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North Coast

# Advocate

Byron Shire President:

## NOW PLANNING CAN BE SORTED OUT

President, Cr Stan Robinson, is not disappointed a planning administrator has been appointed to the Byron Shire Council as the council 'now could get its planning function sorted out'.

Cr Robinson was commenting following the stripping of the council's planning powers and the appointment of a planning administrator from the Department of Planning and Environment.

This action was taken last week by the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Carr.

Mr Carr said the administrator would be responsible for all the functions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979).

**Number of complaints**  
"The Byron Shire Council's planning performance has given rise to a number of complaints in recent years," Mr Carr said.

"In 1983, Local Government inspectors were sent to investigate the council's performance and a major report was prepared.

"Many of the issues raised in that report indicate a totally inadequate performance of the council's functions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act."

"The council has had considerable difficulties in coming to grips with its responsibilities in implementing the Act. It has performed inadequately in ensuring that proper consideration is given to a full range of environmental issues and, most important, that its statutory planning controls are implemented correctly."

**Planning powers**  
Mr Carr said that as a result he had decided to appoint a planning administrator to assume all of council's planning powers.

These duties now will be taken over by the assistant director of the Department of Environment and Planning, Mr Jim Waugh.

Mr Carr said Mr Waugh had had considerable experience in the administration of planning in New South Wales.

He was a council engineer-planner for a number of years, before starting his duties with the State Planning Authority in 1971.

It is expected Mr Waugh will work in Byron Bay two days a week.

This will cost the council about \$30,000 as the council must pay for Mr Waugh's salary and expenses.

Cr Robinson said he had spent several hours with Mr Waugh discussing the situation.

Mr Waugh would have the final say in all planning matters and there would be little or no input from councillors.

"This of course is extremely disappointing to the councillors," he said.

"Mr Waugh's decision will be final, although people still will have the option of taking their case to the Land and Environment Court."

"I do expect however, that Mr Waugh will find his job quite a difficult one as there are

a lot of 'stirrers' in the shire."

Cr Robinson said the appointment of a planning administrator (the first time that the



Planning administrator, Mr Jim Waugh

State Government has this power) would make little or no difference to ratepayers and residents of the shire.

People wanting to present development applications would do so in the same way as they always had done.

Development applications would be reported on by the council's chief town-planner, Mr Ian Pickles, but these reports now would go to Mr Waugh instead of to a council meeting.

"The council will not deal with the development applications or any other planning function — they will be dealt with by Mr Waugh," he said.

There would be no secrecy about planning decisions in Byron Shire, the newly appointed planning administrator, Mr Jim Waugh, told the Advocate.

Mr Waugh, assistant director of the Department of Environment and Planning, was appointed to his new role by the Minister for Planning and Environment, Mr Carr.

Mr Waugh visited the Byron Bay following his appointment last week.

On his return to Sydney, Mr Waugh told the Advocate that he had visited the council straight away so the 'least amount of interruption would be made'.

He said he did not intend to delay people, especially those who just wanted a building application approved.

"The public will be informed of all decisions I make and there will be no attempt to do anything in secrecy," Mr Waugh said.

Mr Waugh intends to hold a public meeting on the day after the normal council meetings (which are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month) and it will be at this meeting that he will hand down his planning decisions.

"The public will be allowed to attend these meetings but they will not be allowed to speak."

Mr Waugh's decision will be final, except for applicants' right of appeal to the Land and Environment Court.

"I hope that during my time in Byron Shire I will become conscious of the people's and the councillors' views on many planning matters," Mr Waugh said.

### Administrator to hand down decisions at public meeting

### Chambers' response disgusts organiser

Organisers of a proposed regional chambers of commerce conference at Ballina have been disgusted by the poor response which has forced its cancellation.

The conference, being organised by the Ballina and District Chamber of Commerce was to have been held this weekend.

The president of the chamber, Mr John White, said lack of interest and support from other North Coast chambers had forced the cancellation.

Letters had been sent to chambers of commerce from Coffs Harbour in the north to the Queensland border and west to Tenterfield.

"No one bothered to answer our invitations, let alone send them back," Mr White said.

"These invitations were followed up with reminder calls, but I still did not get any response."

Mr White said he was disgusted with the poor response.

He said local businesses obviously were apathetic in their approach to promoting their business and their town.

"There are so many local businessmen who say they are struggling, yet here they have been presented with a perfect opportunity to do something about it and they will not," Mr White said.

"I wonder how these people run their businesses."

The regional conference was to discuss local matters and to find ways of promoting the area and lobbying State and Federal Ministers.

The conference also would have provided an opportunity for local chambers of commerce to liaise with delegates from the North East Local Government Association.

Mr White said it still was hoped to hold a regional conference in Ballina within the next three months but there would have to be a 50 to 60 per cent positive response from North Coast chambers before the conference would be held.

### INSIDE:

Old theatre to go..... P14

### Grant delay halts Mullumbimby museum repairs

Plans for further major work on the Brunswick Valley Historical Society's museum at Mullumbimby have come to a standstill while the society waits for its first allocation of a Bicentennial Authority grant.

The society received a letter on November 11 from the Byron Shire Council, which is acting as overseer of the grant, regarding allocations and the conditions attached.

A meeting of the society was hastily arranged and a reply forwarded on November 18 agreeing to the conditions.

The president, Mr Maurie Summers, said there was an agreement to be signed and

the society was asked to make an appointment with a member of the council's staff.

Several attempts were made but the man was never available, the society being told he was occupied with the council's estimates.

Mr Summers said the agreement had finally been signed and forwarded to the Bicentennial Authority.

It was hoped the \$7000 due at the end of January now would be forthcoming within four to six weeks.

The money will be used to repair and paint the museum.

The society is to receive a total of \$50,000 over the next 18 months from the Bicentennial Authority.

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