGRA SUBMISSION - ~~THE~~ INQUIRY INTO THE LT FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

## Attachment 3 (Part A)

### QUOTE 1:

I haven't lived in Crows Nest for a long time but feel that the isolation felt by the smaller towns outside of Toowoomba city is quite dramatic. There does not feel like there is any representation of our town because there is no local representative on Council but even then they don't represent you but moreso a portfolio for the whole region. Our needs are so different to Toowoomba so should be addressed locally.

The tourism dollar is spent mostly on the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers rather than spreading more funds out to small towns. I feel we get a token amount for anything we hold in our town which we appreciate. In a smaller council I expect the tourism dollars to be spent more on things that reflect that local areas rather than a very large diverse area.

The maintenance of roads in our area is very poor compared to the previous council.

Rates are dearer.

Local concerns when presented are fobbed off, takes a long time to get an answer if at all.

No promotion of the north of the shire, there was a lot more industry with the local council.

Subdivisions were done by local council using their own plant equipment and employing a lot of apprentices.

I have also been advised that there are no on ramps for the New England Highway from the new bypass which will mean having to go through Toowoomba to access the Northern part of the shire. Definitely won't help the economy of our little towns.

QUOTE 2: Residents of Crows Nest are frustrated that they can't contact facilities/personnel directly. When ringing you are often connected to a person outside the area who is not familiar with the issues/venues/events in Crows Nest and therefore unable to answer questions pertinent to our town.

It is quicker to drive to our service centre than make a phone call. Similarly there is no direct link to the swimming pool.



# Deb Frecklington MP

Member for Nanango



ATTACHMENT 3 (B) - ~~EXCERPT~~ EXCERPT SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO  
27 July 2017

THE LONG TERM FINANCIAL  
SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS

The Hon Jackie Trad MP  
Deputy Premier and Minister Minister for Transport,  
Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade  
PO Box 15009, City East QLD 4002

Dear Deputy Premier,

**RE: URGENT - Crows Nest Translink Bus Timetable - Route 950**

Following my letter of 26<sup>th</sup> June in regards to the Crows Nest Translink Bus Timetable (Route 950), I seek to escalate my request for reconsideration of the Crows Nest Inbound Route timetable.

Community concerns are growing as it becomes even more evident that the new timetable is not acceptable for Crows Nest residents. As noted previously, the new timetable includes just two services in the morning – departing at either 6.20am or 9.57am. This is a loss of service for the Crows Nest community, with the old timetable providing options for inbound transport to Toowoomba at 7.10, 9.10 or 11.10am.

Along with the original concerns expressed in my previous letter, the loss of a practical timetable is heavily affecting residents of Crows Nest. Following are just some of the anecdotal examples of the impact of the changes:

1. A 78 year old female resident having to catch the bus at 6.20am to attend specialist appointments in Toowoomba. After arriving at the bus terminal, she must walk 4 blocks to the doctors, and then wait another four hours to catch the bus home.
2. A family has had to relocate closer to Toowoomba so their children can remain in school as they have no other transport options. Their school does not allow their children to wait at school from 7am in the morning (when the 6.20am bus drops them there).
3. Three elderly ladies who used to catch the bus to Toowoomba for social interaction can no longer undertake this activity due to the impractical times on the inbound timetable. This was their only social activity and the loss of this service is already having a noticeable impact on their mental health.

This matter is urgent. The community of Crows Nest deserve better and I once again request reconsideration of the inbound timetable to better service the community.

Yours sincerely,

**Deb Frecklington**  
Member for Nanango





## Do mergers make for better councils? The evidence is against 'bigger is better' for local government

March 31, 2018 6:11am AEDT

Those opposed to forced municipal mergers have reason to be sceptical of NSW Premier Mike Baird's promises that it will improve councils' performance. AAP/Paul Miller

Hard-pressed ratepayers in New South Wales and Queensland need no reminding of the perils of municipal amalgamation. NSW experienced a sharp dose of forced mergers in 2004. Queenslanders underwent draconian council consolidation under the Beattie government in 2008.

NSW is now on the cusp of a further round of mergers being inflicted on unwilling councils.

In all three cases, the architects of compulsory amalgamation have been under the sway of the dogma that "bigger is better" in local government. Ratepayers are told amalgamation will herald a new dawn of lower rates, cheaper services, improved service quality, enhanced financial viability and superior administration and planning.

In NSW, the Baird government has especially emphasised the financial advantages of municipal amalgamation. These claims are typically presented as the outcome of careful research and deliberation.

### Author



**Brian Doherty**  
Professor of Economics and Director of the  
Centre for Local Government, University of  
New England



## ATTACHMENT 4 - Page 2

**Mergers tested in a real-world experiment**

Are these claims consistent with the empirical evidence? My colleagues Brian Bell and Joseph Drew and I investigated this question for NSW's 2004 forced amalgamations.

We took advantage of being able to use 2014 data to compare the performance of merged councils with their unmerged counterparts over ten years.

We compared amalgamated "general purpose" councils with their un-amalgamated peer councils in the same local government classification. We thus had the benefit of a "natural experiment", being able to compare the two groups of "like" councils against a common set of performance indicators.

Our peer-reviewed research paper will be published shortly.

The criteria we used for this comparison included four the Baird government is using under its "Fit for the Future" program – operating performance, own-source revenue, building and infrastructure renewal, and asset maintenance ratios – as well as council employees per capita.

We found no statistically significant differences in the performance of the two groups of councils against these criteria. This falsifies past claims by the Carr Labor government that its forced amalgamations would substantially improve NSW local government financial performance. It also undermines the Baird Coalition government's claims for its proposed mergers.



The Carr government's 2004 council mergers provide a basis for comparing the impacts over the following decade.  
AAP/Mick Takas

**Evidence mounts against 'bigger is better'**

Other research provides additional damning evidence. For example, Joseph Drew, Mike Kortt and I examined the outcomes of forced amalgamations in Queensland in 2008. These reduced the number of councils from 157 to just 73.



Some of the council mergers pushed through in Queensland in 2008 under the Beattie

Our research demonstrated that this resulted in a greater proportion of councils exhibiting diseconomies of scale. That is, mergers created entities that were simply too large to be run efficiently.

Furthermore, of the 31 new councils the mergers created, 58% exhibit decreasing returns to scale. Comparing their efficiency through time, we found merged councils performed worse than unmerged councils.

Finally, Elizabeth Sinnewe, Mike Kortt and I recently tested the claim that "bigger is better" by examining the financial performance of Australia's largest council by population, Brisbane City. In our recently published analysis, we



government have since been reversed.  
AAP/Dave Hunt

compared Brisbane City Council to Sydney City Council, the average of six southeast Queensland councils and the average of ten metropolitan NSW councils.


We did so using four measures of financial performance – financial flexibility, liquidity, debt service capacity and asset management. Between 2008 and 2011, the three comparator groups outperformed Brisbane Council in financial flexibility, liquidity and debt-servicing ability.

Taken together, these three papers cast doubt over the continuing dogma that "bigger is better". They also add to the empirical literature on municipal mergers by demonstrating that "biggest is not best" either.

In particular, the financial performance of local authorities does not improve as advocates of amalgamation contend. On the contrary, amalgamated municipalities often perform worse than their unmerged counterparts.

Amid the controversy over the Baird government's compulsory council consolidation program, our findings underline the foolishness of making public policy in an "evidence-free" manner.

If forced amalgamations proceed, we may well see hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer and ratepayer funds squandered simply because policymakers preferred dogma to empirical evidence.

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## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### Railway Street upgrades poorly planned

I AM writing this Letter to the Editor to clarify some opinions attributed to me in last week's letters column of The Guardian. I was never approached for a quote regarding the Railway Street project, which Jade Greenh submitted to the paper, however I would now like to add my thoughts on the matter.

What I do know about the Railway Streetscape Upgrade Project is:

1. When the project began it was to take 12 weeks. It is now 21 weeks with it still uncompleted. And it is rumoured to be grossly over budget.

2. The project was to be completed in stages with the first stage beginning with the lower footpath on High Street and then now completed progress around and

along Railway Street. High Street footpath is still closed. It has been closed this entire project.

3. That this project has installed flame trees which grow up to 10m tall, which are deciduous and notorious for decaying rubbish from flowers, large pods, and leaves planted next to a flat awning roof. This in time will clog the gutters and cause the roof structure to deteriorate. There are already several of these nuisance trees located up High Street, which if anyone took the time to ask any of the affected business owners would understand the mess and destruction these trees can cause. Not to mention that purpose of the installation of these trees was to allow "dappled sunlight" during Winter months.

Unfortunately the side of Railway Street on which the trees have been in-

stalled do doesn't receive any direct sunlight until after during these months anyway due to the position of the Winter sun and the opposite building.

4. Lilly pilly trees have also been installed in this project for under powerline structures as the Architect Mr Monaghan recommended them for being "smaller" than the flame trees. However, the current Lilly pilly tree under the powerline across Railway Street is only 30cm off touching the line at the time of planting.

5. In one town, which already desperately lacks central car parks in the main street of town, this project has removed one, as well as making the existing Railway Street park narrower. This makes it very dangerous for anyone heading on the driver's side with traffic swerving to avoid collecting pedestrians. And without any

consideration with the functionality of the surrounding businesses and their patrons.

4. This project has also removed a multi-functional ramp, in favour of more trees. This ramp aided the elderly and the incapacitated and those with young children. It will eventually be replaced by a single passage set of stairs once the professional organisers can agree on the safety of the rail and balustrade setup. The current balustrade setup has only a top and bottom rail with a large gap in between which anyone or anything could fall through into the gardens or onto the brick footpath below. But this was brought up at a recent meeting with the Architect Mr Monaghan and the comment was made "that it's a misdeed we'll have to worry about".

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7. The erecting of the trees has also interfered the sight of any signage which business owners have gone to great expense to try to utilise the visual aspect of promotion. When will people realise that the small local businesses re what make a town an attractive tourist destination, not vice versa. Tourists want shops to look at and shop in, as well as the local residents who rely on the quality and services of a viable profitable town. Once the small businesses shut down what will be left? pretty footpath? A few trees? It's certainly not Mr Monguard's concern.

8. When several issues regarding the trees and the removal of a multifunctional ramp were raised with a particular Councillor he replied with "quieten down it will look beautiful". When the issue was approached regarding the excessive noise and dust as well as the restriction of shop/footpath access during the destruction stage his reply was "you don't think I actually personally oversee these projects". And when the architect Mr Monguard was approached regarding the consultation of a project with local business owners replied with "we stood in front of the A for a week with the plans".

When asked who can adjust the installation of the trees an engineer replied "only two people the CEO or the architect, but I'm not allowed to talk to the CEO and the Architect is on holidays overseas".

This is the attitude from the Scenic Regional Council towards the business owners, local residents and a very costly project. Not once did the CEO or Architect or Councillor approach any local business

owner to consult on this local project. No timeframes were ever discussed until a noise complaint or access restriction was imposed, never allowing any time to alert customers or to make alternative arrangements with deliveries or services.

9. The Architect has abused the council workers for not matching his trees fast enough as the trees were deteriorating already. However the oversight of choosing rainforest trees to be planted in 40-degree heat and the regular climate of our town was never considered a fault in design to begin with.

10. There were several missed opportunities for local businesses to be involved in this local project, which would have saved time and money. For instance, the garden irrigation systems were never opened for local quoting, that went to a company in Nambour as per the Architect's Mr Monguard's direction.

11. Another issue with this project is the installation of the garden lights. The junction box sizes were changed mid-installation leading to another delay in the project courtesy of Mr Monguard's request. But also the design for the boxes to be buried beneath the soil and mulch, while the boxes have been installed and the soil and mulch spread, the lights themselves have yet to be delivered or installed and thus leading to another waste where the soil and mulch will have to be removed to allow access for the lights to be installed, then the gardens will be done over again with soil and mulch. What a complete waste of time and lack of any organisational project skills. All to keep the architect happy.

On a personal note I would like to say that I am not against beautifying

Boonah, the town I was born and raised in and now proudly raising my own sons. But I don't see why we need someone from out of town design something which is neither functional or practical for our many local residents who regularly use Railway Street.

Boonah is a thriving township with our own residents to support and encourage. We should be looking after our locals first, some of those who may travel over 50km or have children or are elderly to come to town.

These people don't just grab a single bag of groceries, but entire boot loads, plus visit the optometrists, the doctor surgery, the chemist, buy parts from Dovers and Sons, grab The Guardian and stop at anyone of the local cafes or pubs. These are the people that keep the locals employed and the town viable. Why would anyone design something that would make life more complicated in the name of gardens?

What amazes me even more, is not one person, when many were approached regarding the many issues with this project, could ever own responsibility. It was always someone else's fault or issue or department.

Not a single direction was ever completed in this project without a fault of some degree.

Yet if this was my business or any other private enterprise that delivered such a project so poorly they would never be employed again and they would face ruin and embarrassment.

Who is accountable for this project? Maybe if there is something that needs to be done in Boonah then maybe the locals should be consulted first.

- Scott Martin,

Proud Owner, Boonah Fruit Supply

ATTACHMENT 5 - Page 2.

QLGRA

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Attachment 6 QLCRA SUBMISSION - INQUIRY INTO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF LOCAL GOVT  
Quote 1: Most major tender winners are outside the shire now and the quality of work is never up to speck.

Ratepayer money is then used to rectify shortcomings.

Of recent times, in old XXX shire, there has been approximately 1 million of ratepayers money spent rectifying damage caused by these contractors failing to fulfil their contractual duties.

Pre-amalgamation, numerous gravel pits were available for council use on rural properties. This provided efficiency freight-wise, cost of product and less damage to the roads as a result of not having to cart the product from a mega pit hundreds of kms away.

Public safety is an issue as a result of the poor road conditions and the number of blown tyres experienced when trying to negotiate these roads.

This is replicated in the other 3 shires foisted into XXX Regional Council.

The quality of rural roads has gone back 30 years with reduced rural road expenditure and the majority of spending is occurring in the Emerald township.

Council, post-amalgamation, has resulted in very little input into day to day running of amalgamated shires by our elected representatives.

The structure of middle and upper management is such, that it is now open to misconduct and corruption.

Pre-amalgamation, this would never have been allowed to happen as our elected councillors had more decision-making powers in the running of council in our small XXX Shire.

There must also be a 'duty of care' required by amalgamated councils to share information regarding the termination of senior management officers contracts for gross mismanagement or corruption, with other councils.

(A XXXXX Regional Council Manager whose contract was terminated by the Central Highlands Regional Council was allowed to gain immediate employment with a neighbouring council)

Checks must be in place to cease the practice of the divulgence of information to friends and associates of management who tender for major government contracts.

One arrogant prominent XXXX Regional Councillor does not bother to fill in the pecuniary interests register as required by law.

Facts, innuendoes and rumours are so rife as to the issuing of contracts and business deals (going back to the beginning of amalgamation in 2008) that a Royal Commission is warranted).

These activities (bordering on criminal) could never have happened pre-amalgamation with individual tightly-run and managed community-minded shires.

The loss of revenue to small townships as a result of issuing major contracts to outside tenders has a devastating effect on these small communities.



QUOTE 2: As many of the senior staff at many councils are now from outside the local community, we are noticing a move from community based decisions to financially based decisions and a rift between the council staff and the ratepayers and community. In many local government areas, there is also a lack of communications between the senior staff at councils and the elected councillors due to current Local Government Act.

There are many cases of a decrease in services and the quality of the services offered by local Government however the main concern is the direction the councils are taking in the management of outsourced works, where local companies are overlooked in favour of large companies who are offering the councils reduced services at considerably reduced prices, so that the rate payers are missing out both ways by not gaining work from the councils and receiving less or reduced services.

In many cases, this is causing considerably higher costs to the ratepayer by increased travel times on poorly maintained roads and poorly staffed town planning offices or the use of expensive consulting town planners. Ratepayers are observing poorly supervised and managed council projects with considerable wastage on each project.

With many councils, ratepayers are noticing collusion, questionable activities and possibly corruption, with the elected councillors powerless to ask questions of the council staff responsible.

I would consider that the local government system is in urgent need of over hauling as the financial sustainability of the current local government system is not answerable to the elected councillors or ratepayers. The current local government system has been in disarray for the last 18 months however neither major party are prepare to commit to overhauling the system due to their previous input in developing the model that currently exists.

I believe that the amalgamations have allowed for increased corrupt activities to occur on a larger scale within local government. This corruption can be observed throughout the system from the appointment of CEOs to the administration of contracts involving local government, state and federal funds.

Quote 3: Our road only gets graded once a year now when it was always done twice a year with Boonah Shire.

WHY get aggravated over a couple of signs?

Two reasons:

1. Bureaucratic incompetence - one can infer this, after a decision to replace two signs takes two years to execute.

2. The proposed replacement indicates that the responsible bureaucrats are happy to host an eminently inferior product on us; namely, an uplifting aerial shot of a creek, paddocks and a piggery. What happened to the wonderfully striking, embossed, gold lettering that also disappeared?

"Entry statement" indeed! Basic graphic design principles would rule the proposed banality out.

I suspect that after the project languished for two years in the "too hard" basket and on the "never, never plan" and with staff beginning to get inquiries from residents about what was happening, someone rifled through some photographs associated with Kalbar, pulled one out and cried "This'll do. This'll get them off our backs". Who ultimately signed off on this mediocrity?

There are many questions that need to be answered about this whole saga - answers which my local councillor has not been able to provide on the occasions I have broached the subject; and answers that the mayor did not provide in this newspaper last week. No-one it seems, can provide the facts. I am so frustrated that even "alternative facts" would suffice.

— Aub Beck, Kalbar.

### Where are our signs?

WOULD have been nice if we could have had a say in the design of our new sign, but we were under the impression that our old sign was being repaired. That's what I was told only one month ago when I rang Council. Rang again two weeks ago and was told they would look into it and call me back, 'still waiting', and this week another call to them only to be told the signs were rusted through.

Maybe Council would like to donate the old signs to us and one of them can be put up in the Civic Centre as part of our local history.

Such a shame as we have such beautiful scenery with the ranges as a backdrop to our little town. But I think driving past the new sign at 60kmh visitors to our town will be left wondering "what was that?"

If this sign is good enough for Kalbar, maybe Broomah and Beaudesert would like it as their entry sign as well.

So please Council can you tell us where are our original signs?

— Shirley Ernst, Kalbar.

IN REFERENCE to the story that featured in the Fassfern Guardian on July 13 titled "Kalbar Signs return ... by two".

I would like to say as a business owner in Kalbar that the township's identity signs have been changed without, to my knowledge, any consultation of the process with the Kalbar community. Our beautiful signs were removed a long time ago. Some members of the community thought they had been stolen. When enquires were made to council we were informed that they were being "touch-up" or repaired. As a community we have been very patient awaiting their return.

On Monday morning, July 10, new steel signs were erected further up the road from our now blank identity signs, showing the Scenic Rim Council symbol and the word "Kalbar". At first we thought these signs were replacing our old Kalbar identity signs, but on further investigation, it came to light that was not the case.

When asking the question "so when is our Kalbar sign returning home?", we were informed that it would not be. This truly blindsided our community and I am bitterly disappointed with the council for the way this has all been handled.

It wasn't until the Guardian spoke with Cr Duncan McInnes that we were informed a new picture would be installed into the old framework. What?

The picture that will now be in place has no history to it, like our old sign and reflects nothing but a few green paddocks. How was this picture chosen? As a town we did not get any say. At what meetings were these changes discussed?

Was there ever any notification in the public notices section of our local Fassfern Guardian paper?

We are talking about our identity signs here, something that means a lot to our town and its community not just any old sign. How Council would think that having something we are very proud of just removed without backlash is beyond me.

My Questions to Council:

Where are the old signs now?

Who tendered on the repairs of the old signs?

What were the costs quoted to repair the old sign?

How was the new imagery chosen?

Who was involved in the choice process of the new image?

— Frustrated Scenic Rim resident and Kalbar business owner.

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# LETTERS to the EDITOR

ATTACHMENT 7

QUEST SUBMISSION

INQUIRY INTO

LONG TERM FINANCIAL

SUSTAINABILITY

OF LOCAL

GOVERNMENT.