

Business Paper

LATE REPORTS ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

**ALBY SCHULTZ MEETING CENTRE,
COOTAMUNDRA**

6:00PM, Tuesday 24th February, 2026

Administration Centres: 1300 459 689

LATE REPORTS

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5 MAYORAL MINUTES

5.2 MAYORAL MINUTE - GUNDAGAI RICHARD NORDEN MEMORIAL PROJECT

DOCUMENT NUMBER	459135
AUTHORISING OFFICER	Abb McAlister, Mayor
REPORTING OFFICER	Abb McAlister, Mayor
ATTACHMENTS	1. Funding Request from Gundagai RSL - Gundagai Memorial ↓

RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider providing financial support to the Gundagai RSL for the Richard Norden Memorial project.

Introduction

At its ordinary meeting of 22 April 2025 Council resolved as follows (RES 072/2025):

That Council notes the request and considers providing support to the Gundagai RSL for the Richard Norden Memorial project at a future point once funding applications are known.

This report provides an update on the project and outlines a request for financial assistance.

Background

The proposed memorial will honour one of the most significant engagements involving Australian forces during the Vietnam War – the Battle of Coral/Balmoral. Over a 26-day period in May-June 1968, approximately 3,000 Australian soldiers defended their position against a larger and well-prepared enemy force. The battle resulted in 26 Australian fatalities and 99 wounded.

Private Richard Norden, born and raised in Gundagai, enlisted in the Australian Army at 18 years of age and served from 1966 to 1969. Following his military service, he joined the ACT Police and tragically died in the line of duty in October 1972. Members of the Norden family continue to reside in Gundagai and surrounding areas. It is considered fitting that his service and bravery be formally recognised within his hometown.

The memorial is proposed to be located at Council Park, at the intersection of West and Sheridan Streets, Gundagai – a prominent and highly visible location.

The memorial design includes:

- A bronze statue depicting Private Norden rescuing his wounded Section Commander, Lance Corporal Daniel (Joe) Kelly, during intense combat;
- Interpretive plaques detailing the Battle of Coral/Balmoral and Private Norden’s actions; and
- QR-coded audio-visual components providing expanded historical content and personal accounts.

Project Overview

Since Council's April 2025 resolution, the Gundagai RSL Sub-Branch has continued to work closely with Council staff on the memorial's design and proposed construction.

The RSL intends to erect and dedicate the memorial commemorating both the Battle of Coral/Balmoral and the heroic actions of Private Richard Norden VC – the only Victoria Cross recipient from that engagement.

The unveiling ceremony is scheduled for 14 May 2026, being the anniversary of both the battle and the action for which Private Norden was awarded the Victoria Cross for Australia. It is anticipated that the ceremony will be attended by the Governor-General.

On 18 February 2026, Council received correspondence from the Gundagai RSL Sub-Branch outlining project progress and advising of an unexpected escalation in site construction costs.

The RSL has successfully secured the full \$325,000 project budget through grants and community donations. However, site preparation and construction costs at Carberry Park have increased significantly beyond initial estimates, based on updated quotations.

As a result of this cost escalation, the RSL has formally requested that Council consider contributing 10% of the project budget (\$32,500) to address the shortfall and ensure delivery of the project ahead of the scheduled unveiling in May 2026.

Financial Considerations

Council's consideration of this request would need to take into account current budget allocations, available funding sources, and any precedent implications associated with providing financial assistance to community-led projects.



Gundagai RSL Sub Branch

Mayor Abb McAlister
Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council

18 February 2026

Funding Request
Gundagai Memorial to the Battle of Coral-Balmoral and
Richard Norden VC

Dear Mayor McAlister,

Gundagai RSL would like you to forward a request to CGRC Council for funding support for the Gundagai memorial project.

Gundagai RSL and CGRC commenced a partnership to construct and dedicate the Memorial in December 2024. Since that time, we have worked closely together to progress the project. At the commencement of the project, it was agreed that on completion of the opening ceremony, the Memorial would be gifted to the Gundagai community, with stewardship and maintenance provided by CGRC.

The Memorial project has been budgeted for a total of \$325,000. The major cost element has been the feature piece – a bronze statue at a cost of \$210,000. We have reached our budget target of \$325K with generous support from a Department of Veterans' Affairs grant, and donations from RSL NSW and sub branches, and the regional community.

We are now facing an unexpected increase for the construction of the Memorial site in Carberry Park. Initial budget advice from CGRC was to allow \$30K for this phase of the project. Engineering designs were provided by CGRC in early November 2025 and it was expected that while Gundagai RSL would pay for the construction, oversight would be provided by CGRC. In early February 2026 CGRC advised that Gundagai RSL should take responsibility for obtaining quotes from contractors.

This task was undertaken by Gundagai RSL members, and three quotes were sought from local and Cootamundra based contractors. Two of the contractors withdrew from the quotes, and the remaining contractor provided a quote that was two and a half times the cost previously advised by CGRC.

Gundagai RSL is presently seeking a further two quotes from local suppliers, however we are now facing a narrow time frame in which to complete the memorial site to meet the Opening Ceremony date of 14th May 2026 by the Governor General, HE Sam Mostyn AC.

As stated above, Gundagai RSL has raised the entire budget target of \$325K on its own. All other aspects of the project (statue, plaques, QR coded information and opening ceremony planning) are on-target for timing and budget.

Due to the cost overrun for the memorial site construction, CGRC Council is requested to consider a 10% contribution to the Richard Norden VC Memorial project – i.e. an amount of \$32,500.

For your consideration please.

Paul Vercoe
Secretary and Project Chair
Gundagai RSL

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